

## How animals perceive time

[Are animals] entirely free from the temporal plane? Do they perceive it in any way? Do some species perceive it more acutely than others? For this week's Giz Asks, we reached out to a number of experts to find out.

[Zoologist [Andrew Jackson](#).] The concept of time is, to begin with, philosophical, and tricky. I'm interested not so much in the passage of time, per se, as in the speed at which animals perceive the instantaneous world — how events change in the world around you, how you're able to perceive and react to those changes.

One way to measure this, in a laboratory setting, is to sit a human down and flash a lightbulb in front of them; you speed up the flashing lightbulb until they don't see it flashing anymore, until it becomes one constant light source. And you can effectively pose the same experiment with animals.

There's an enormous range in this ability in the animal kingdom.

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What this means is you can have two animals sitting beside one another, one seeing all these little details, hyper-sensitive to all these minute little changes, the world flying around them, and meanwhile the other is basically living in a completely different temporal niche, living in a slow-paced, kind of lazy world, completely oblivious to all of it.

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