



Linh Dao & Pavla Hanáčková

IS WHAT THEY TELL US TRUE? MYTHS AND STEREOTYPES ABOUT ANIMALS



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**MYTHS AND  
STEREOTYPES**  
ABOUT ANIMALS

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# OSTRICH

## FEATHERED COWARD

A coward, shrinking violet, or simply someone who wants to avoid problems by taking the easiest route available? Or is it just stupid enough to stick its head in the sand for no reason at all? Can ostriches even be deemed birds if they can't fly? Let's collectively find out if there's at least a kernel of truth in these claims.

## IF YOU HAVE FEATHERS, YOU CAN FLY

Even though ostrich is a winged bird, it can't fly. Nonetheless, its wings aren't just for show! Ostriches can run like wind and while they do so, the wings help them balance their body and work pretty much like a helm. Similarly, peacocks flaunt their feathers when courting a mate, or when trying to drive away an unwanted visitor. ▼



## WHAT DO OSTRICHES HAVE IN COMMON WITH CAMELS?

Because ostriches originated in Africa where they inhabit savannahs and desert areas, they're well-adapted to living in the local climate. They even used to be called "camel birds", not only due to a certain similarity between the two of them, but mainly because they are able to withstand high temperatures and survive several days without water, just like camels. ▲

## OSTRICHES STICK THEIR HEAD IN THE SAND

Do ostriches stick their head in the sand when they feel threatened? That's just a myth – if they were doing this, they'd be unable to breathe. How is it, then, that this superstition came to be? When an ostrich is in danger, it crouches down and places its long neck on the ground. This is sort of a camouflage – it works so well that from the distance it looks like the ostrich has its head stuck under the ground. ►



## OSTRICHES ARE STUPID

Ostriches have a small brain, approximately walnut-sized. This means that an ostrich's brain is smaller than its eye! OK, so these birds aren't exactly geniuses, but they're not completely stupid either. Otherwise they'd be unable to protect themselves and their young from predators. ◀



## OSTRICHES ARE COWARDLY

Calling an ostrich a coward might not pay off. In fact, everybody should be wary of them! The truth is that ostriches have really strong long legs they can use to give anybody quite a kick. Even lions can end up on the receiving end of a proper butt-kicking! ◀



## TAKE A LOOK & THERE'S YOUR ANSWER

Owing to the head-in-the-sand superstition, a lot of people believe that ostriches don't look around much. Quite on the contrary, in fact – being the largest bird species of all, ostriches have a pretty good view of their surroundings, especially due to their long neck and great height. They also have excellent eyesight and largest eyes out of all terrestrial animals. ▲

# WOLF

## DANGEROUS LONER

Dangerous creatures that have no place in nature. Bloodthirsty beasts that dare attack farm animals, and even people. Not particularly intelligent, solitary animals, spookily howling at the moon. Well, poor wolves will certainly not brag about this. Have a quick look at whether people are right to assign all these qualities to them.



## THERE'S A LOT OF WOLVES IN THE WORLD

You can find wolves at many places around the planet, true, but there's definitely no abundance of them. Quite on the contrary, this species is considered endangered worldwide. Humans don't really help much as they kill wolves off in many countries. Fortunately, it seems like the total numbers are starting to rise again and wolves are beginning to return even to those areas where there's long been no sign of them. ◀

## BLOODTHIRSTY CREATURE

Are you afraid that you might be attacked by a wolf when you're in the wild? That's extremely unlikely. Wolves are so shy that even scientists find it difficult to find opportunities to observe them in their natural environment. So rest assured; they're certainly not waiting behind the nearest tree to get you. ▼

## BIG BAD WOLF

Little Red Riding Hood. Three little piggies. Werewolves. What do they have in common? The alleged bad guy, the big bad wolf. However, such a portrayal is pretty skewed and affected by long-standing prejudice. A wolf is a very shy creature and would definitely never strike up a chat with a human. Stories of this kind take the intelligence and ingrained talent for hunting in packs that wolves naturally exhibit and twist them into an attempt to trick their prey and hunt it down. ▼



Wolf - dog's ancestor



I HAVE A WOLF GENOME!

## AGE-OLD ENEMIES

Did you know that wolves are the ancestors of dogs? The qualities which dogs have and people appreciate are derived from the qualities of wolves. Both wolves and dogs have sharp senses, are quick to learn, can establish relationships with their peers and cooperate with them. Long ago, wolves even behaved in a friendly manner if they encountered a person for the first time. The enmity probably began only after wolves started to attack shepherds' herds in the time of need. ▲

## PREDATORS THROUGH & THROUGH

Yeah, we're in agreement on that one – wolves truly are outstanding beasts of prey. They're adapted in every way possible to live under harshest conditions. All they need to survive is a food source and a place to hide their new-born young. However, wolves never purposefully attack human residences unless they're in great need. ◀



AWOOOOO!  
LET'S GO TO  
BED!

A timid wolf



## WOLF THE LONER

Are wolves truly loners? Well, they can be, but their family and pack is always come first. Wolves have an elaborate system to communicate with one another – they lick each other, rub shoulders, or howl. Apart from that, they're very sensitive and take care not only of their families, but also wounded fellows. ◀



GET TO KNOW US!

# IS WHAT THEY TELL US TRUE? MYTHS AND STEREOTYPES ABOUT ANIMALS

FOR AGE 6+



Written by Pavla Hanáčková  
Illustrated by Linh Dao



Fox = cunning thief. Bear = menace of the forest. Ostrich = coward with his head in the sand. We're sure you know other such comparisons – and we intend to show you that there may not truth in them ... That cute little bat has no intention of feeding on human blood. A black cat, crossing the road, won't bring you any bad luck. And who's to say that a "dirty" rat can't be your best friend? Come with us on a trip through the natural world, and learn that not everything is as black and white as it may appear at first! Together, we'll succeed in overturning many long-established false notions.



Funny book full of beautiful illustrations.



Animal myths debunked!