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# Are People as Smart as Animals?

ARE some animals as smart as people? Or rephrased, are people as smart as some animals seem to be?

Speculation has been revived on this perennial topic by a Readers Digest version (Feb. 1979) of National Geographic's (Sept. 1978) article "The Joy of Pigs," and by a recent Wall Street Journal feature on a place at Hot Springs, Ark., where parrots roller skate and raccoons play basketball.

In "The Joy of Pigs," it is stated that pigs can be taught to accomplish almost any feat a dog can learn, in a shorter time. It challenges common beliefs, such as that "eating like a pig" means bolting one's food. It says pigs chew food well and enjoy it, even to rejecting vegetables they don't like, just as humans may do.

In another laudatory dissertation on live pigs published last year, "The Hog Book," by William Hedgepeth, the hog is said to be smarter than horses, cows, sheep or chickens. In fact, the hog is claimed

to be smarter than any other animals, except primates.

Hedgepeth insists that pigs don't say "Oink!", as cartoonists and writers frequently quote them. Instead, the sound may be "Gronk!" He also reports that hogs say "Rawrk!" when startled, "Wheeeeeiiii!" when intruded upon, "Ronk!" when they want another pig to move over, and "Baawwrp!" when they're happy.

Animal documentaries on TV have frequently suggested that porpoises and whales use language to communicate, but they haven't succeeded in making people understand it yet. As proof, National Geographic recently sent subscribers a recording of whales singing. It sounds about as musical as some modern bands, but not very.

Animal Behavior Enterprises Inc. at Hot Springs has trained more than 8,000 animals of 200 species since 1947 to do tricks that people will pay money to see. This includes teaching chickens to do card tricks, ducks to play pianos, and pigeons to find people.

Who is training whom? Has mankind trained animals and birds to do tricks by providing food, or have the captive species trained people to bring them food so they won't have to go hunting for it?

After all, Americans spend six times as much each year to buy commercially prepared pet food as they spend on baby food. And courts have ruled that tiny snail darters have more right to their habitat than people do to dam the stream for electricity and fun.

Insects might not be as creative as other species of life, but they are organized and do their individual jobs. Insects outnumber people by thousands (or millions) to one, and if the various species ever get together they could take over the world.

Providing the hogs don't think of it first. Remember, it was a hog in Orwell's "Animal Farm" that observed "In a state of equality, some are more equal than others!"