

ANIMAL NEWS

FELINE LONELY

A NEW study has shown that cats, like dogs, can feel sad when we leave them at home alone.

Several studies have been carried out on dogs, confirming that some have problems if they are separated from their owners. It has always been assumed that cats were not bothered about being on their own, so very little research has been done to see whether

it is true.

Although the study carried out in Brazil was small, it showed that 13.5% of cats behaved in a way that suggested they were distressed, such as crying, scratching, being aggressive or weeing in the house.



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The scientists who set up the research say the results show more work is needed so we have a better understanding of how cats behave.

THE SMELL OF LOVE

SCIENTISTS have discovered that male ring-tailed lemurs like to smell nice to attract females.

A study by Kazushige Touhara, professor and biochemist at the University of Tokyo, found that the males release a fruity-smelling perfume from glands on their wrists when they want to impress a female. They rub their tails against the gland, before waving their tail around so that females can

smell their “perfume”. The behaviour is known as “stink flirting”.

Ring-tailed lemurs are known for using different smells to communicate with each other. They use scent for marking their territory and to show where each animal ranks in their social group. Scientists now plan to further investigate



Chigusa Tanaka, Japan Monkey Centre

the smells that the lemurs use to attract females, and how successful it makes them when it comes to securing a mate. The full report is published in the nature journal *Current Biology*.

FLAMINGO FRIENDS

FLAMINGOS are friendly and loyal birds, research has shown. Exeter University studied four flamingo flocks for four years. They found that, despite being in giant flocks of up to two million, flamingos form small friendship groups, teaming up to help with feeding and nesting.



Getty

SIPHONO-WHAT?!

THIS bit of string floating in water could actually be the longest animal ever recorded! It’s called a siphonophore, a long stringy, stinky creature related to jellyfish. Biologists from the Western Australian Museum spotted it and, although not officially measured, it is believed to be around 50m long, which would make it three times as long as a humpback whale!



wamuseum/facebook

JUST LION AROUND

LIONS in the Kruger National Park in South Africa are taking over tourist areas. A pride that is not usually seen by tourists has moved out of their normal range in the empty park. The lack of visitors due to border and flight restrictions has given the animals the chance to explore further afield and even have a lie down on the warm, traffic-free roads.



ANCIENT AMPHIBIANS

SCIENTISTS from the Swedish Museum of Natural History have uncovered the oldest known remains of modern amphibians in Antarctica. The 40-million-year-old fossils are the remains of helmeted frogs, a species still found in South American rainforests. They say the discovery is further proof that Antarctica was once home to a massive rainforest, similar to the ones in South America today.



Pollyanna von Knorring, Swedish Museum of Natural History

ANIMAL NEWS



1. Match the animal to the news story it features in and to the place where the news story originated.

ANIMAL	HEADLINE	LOCATION
Lion		
Pet cats		
	The smell of love	
Helmeted frogs		
		Exeter, UK
	Siphono-what?!	Australia

2. Quick statistics quiz. Which creature...

2a. is around 50m long?

2b. lives in groups of up to two million?

2c. lived 40 million years ago?

3. Look at the story 'Siphono-what?!'

3a. What three **adjectives** does the journalist use to describe the siphonophore?

3b. How does the journalist use two other creatures to help the reader picture the unusual siphonophore?

ANIMAL	REASON FOR COMPARISON

4. Look at the story 'Flamingo friends'.

Why do the flamingos form friendship groups?

5. Look at the story 'Ancient amphibians'.

What do scientists think the Antarctic was like 40 million years ago, when the helmeted frog would have been alive?

6. Look at the story 'Feline lonely'.

When scientists were studying the cats, what behaviour did they observe that suggests some cats left on their own get distressed and lonely?

7. Look at the story 'The smell of love'.

7a. Explain "stink flirting".

7b. How else do ring-tailed lemurs use scent?

8. Look at the story 'Just lion around'.

Why are the lions venturing out of their normal range in the park?

9. Identify the **headline techniques** used by the journalist.

Flamingo friends:

Ancient amphibians:

Feline lonely:

Just lion around:

10. Which of these six news stories would you like to investigate further?

Headline: _____

What questions would you like to ask to find out more about this story?

Q1

Q2

Q3

ANIMAL NEWS



■ **1.** Match the animal to the news story it features in and to the place where the news story originated.

ANIMAL	HEADLINE	LOCATION
Lion		
Pet cats		
	The smell of love	
Helmeted frogs		
		Exeter, UK
	Siphono-what?!	Australia

■ **2.** Quick statistics quiz. Which creature...

2a. is around 50m long?

2b. lives in groups of up to two million?

2c. lived 40 million years ago?

■ **3.** Look at the story 'Siphono-what?!'

3a. What three **adjectives** does the journalist use to describe the siphonophore?

1. 2. 3.

3b. How does the journalist use two other creatures to help the reader picture the unusual siphonophore?

ANIMAL	REASON FOR COMPARISON

■ **4.** Look at the story 'Flamingo friends'.

Why do the flamingos form friendship groups?

.....

■ **5.** Look at the story 'Ancient amphibians'.

What do scientists think the Antarctic was like 40 million years ago, when the helmeted frog would have been alive?

.....

■ **6. Look at the story 'Feline lonely'.**

When scientists were studying the cats, what behaviour did they observe that suggests some cats left on their own get distressed and lonely?

- 1. 2.
- 3. 4.

■ **7. Look at the story 'The smell of love'.**

7a. Explain "stink flirting".

.....
.....
.....

7b. How else do ring-tailed lemurs use scent?

.....
.....
.....

■ **8. Look at the story 'Just lion around'.**

Why are the lions venturing out of their normal range in the park?

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Flamingo friends:

Ancient amphibians:

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Just lion around:

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TEACHER ANSWERS

AIM OF THE NEWS COMPREHENSIONS: News reports are unique non-fiction texts. Being real, they naturally engage students, and with the range of topics that are covered, help to develop pupils’ knowledge and understanding of the wider world outside the classroom. The reports are ideal for short, focused comprehension or discussion activities. Along with the opportunity to find fascinating facts and appreciate the opinions of those involved, there is plenty to be inferred and deduced to understand in more depth what is being reported. Like authors, journalists play with language, so news ‘stories’ are rich nuggets of text to investigate and provide the opportunity for literacy programmes.

TEACHER ANSWER GUIDE: The teacher answers are intended to provide a quick reference guide. Suggestions are given for the 'Expected response' or starting point that pupils could give. The 'Development' then gives more in-depth ideas that students can work towards as they develop their reading comprehension skills.

For a list of the reading skills used, please email schools@firstnews.co.uk.

1) Match the animal to the news story it features in and to the place where the news story originated.

READING SKILL – Find and explain information

(NC 2a)

Expected response

ANIMAL	HEADLINE	LOCATION
Lion	Just lion around	South Africa
Pet cats	Feline lonely	Brazil
Lemurs	The smell of love	Japan
Helmeted frogs	Ancient amphibians	Antarctica
Flamingos	Flamingo friends	Exeter, UK
Siphonophore	Siphono-what?!	Australia

2) Quick statistics quiz. Which creature...

READING SKILL – Find and explain information

(NC 2a)

Expected response

2a. is around 50m long? – siphonophore

2b. lives in groups of up to two million? – flamingos

2c. lived 40 million years ago? – helmeted frogs

3) Look at the story ‘Siphono-what?!’

3a. What three adjectives does the journalist use to describe the siphonophore?

READING SKILL – Understand vocabulary in context

(NC 2a)

Expected response

- long
- stringy
- stingy

3b. How does the journalist use two other creatures to help the reader picture the unusual siphonophore?

READING SKILL – Recognising effect of language choices

(NC 2f & 3)

Expected response

ANIMAL	REASON FOR COMPARISON
Jellyfish	The siphonophore is related to jellyfish
Humpback whale	It would be three times as long as this large sea mammal

4) Look at the story 'Flamingo friends'.

Why do the flamingos form friendship groups?

READING SKILL – Find and explain information
(NC 2a)

Expected response

- To help with feeding and nesting.

Development

- Even though the birds can live in flocks of millions, within this the birds form friendship groups to help each other out with tasks such as finding food and nesting.

5) Look at the story 'Ancient amphibians'.

What do scientists think the Antarctic was like 40 million years ago, when the helmeted frog would have been alive?

(NC 2a)

Expected response

- A rainforest.

Development

- Similar to South American rainforests today.

6) Look at the story 'Feline lonely'.

When scientists were studying the cats, what behaviour did they observe that suggests some cats left on their own get distressed and lonely?

READING SKILL – Find and explain information
(NC 2a)

Expected response

- crying
- scratching
- being aggressive
- weeing in the house

7) Look at the story 'The smell of love'.

7a. Explain "stink flirting".

READING SKILL – Summarise information from more than one paragraph
(NC 2e)

Expected response

- Males use a fruity-smelling perfume to impress females.

Development

- Males rub a fruity-smelling perfume, produced on their wrist, and rub it on to their tails. They then wave their tails around so females can smell their 'perfume'.

7b. How else do ring-tailed lemurs use scent?

READING SKILL – Infer information and justify with evidence
(NC 2c & 8)

Expected response

- To communicate with each other.

Development

- Marking their territory and to show where each animal is in their social group.

8) Look at the story 'Just lion around'.

Why are the lions venturing out of their normal range in the park?

READING SKILL – Infer information and justify with evidence
(NC 2c & 8)

Expected response

- There are no tourists in the park so the lions don't need to keep away from humans.

Development

- Due to travel restrictions caused by the coronavirus, there are no tourists at Kruger National Park. The lions are now exploring outside their normal area.

9) Identify the **headline techniques** used by the journalist.

READING SKILL – Recognising effect of language choices

(NC 2f & 3)

Expected response

Flamingo friends:

alliteration – the words all begin with the same letter.

Ancient amphibians:

alliteration – the words all begin with the same letter.

Feline lonely:

pun – play on words. ‘Feeling lonely’ has been changed to ‘Feline lonely’ because the story is about lonely cats

Just lion around.

pun – play on words. ‘Just lying around’ has been changed to ‘Just lion around’ because the story is about lions spotted sleeping on roads.

10) Which of these six news stories would you like to investigate further?

Headline: _____

What questions would you like to ask to find out more about this story?

READING SKILLS – Develop personal responses to news stories

– Ask questions to help understanding

Pupils will have personal responses to this question.