

Beliefs about Animal Emotions Scale*

*Kisley, M. (2025) Measuring human beliefs about nonhuman animal emotions. *Anthrozoös*, 1-22. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08927936.2025.2568292>

The scale consists of three subscales (factors) that are distributed across 23 items. Items are listed below in non-randomized order. You will need to randomize the order of presentation on your testing platform. I also recommend including the two attention check items in order to help ensure that participants are paying attention to the task, in which case you will present 25 items in total. I typically exclude any participant that does not answer *both* attention check items correctly. Attention check items should also be distributed randomly.

If questions arise, feel free to reach out to me. Either way, I would appreciate hearing about how you plan to use the scale, and I invite collaboration. Sincerely, Michael Kisley
<https://psychology.uccs.edu/mike-kisley>

Instructions *(be sure to include the underlining)*

We are interested in your beliefs about the emotional lives of animals. For animals, you may think of pets, farm animals, wildlife, and other animals. For emotions, you may think of feelings like sadness, happiness, fear, and other feelings. There are no right or wrong answers. We are interested in your personal viewpoint.

Response Options *(be sure to provide options to participants in this order)*

Strongly disagree, Disagree, Somewhat disagree, Neither agree nor disagree, Somewhat agree, Agree, Strongly agree

Scoring *(note that stronger disagreement corresponds to stronger endorsement of animal emotion)*

Strongly disagree – 7

Disagree – 6

Somewhat disagree – 5

Neither agree nor disagree – 4

Somewhat agree – 3

Agree – 2

Strongly agree – 1

Subscale Scores

1. Animal Emotions Complexity and Authenticity: average items 1-11

2. Animal Emotions Independence from Human Similarity: average items 12-16

3. Moral Relevance of Animal Emotions: average items 17-23*

**includes 2 reversed score items (i.e., Strongly disagree = 1, Disagree = 2, etc.)*

Factor 1: Animal Emotions Complexity and Authenticity

1. An animal's emotions are basically just simple reactions to threats or rewards
2. Animal emotional displays are just behaviors and do not correspond to true emotional states
3. It is unlikely that animals experience emotions beyond very basic, instinctive reactions
4. Animals are not capable of complex emotions like empathy
5. Animal emotions are more like automatic reflexes than true feelings
6. The emotional lives of animals are very simple
7. Animal emotions are too superficial to be considered heartfelt
8. An animal's emotional display is just a behavioral program lacking true inner feeling
9. All animals, from insects to mammals, are limited to very simple instinctual reactions
10. The emotional world of most animals is too limited to be considered "complex"
11. Animal emotions are very basic

Factor 2: Animal Emotions Independence from Human Similarity

12. Because monkeys share some human-like traits, they experience a wider range of emotions compared to other animals
13. Because chimpanzees show facial expressions similar to humans, they likely have more complex emotions than other animals
14. Chimpanzees have richer emotional lives than birds
15. A monkey feels a richer range of emotions than a lizard
16. The more similar an animal is to humans, the more rich its emotional life

Factor 3: Moral Relevance of Animal Emotions

17. We should prioritize human emotions over animal emotions
18. Animal emotions are less important than human emotions
19. Animals' emotional states matter less than human emotions
20. We owe less moral consideration to animal emotions than we do to human emotions
21. The emotional experiences of animals deserve as much moral consideration as those of humans (*REVERSE SCORE*)
22. Human emotions matter more than any emotions experienced by animals
23. The emotional distress of a cat should be treated with the same seriousness as human emotional distress (*REVERSE SCORE*)

Attention check items

- AC1. The emotional lives of animals, choose Agree
- AC2. Even if an animal appears very different from us, choose Neither agree nor disagree