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Beautiful Minds: The Parallel Lives of Great Apes and Dolphins

Maddalena Bearzi, Craig B. Stanford

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Apes and dolphins: primates and cetaceans. Could any creatures appear to be more different? Yet both are large-brained intelligent mammals with complex communication and social interaction. In the first book to study apes and dolphins side by side, Maddalena Bearzi and Craig B. Stanford, a dolphin biologist and a primatologist who have spent their careers studying these animals in the wild, combine their insights with compelling results. *Beautiful Minds* explains how and why apes and dolphins are so distantly related yet so cognitively alike and what this teaches us about another large-brained mammal: Homo sapiens.

Noting that apes and dolphins have had no common ancestor in nearly 100 million years, Bearzi and Stanford describe the parallel evolution that gave rise to their intelligence. And they closely observe that intelligence in action, in the territorial grassland and rainforest communities of chimpanzees and other apes, and in groups of dolphins moving freely through open coastal waters. The authors detail their subjects' ability to develop family bonds, form alliances, and care for their young. They offer an understanding of their culture, politics, social structure, personality, and capacity for emotion. The resulting dual portrait—with striking overlaps in behavior—is key to understanding the nature of "beautiful minds."

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