

Professor Marian Stamp Dawkins received ISAE Honorary Fellowship in 2018

Biography of Professor Marian Stamp Dawkins, written by Dr. Birte Nielsen



Marian Stamp Dawkins has been one of the leading lights in promoting the scientific study of animal behaviour and welfare. Coming from a fundamental ethological background (she did her PhD on the mechanisms of hunting in birds), she has devoted a large part of her working life to issues relating to the behaviour and welfare of animals managed by humans.

In one of her most famous studies, she applied consumer demand theory to the measurement of ethological needs (Dawkins, 1983); being one of the first to use this method to “ask the animals”. She also measured the space needed in three dimensions by laying hens to perform their normal behaviour, and concluded that the battery cage in use at the time did not allow the birds to perform most of their behavioural repertoire (Dawkins and Hardie, 1989).

Throughout her career, she has taught, tutored, and inspired young researchers to catch the bug that is establishing knowledge about animal behaviour. That she mostly studied non-exotic species, such as the humble chicken, just added to her status. Indeed, in 2004 she managed to get an article on chicken welfare published in *Nature*!

In her classic book from 1980, she says: “*I wrote this book because I believe that the welfare of animals is a very important subject but one about which there is ... confusion and muddled thinking*”. She is a sought-after lecturer, with a capacity to convey complex messages in easy-to-understand ways, and she is still publishing – not least in the popular press (Dawkins, 2012, 2013). More recently she has rekindled her interest in the subject of animal consciousness, having published books on the subject both in 1993 and 2012.

Marian Stamp Dawkins has been awarded the RSPCA/British Society for Animal Protection prize in 1991, the Association for the Study of Animal Behaviour's Niko Tinbergen Medal in 2009, and the World Poultry Science Association Robert Fraser Gordon Medal in 2011. In 2014, she was given a CBE for services to animal welfare, and the same year elected a Fellow of the Royal Society for her work on animal welfare.

Having already been given a lot of prizes and honours does not always mean that more are deserved, but in this particular case, awarding Marian Stamp Dawkins the title of Honorary Fellow of the International Society for Applied Ethology was long overdue.

References

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