

# SO, YOU WANT TO TALK TO A TIGER?



Tigers communicate with each other in a variety of ways, including with sounds, scents and touches. But you can learn most of what you need to know by watching a tiger's tail.

Tigers are the largest cats on Earth, and as such, their tails can stretch out one to two metres in length. If a tiger's tail is held high and softly swishing, the animal is interested in being social. Perhaps it's exploring a new area or making contact with another tiger for mating purposes. If the tail is held low and loose, then the tiger is relaxed and calm. But if that tail starts to **THRASH** or **TWITCH** from left to right – then watch out! This means the tiger is scared, nervous or displaying aggression.



## AN OPEN MOUTH, A CHEST BEAT, A PUFFED-UP STANCE: ASSERTING YOURSELF THROUGH BODY LANGUAGE

→ Great white sharks tell each other to back off by opening their mouths at one another, which scientists call **GAPING**. They often gape at the time of feeding, driven by frenzy, and are more likely to physically attack than when defending their territory.



→ The silverback gorilla's most famous gesture is the **CHEST BEAT**, standing on two legs and hitting its chest alternately with open hands. It starts off hooting, sometimes biting off a leaf, then the hoots speed up until they slur together. Then, it stands up and does a quick chest beat, finishing off the display by hitting the ground.



→ Male giraffes make their dominance known by **STANDING AS TALL AS POSSIBLE**, with stiff, straight necks and locked legs. When the giraffes are in submission behaviour, the head and ears are held down.



### A TORTOISE STAND-OFF

Galápagos tortoises are huge, hulking reptiles with a slow, plodding way of life, but will engage in dominance poses when it's time to mate, or even to decide who gets the right-of-way on a narrow path. When two males go up against one another, each will try to stick its neck and head way up into the air. Then, they both slowly let their heads lower, before going back up again and again. And it can go on like this – two tortoises in the middle of the road, stuck in a slow-motion staring contest – until one tortoise is able to crane its neck higher than the other. **SLOW AND STEADY MAY WIN THE RACE, BUT THE HEAD HELD HIGHER WINS THE ROAD.**



### THE TICKLE-ME-LORIS IS ADORABLE AND DEADLY

Lorises are one of the cutest animals on Earth. These forest primates are small enough to fit in your pocket and have large puppy dog eyes. In recent years, lorises have been taken out of the wild and sold as pets. Some have even found their way onto the internet. Videos show the animal lifting its arms above its head and leaning backwards as its owner rubs and scratches its belly. **IT LOOKS LIKE THE LORIS IS ENJOYING ITSELF, BUT LOOKS CAN BE DECEIVING...** especially if you don't speak loris. Scientists say that a loris with its arms held over its head is showing that it feels threatened and will defend itself if necessary.

Lorises have a pair of secret weapons: **SPECIALIZED GLANDS**. These glands are on their inner elbows and produce a clear, smelly liquid that can cause an allergic reaction in humans. Interestingly, because the oil is on the loris's elbows, it has to first lick it to mix it with saliva, then bite its victim for the toxins to release. This explains why a scared loris would put its arms up – **IT'S GETTING ITS VENOM GLANDS CLOSE TO ITS MOUTH IN CASE IT NEEDS TO FIGHT.**

