



CONSCIOUS BEINGS: RETHINKING ANIMALITY AND AWARENESS

INVITATION

We invite you to take part to the 8th edition of the Anthrozoology Symposium, *Conscious Beings: Rethinking Animality and Awareness*.

Throughout history, the relationships between humans and other animals have been a constant source of meaning, generating concepts, ideas, and images that helped us make sense of our identity and purpose. There have been many complex and profoundly different ways humans related to other beings and viewed and understood animals. But, until recently, we favored only one way of seeing the world, neglecting and dismissing all others. Seeing ourselves as the peak of evolution, we considered human exceptionalism our right to (ab)use and exploit the rest of beings and all nature to serve our ends.

Faced with the tremendous consequences of such a way of believing and behaving, we gradually move away from it, discovering a rich landscape of alternative ideas. Exploring the various and complex ways we perceived and defined animality and consciousness, we also discovered how these notions and concepts conditioned the shape of our own humanity. Today, both modern science and ancient wisdom lead us to transcend human privilege, see and investigate other animals' consciousness, agency, and way of being in the world in new and innovative ways.

Only when we analyze awareness, sentience, agency, or other related ideas in a larger context do we become knowledgeable of these concepts' extraordinary richness and great fluidity. We need the courage and freedom to ask new questions and find new ways of answering them. We need the audacity to go beyond classical meanings, known notions, and limited vocabulary. Seeking alternative approaches such as kindness, empathy, sympathetic imagination, shared embodiment, corporeal compassion, or animism as ways to connect and understand other living beings and life forms may lead us to amazing discoveries. Finding new modalities to think and understand animals is widening our understanding of the world, and it generates new ways of thinking about ourselves.

In this year's edition of the Symposium, we invite you to explore the various and fluid ways that consciousness, awareness, sentience, agency, animality, and other related concepts and ideas have been defined and understood over time: how these definitions, images, and notions conditioned our understanding of animals — humans among them — and nature?

Within the Anthrozoology Symposium, we would like to invite you to take part in a debate forum focused on the following topics concerning the human-animal interactions:

- Ideas, concepts, and beliefs about animals;
- Theories about the differences and distance between humans and animals;
- Animal rights and human responsibilities;
- Species extinction and human responsibility;
- Animals in literature, mythology, art and folklore;
- Animal psychology;
- Cognitive ethology;
- Mental models and economic value in human-animal interactions from a historic perspective;
- Animal protection movement and the laws that support it;

The Anthrozoology Symposium will take place online between the 6th and 8th of November 2025.

Registration is open until **May 30th**. The registration can be done by completing the form that may be found on our website <https://anthrozoology.acadiasi.org/> or by sending an e-mail to irina.anthrozoology@gmail.com.

**On behalf of the organizing committee,
Dr. Irina Frasin**



I ORGANIZERS

- Institute of Economic and Social Research Gheorghe Zane (Romanian Academy – Iași Branch)
- Faculty of Animal Sciences and Biotechnology (University of Agricultural Sciences and Veterinary Medicine of Cluj-Napoca)
- Faculty of Veterinary Medicine (Iași University of Life Sciences Ion Ionescu de la Brad)
- AEDC Anthrozoology Education Dogs Canines
- TIES Interspecies Hub
- Moldavia's History Museum ("Moldova" National Museum Complex)