参考译文

These Small Mammals Snort to a Different Tune

一些小型哺乳动物哼唱着不同的音调

They grow to about 20 inches long and weigh less than 10 pounds. So you might not think they’d be the closest living relatives to elephants. Meet the rock hyrax, sometimes called the rock rabbit or the dassie, common in rocky areas of Africa and the Middle East. They live in groups of up to 80 individuals.

它们能长到大约20英寸长，体重不到10磅。你可能不会认为它们是大象的近亲。来看看岩狸吧，有时也被称为岩兔或蹄兔，常见于非洲和中东的多岩石地区。它们成群生活，最多可达80只。

“The hyraxes are a mammal that has a rare phenomenon, which is singing. We know a lot of birds sing, but we don’t have many mammals that actually perform a song, a complex song with different syllables coming in bouts. And these bouts are complex. And along the song, they get more and more complex, they get longer, they include more sounds.”

蹄兔是一种罕见的哺乳动物，它会唱歌。我们知道很多鸟类会唱歌，但是很多哺乳动物不会唱歌、发出不同音节的歌声。这些哺乳动物的叫声是复杂的。随着这首歌，变得越来越复杂，越来越长，包含了更多的声音。

Biomusicologist Yishai Weissman from Bar-Ilan University and Hebrew University in Israel.

以色列巴伊兰大学和希伯来大学的生物学者Yishai Weissman说道。

“We’ve tried to understand the meaning of all this—why a hyrax would waste time and energy and expose himself to predators by singing such a loud song.”

“我们试图理解这一切的意义——为什么蹄兔会浪费时间和精力，把自己暴露在捕食者面前，而发出如此响亮的叫声。”

Weissman and his team recorded the songs of male hyraxes during mating season, and they analyzed their structure.

魏斯曼和团队记录了雄性蹄兔在交配季节的鸣叫声，并分析了鸣叫声的结构。

“We found that the song is an advertisement for male quality. And in the song, the rarest thing, most interesting element, is the snort. It sounds like this—just like a snort. The whole song seems to be an introduction for these snorts.”

“我们发现这首歌是男性广告。而在这首歌中，最罕见、最有趣的元素，就是哼哼声。听起来像这样——就像一声哼哼。整首歌似乎就是对这些哼哼声的介绍。”

In the earliest parts of the song, snorts are relatively rare. But as the song continues, they become more common, resulting in a snort crescendo. The increase in snorts reflects the animals’ inner emotional state: as they become more excited or more aggressive, their songs become, well, snortier. And those snorts, according to Weissman’s findings, also become louder and harsher. The snorty study is in the journal Animal Behaviour.

在这首歌的早期，哼声相对较少。但随着歌曲的继续，它们变得越来越常见，导致鼻音渐强。呼噜声的增加反映了它们内心的情绪状态:当蹄兔变得更兴奋或更具攻击性时，这些哼哼声就会增加。根据韦斯曼的发现，这些呼噜声也会变得更响亮、更刺耳。这项研究发表在《动物行为》杂志上。

Weissman thinks that the snort crescendo, together with the increasing harshness, make the songs impossible to ignore and grabs the attention of other hyraxes—which makes sense. Harshness is a salient feature in the sounds of crying newborns, barking dogs and frightened piglets. Acoustic harshness is routinely used in movie soundtracks to increase tension—and attention.

韦斯曼认为，哼声的渐强，加上刺耳的声音，使得这些歌曲无法被忽视，并吸引了其他蹄兔的注意——这是有道理的。在新生儿的啼哭声、狗的吠叫声和受惊的小猪声中，刺耳是一个显著的特征。在电影原声带中，刺耳的声音通常用来增加紧张感和注意力。

“It might be that these snorts are what’s keeping the listeners listening. A lot of times, the hyrax is just busy eating leaves, and they don’t even turn their heads to someone that’s singing. The snorts might be what serves as an attention grabber. And getting harsher and harsher might keep the listeners from droning off.”

可能是这些呼噜声让听众一直在听。很多时候蹄兔只是忙着吃树叶，它们甚至不会把头转向唱歌的人。哼声可能是为了吸引注意力。越来越刺耳可能会让听众听不下去。”

For Weissman, this work isn’t only about understanding the nuances of hyrax communication. He believes that understanding why hyraxes sing, and how they construct their songs, could reveal something about the evolutionary origins of human speech and human music—which is no snorting matter.

对韦斯曼来说，这项工作不仅仅是理解蹄兔交流的细微差别。他认为，了解蹄兔为什么唱歌以及它们是如何唱歌的，可以揭示人类语言和音乐的进化起源，而这与吸鼻子无关。

听力原文

These Small Mammals Snort to a Different Tune

They grow to about 20 inches long and weigh less than 10 pounds. So you might not think they’d be the closest living relatives to elephants. Meet the rock hyrax, sometimes called the rock rabbit or the dassie, common in rocky areas of Africa and the Middle East. They live in groups of up to 80 individuals.

“The hyraxes are a mammal that has a rare phenomenon, which is singing. We know a lot of birds sing, but we don’t have many mammals that actually perform a song, a complex song with different syllables coming in bouts. And these bouts are complex. And along the song, they get more and more complex, they get longer, they include more sounds.”

Biomusicologist Yishai Weissman from Bar-Ilan University and Hebrew University in Israel.

“We’ve tried to understand the meaning of all this—why a hyrax would waste time and energy and expose himself to predators by singing such a loud song.”

Weissman and his team recorded the songs of male hyraxes during mating season, and they analyzed their structure.

“We found that the song is an advertisement for male quality. And in the song, the rarest thing, most interesting element, is the snort. It sounds like this—just like a snort. The whole song seems to be an introduction for these snorts.”

In the earliest parts of the song, snorts are relatively rare. But as the song continues, they become more common, resulting in a snort crescendo. The increase in snorts reflects the animals’ inner emotional state: as they become more excited or more aggressive, their songs become, well, snortier. And those snorts, according to Weissman’s findings, also become louder and harsher. The snorty study is in the journal Animal Behaviour.

Weissman thinks that the snort crescendo, together with the increasing harshness, make the songs impossible to ignore and grabs the attention of other hyraxes—which makes sense. Harshness is a salient feature in the sounds of crying newborns, barking dogs and frightened piglets. Acoustic harshness is routinely used in movie soundtracks to increase tension—and attention.

“It might be that these snorts are what’s keeping the listeners listening. A lot of times, the hyrax is just busy eating leaves, and they don’t even turn their heads to someone that’s singing. The snorts might be what serves as an attention grabber. And getting harsher and harsher might keep the listeners from droning off.”

For Weissman, this work isn’t only about understanding the nuances of hyrax communication. He believes that understanding why hyraxes sing, and how they construct their songs, could reveal something about the evolutionary origins of human speech and human music—which is no snorting matter.