参考译文

For African Elephants, Pee Could Be a Potent Trail Marker

尿液作为大象行走的标记

Christopher Intagliata: We humans often navigate using road signs and GPS. Elephants, though?

克里斯托弗·因塔利亚塔:我们人类经常使用路标和GPS导航。大象呢?

Connie Allen, a behavioral ecologist at the University of Exeter in the U.K., says they navigate over long distances using their incredible memories. (An elephant never forgets, right?)

英国埃克塞特大学的行为生态学家康妮·艾伦说，它们利用难以置信的记忆力进行长距离导航。(大象永远不会忘记吗？)

Connie Allen: But it’s also been suggested here and there that maybe olfaction and sense of smell is critical to these long-distance movements.

康妮·艾伦:但也有人指出，也许嗅觉和气味对大象的远距离迁徙至关重要。

Intagliata: Allen and her colleagues investigated that idea by testing African elephants’ ability to tune in on a very specific smell: urine. You see, elephants pee a lot—some 12 to 15 gallons a day—and that urine can contain an array of chemical cues.

印塔利亚塔:艾伦和同事们通过测试非洲象对一种非常特殊的气味——尿液——的感知能力来进行研究。你看，大象尿的量很大——每天大约12到15加仑——这些尿液中可能含有一系列的化学信号。

But first, they needed some pee. So they headed to a spot along Botswana’s Boteti River and waited.

但首先，大象需要上厕所。因此，它们前往博茨瓦纳博泰提河沿岸的一个地方等待。

Allen: We’d wait for elephants to urinate and, within 20 minutes, go and collect these fresh urine samples.

艾伦:我们会等大象排尿，然后在20分钟内去收集这些新鲜的尿液样本。

Intagliata: Then they set up camera traps on seven elephant trails. After observing the elephants’ natural behavior on the paths, they noticed that a majority investigated scents along the trail—especially elephants traveling alone—an indication, the researchers say, that scents may serve as signposts along the trail.

印塔利亚塔:然后他们在7条大象的踪迹上设置了摄像头陷阱。在观察了大象在道路上的自然行为后，他们注意到，大多大象会注意道路上的气味——尤其是独自旅行的大象——研究人员说，这表明气味可以作为道路上的路标。

Next, they placed those urine samples along the trails. And they found that for at least two days, passing elephants trained their trunks on the samples—especially samples from mature adults—another indication that scent might be a potent navigational cue.

接下来，他们把这些尿液样本放在路边。结果发现，在至少两天的时间里，经过的大象用它们的鼻子对着这些样本——尤其是成年大象的样本——进行嗅，这是气味可能是一个有力的导航线索的另一个迹象。

Their findings appear in the journal Animal Behaviour.

他们的研究结果发表在《动物行为》杂志上。

Based on these results, they hope conservationists might be able to use elephant pee as a decoy.

基于这些结果，他们希望环保人士可以利用大象的尿液作为诱饵。

Allen: If we can trick elephants into thinking the path of other elephants is going this way, maybe we can redirect them away from it at the moment where they are coming into conflict with humans.

艾伦:如果我们能欺骗大象，让它们认为其他大象会走这条路，也许我们就能在它们与人类发生冲突的时候改变它们的方向。

Intagliata: They’ll just have to see what happens, once elephants get a whiff of that plan.

印塔利亚塔:他们只想知道一旦大象知道了这个计划，接下来会发生什么。

听力原文

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