



# The Neuroethology of Predation and Escape

*Keith T. Sillar, Laurence D. Picton, William J. Heitler*

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The forces of natural selection have been a primary driver in the evolution of adaptive animal behaviours. On the one hand animals must evade predation in order to survive and pass on their genes; on other hand, and for the same underlying reasons, animals must also be capable of successfully capturing prey. This situation has led to an evolutionary arms race in which predator and prey are locked in the battle to survive. A common strategy in each situation is to enhance the speed of response, resulting in the evolution of neural, muscular and biomechanical designs that produce supremely fast and eye-catching behavioral responses.

The aim of this book is to illuminate the design principles of escape and predatory behaviours using a series of case histories from different animal groups and to emphasize the convergent evolution of neural circuitry that optimizes the chances of survival. Using these case histories the authors describe sensory mechanisms that aid prey and predator detection, central neural circuit designs that increase speed of response and neuromuscular and biomechanical properties that aid the performance of escape and predatory movements.

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