

You're going to hear a radio program about how certain animals are able to sense approaching earthquakes.

Listening tasks one: listen to the radio program. Check the three main ideas that are discussed. All the ideas are mentioned.

Welcome back, last week, I received an interesting question via email from a listener, a pet owner in San Francisco. I was so intrigued by that email, in fact, that I had to call in our zoologist friend, Frank Scurlock, to help us answer the question from our listener. Frank, how are you? I'm doing well. It's good to see you. Same here! Well, our listener happens to be on the line phoning in from California, so let's take her call. Hello Carolyn, are you there? Yes, I'm here. Hi! Hi Carolyn! Why don't you tell us why you emailed me last week? Okay, I had a question about something a little weird. Some strange behavior I had noticed with my pets, my cats, and my dog. What's your question, and what did you observe? I've heard that some animals can sense that an earthquake is coming before it happens. Is there any truth to that? Ah, yes. Well, we believe there may well be truth to that, but before I explain, what did you observe? Well, we, my husband and I, have all noticed our pets act a certain way. It's kind of strange! All the animals, three cats, and the dog do the same thing at approximately the same time. They gather together, and won't stand up. They sort of crouch down or lie flat in the center of the room. They'll stay there for around two minutes. If my husband and I are in another room, they'll come into the room where we are. It's as though they want to stick together or something. I've definitely seen them do that just before an earthquake, but we've also known at other times when we didn't feel any tremors. Oddly enough, though, we would sometimes hear on the news that next day that there had been a mild quake or some tremors. We would think it's as if they knew the earthquake was coming. What you've described sounds very normal. Your animals can sense that a quake is on its way. In fact, scientists are beginning to pay more attention to this kind of behavior by animals, and in some places, China, for instance, they're counting on the unusual animal behavior to tip them off in advance that an earthquake is imminent. How do they know? Well, it's widely accepted that animals possess a finer sense of smell than we do. That's why some dogs are used in detective work to sniff out drugs or bombs or to find suspects. Many animals also have a heightened sense of hearing. Dogs, some birds, and elephants, for example, can pick up infrasound, something that's too low for us to hear. In fact, manufacturers have taken advantage of these different abilities to hear



sounds to invent high-frequency whistles to call dogs, but not to disturb humans, who can't hear sounds in that range. Some animals have amazing eyesight, for instance, cats, as you know, can see well in the dark much better than we can, and that's not all. Experts claim that there are some other senses that we don't understand yet, and it's mysterious senses like that which alert animals to trembling in the earth. This really isn't a new phenomenon. As far back as 400 years BC, there were records of animal premonitions of earthquakes, squawking birds, for instance, that seemed to predict a coming quake. This seems to be the animals' way of sounding an alarm to some change they've detected. I think animals are more attuned to very subtle differences in their environment. Perhaps they hear or feel very small vibrations in the earth as it shifts. Sounds and movement that we don't register. Well, Carolyn, thanks for the question, and thank you again to our guest Frank Scurlock.

Listening task two: read the questions and answer the ones that you can, then listen to the conversation again, and answer the rest of the questions. Compare your answers with the partner.

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Listen for the third time to make sure you understood everything.

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Listen to Lucia and Rick describing a dream they each had. What did each person dream about? What do they think the dreams mean?

I have this recurring dream. I'm back in high school, and in my dream, the school looks mostly the same as it did, but much bigger. The weird thing is that although I'm now 20 years old, I had to go back to high school and study with all these 15-year-olds. It's very embarrassing; No one seems to notice that I'm much older, and shouldn't be there in the first place, but still, it's very uncomfortable. I keep thinking, what am I doing here? Well, I think it must be a couple of weeks into school, and I've lost my class schedule. I start walking through the halls, trying to find the main office. I can't find it. No matter how far, how many hallways, I just can't find it. I know I'm late for class, and this really worries me. Finally, I wind up in my math class, but it's almost over, so I've missed most of it, and I don't know what the homework is, and I think I've missed an important test or something. Oh, basically, that's the dream. I think I have that dream when I'm worried or overwhelmed about something that is happening in my life at the time.

My name is Rick, and I sometimes have this dream, this bad dream. Really it's a nightmare. I'm in danger, but I'm not sure from what, and I can't move or scream or anything. I can feel something coming closer and closer to me, and you know it's really strange because usually in the dream, I am exactly where I am in real life, like in my own bed in my bedroom, and everything is very realistic. The only part that is dreamlike is that I can't move. Sometimes I can't even open my eyes, or I can only open one eye. Usually, I have to alert someone or possibly save someone, although the person often changes. Anyway, I can't do anything because I can't move. It's really terrifying. You know, I think the dream means that I'm feeling there's something in my life that I can't control, although I should be able to. Once I had the dream when one of my children was very sick, and I just felt completely helpless. I hate feeling that way.

Now listen again, and check your answers.

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Advanced Two - Unit Five - Mini Listening

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