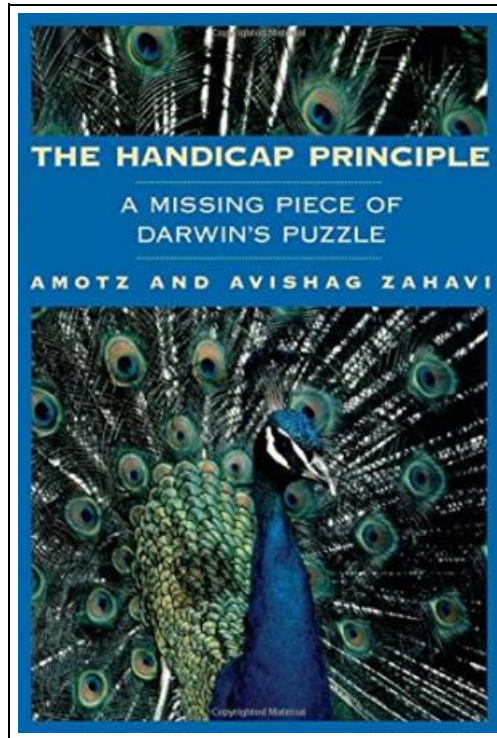


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## THE HANDICAP PRINCIPLE: A MISSING PIECE OF DARWIN'S PUZZLE (PAPERBACK)



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Oxford University Press Inc, United States, 1999. Paperback. Condition: New. Revised ed.. Language: English . Brand New Book \*\*\*\*\* Print on Demand \*\*\*\*\*.Ever since Darwin, animal behaviour has intrigued and perplexed human observers. The elaborate mating rituals, lavish decorative displays, complex songs, calls, dances and many other forms of animal signalling raise fascinating questions. To what degree can animals communicate within their own species and even between species? What evolutionary purpose do such communications serve? Perhaps most importantly, what can animal signalling tell us about our own non-verbal forms of communication? In *The Handicap Principle*, Amotz and Ashvag Zahavi offer a unifying theory that brilliantly explains many previously baffling aspects of animal signalling and holds up a mirror in which ordinary human behaviours take on surprising new significance. The wide-ranging implications of the Zahavis new theory make it arguably the most important advance in animal behaviour in decades. Based on 20 years of painstaking observation, the Handicap Principle illuminates an astonishing variety of signalling behaviours in animals ranging from ants and ameba to peacocks and gazelles. Essentially, the theory asserts that for animal signals to be effective they must be reliable, and to be reliable they must impose a cost, or handicap, on the signaller. When a gazelle sights a wolf, for instance, and jumps high into the air several times before fleeing, it is signalling, in a reliable way, that it is in tip-top condition, easily able to outrun the wolf (A human parallel occurs in children's games of tag, where faster children will often taunt their pursuer before running). By momentarily handicapping itself-expending precious time and energy in this display-the gazelle underscores the truthfulness of its signal. Such signalling, the authors suggest, serves the interests of both predator and prey, sparing each the exhaustion of a pointless...



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