Abstract

In some previous studies, felines were evaluated as one of the most beautiful groups of mammals, but at the same time, they were rated as dangerous. Some studies suggest that felines may be among those dangerous animals that are prioritized by humans in terms of faster neural response and preferential processing of visual information. This thesis tests the prioritization of potentially dangerous animals with each other while trying to identify the factors that influence the positive evaluation of felines. It has been found that felines are prioritized among potentially dangerous animals, but the experimental design is very important. Prioritization has not been proven when respondents have followed a different task and the animals have only acted as distractors. Big cats were evaluated as the most beautiful and most feared felines, with morphology, especially the weight of the animal, influencing both of these ratings. The ranking of beauty was also influenced by the presence of the pattern and saturation and lightness of the colors. Compared to viverrids, felines were rated both as more beautiful and more feared. Felines would be more likely protected and treated as pets than viverrids. Furthermore, large felines are relatively well-known among humans, while respondents basically did not know any viverrids.