

For animals in the wild, each day is a struggle to survive. This kind of special relationship in which animals depend upon and benefit from one another is called symbiosis. One of the most visually surprising examples of symbiosis occurs between the fearsome African crocodile and the small plover bird. After eating its fill, the crocodile invites the honeyguide to finish the leftovers. Another two animals that team up to compensate for their own weaknesses are the zebra and the ostrich. In some cases of symbiosis, like the crocodile and the plover, each animal in the pair benefits from their relationship in a different way. When a plover is nearby, a crocodile will open its long, sharp-toothed jaws to invite it inside. Perhaps even more amazingly, the crocodile, normally known for its aggression, does not snap its mouth shut and have the plover for a snack. This is true of the honeyguide bird and the ratel, a furry creature with short legs and long claws. On the other hand, the zebra has terrible eyesight, while the ostrich has excellent eyesight, enhanced by its long neck which enables the ostrich to see far into the distance. In doing so, it cleans the crocodile's teeth, which prevents it from getting infections. As its name suggests, the honeyguide has a special ability for locating beehives. Ratels are a perfect match for the honeyguide as they love honey, are large enough to crack open a hive, but have no ability to find hives themselves. The honeyguide flies over grasslands looking for a hive. While the giant, flightless ostrich has poor senses of both smell and hearing, the zebra has acute senses of smell and hearing. The ratel uses its claws to tear open the hive.