

THE SENSES OF THE HORSE¹

R.M. Millar²

It is not possible to understand the behaviour of any species unless we first understand the way that species perceives the world about it. Perception is dependent upon the senses. The horse has the same five senses that we do: Visual, Olfactory, Auditory, Tactile, and Gustatory. They differ from ours, however, and the horse, therefore, perceives its world differently than we do. The flightiness of this prey creature would not serve to keep it alive in a natural habitat populated with carnivorous, predatory species unless it could detect their approach. Overwhelmingly, that is the primary function of the horse's senses, just as its anatomical and physiological adaptations must serve to allow the flight response to have the speed to escape danger.