



Galapagos

Using Ultrasound

David Robinson

It's ultrasound. The same technique used to look at human babies in mothers' wombs. The state of development of the early stages of the eggs, the follicles, is a clear indication of where the animals are in their annual sexual cycle.

Beatrix Schramm

Now you can see here it's ending. You don't see this side so good, but nevertheless you can imagine this is the follicle, growing follicle. Yes.

David Robinson

As they approach the time of readiness to mate, the follicles show up as healthy, viable. If they are not fertilised they may be reabsorbed. Beatrix can see the differences between them. The ones that are breaking down, known as atretic follicles have characteristic hollow looking features.

Beatrix Schramm:

Normally you can see very black hole inside here. So you just see some different colours, like blackish, greyish and it's not, a normal follicle is totally white. Atretic follicle has some different colours inside.

David Robinson

The Galapagos can seem like a last frontier. The difficult and sometimes primitive conditions in the islands can suggest a lack of sophistication in scientific research. But making devices like the ultra sound recorder work in these circumstances is nothing less than a research tour de force.