TV STARS



Read the article. Some sentences have been removed from the article. Choose from the sentences A-H the one which fits each gap. There is one extra sentence.

The meerkats of the Kalahari desert in South Africa are famous and Ann and Steve Toon went to find them.

Meerkats are animals which are about 30cm tall and live in groups of 20 to 30. The ones we were looking for were filmed during a period of four years and starred in a TV documentary series. We wanted to see them for real.

So it's 5:30 a.m. and we are in the middle of nowhere, waiting for the sun to burn off the remains of yesterday's storm clouds. Nearby, a large black bird lets rip his deafening, regular wake-up call. (1)____ And while our eyes are off the ball, a meerkat makes his appearance.

He pops his head out of the burrow where he has spent the night. (2)____ Apparently satisfied, he stands upright. He is followed by a female and then some other adults.

We arrived in extreme heat yesterday afternoon with great expectations, but this soon turned to disappointment. (3)____ Today, however, we are finally metres away from some of the world's most charismatic wild creatures. Here are the homes of 14 meerkat groups who are the real-life, wildlife stars of an award-winning TV series.

To our excitement, the adult meerkats are swiftly followed out of the burrow by four five-week-old pups. It's summer breeding season so you would expect to see young. (4)____

Unbelievably comical and cute, the youngsters are each a perfect smaller version of their parents.

Hum, huh, hum," we both softly and repeatedly sing as we move closer to the pups with wide angle lenses. This is the special call we've been taught to use by the volunteer field assistant who tracked down the group for us. It reassures them that our presence is not a threat. (5)____ Each one carries on scanning their surroundings, and getting in each other's way, as they would do every other morning.

The animals that live here have been studied over many years and part of a major, long-running research study known as the Kalahari Meerkat Project. (6)____ Meerkats are ideal candidates for researchers to study because they are active by day and live in quite open terrain in the Kalahari.

The animals have got used to having humans around and their behavior remains unchanged around the researchers. (7)____ This lack of attention to humans extends beyond the researchers to people like us and the TV crew. Sadly our time with these charming creatures is at an end, but tomorrow, and the day after that, the project will go on just as before. They will continue to be weighed, watched and worried over. And on TV, the world's famous meerkats will simply go about their uniquely fascinating lives as if nothing whatsoever out of the ordinary was going on around them.

A At first we feel silly, and more than a little self-conscious, but it seems to work since the animals stay calm as we approach them.

B We realize he has seen us and is checking us out before emerging fully.

C This is because they are most active early in the morning and in the late afternoon.

D Without it, it would not have been possible to make the TV programmes which had brought us here.

E They are therefore able to spend hours in the field each day collecting important information without affect the animals' routine.

F This makes us both jump and distracts our attention from why we are here.

G We had timed our visit with this possibility in mind but we still couldn't believe our luck.

H This was because a series of seemingly endless, ear-splitting Kalahari thunderstorms resulted in a no-show of our subjects.

LIVEWORKSHEETS