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Sommario/riassunto

Do the movements of animals, including humans, follow patterns that can be described quantitatively by simple laws of motion? If so, then why? These questions have attracted the attention of scientists in many disciplines, and stimulated debates ranging from ecological matters to queries such as 'how can there be free will if one follows a law of motion?' This is the first book on this rapidly evolving subject, introducing random searches and foraging in a way that can be understood by readers without a previous background on the subject. It reviews theory as well as experiment, addresses open problems and perspectives, and discusses applications ranging from the colonization of Madagascar by Austronesians to the diffusion of genetically modified crops. The book will interest physicists working in the field of anomalous diffusion and movement ecology as well as ecologists already familiar with the concepts and methods of statistical physics.