

**Ladies and gentlemen,**

Today, I want to take a moment to appreciate one of nature's most charming and underrated creatures: the marmot.

Marmots are mountain-dwelling members of the squirrel family, known for their chubby bodies, soft fur, and unmistakable whistle. Yes — when a marmot senses danger, it lets out a sharp, high-pitched call that echoes across the cliffs. It's nature's own mountain alarm system.

But marmots are more than cute faces and warning whistles. They are remarkable engineers of their environment. With complex burrow systems that stretch several meters underground, they create safe homes that even other animals use. They help aerate the soil, spread seeds, and shape entire alpine ecosystems.

And perhaps most impressive of all, marmots are masters of survival. They spend almost half the year in hibernation, slowing their heartbeat to just a few beats per minute as they wait out harsh winters — a biological feat that inspires ongoing research in medicine and human physiology.

So as we look at the marmot's seemingly simple life — sunbathing on rocks, nibbling wildflowers, watching the world from the edges of cliffs — remember that beneath that fluffy exterior lies a creature perfectly adapted to one of the most demanding environments on Earth.

Thank you.