

For Creative Minds

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Domestic Pet, Exotic Animal, or Farm Animal?

Pets are tame. They are companion animals and live with people in houses and on farms. Cats and dogs are well-known pets. Sometimes people keep exotic animals as pets. Even if people keep "exotic animals" from a young age, they still have wild instincts.

Farm animals are raised to produce food (milk, eggs, or meat) or fiber (wool) for humans.

Which animals are pets, exotic animals, or farm animals (livestock)?



Answers: Domestic Pets: cat, dog. Exotic: arctic fox, binturong, Canadian lynx, kinkajou, tiger, wolf. Farm: cow, goat, llama, pig.

Sanctuaries



Animal sanctuaries are “forever homes.” They are safe places for animals to live for the rest of their lives. The animals will be cared for and fed but will have enough room to roam so they stay healthy. But how and why do animals get there?

Animals can get hurt or orphaned. They might be hit by cars or they can be injured projecting themselves from predators. Wild animals that are unable to be returned to their native environment may live in rescue zoos, sanctuaries, or education centers.

People who adopt exotic pets don't always realize how big the animals will get or how much they will eat. Even exotic pets that are raised from babies have wild instincts. Those instincts can be dangerous to humans. By the time people realize that they can't care for adult exotic pets, the animals can no longer be released to the wild. These animals often end up at sanctuaries.

Some animals that live in sanctuaries were abused or neglected by their owners.

Circus animals and other “working” animals that can no longer do their jobs are often retired to sanctuaries.



It is expensive to rescue, transport, house, feed, and care for animals, especially big, dangerous animals. Some centers and wild animal orphanages have run out of money. There are only a few places that have the room and can afford to care for these animals.

Centers often cooperate to save money. For example, Safe Haven Recue Zoo, Big Cat Rescue, and the Wildcat Sanctuary have worked together on several rescues, saving lynx, bobcats, lions, and tigers from roadside exhibits, bankrupt wild animal orphanages, and backyard zoos.

Behind the Scenes



Many helpers are needed to care for animals that live in rescue zoos, sanctuaries, or on farms. Veterinarians, caretakers, and volunteers:

- Prepare meals, feed and water animals.
- Treat and prevent sickness and wounds.
- Clean, build, and fix enclosures and cages.
- Net, crate, and move animals as needed.
- Train animals and record health and behavior.
- Enrich animals' lives by offering different activities and foods.

Six animal helper organizations shared their stories. Can you find them on the map? Are any of these places close to where you live?

- Big Cat Rescue (Tampa, FL)
- Black Pine Animal Sanctuary (Albion, IN)
- Carolina Tiger Rescue (Pittsboro, NC)
- Safe Haven Rescue Zoo (Imlay, NV)
- Sanctuary One at Double Oak Farm (Jacksonville, OR)
- The Wildcat Sanctuary (Sandstone, MN)



Animal Enrichment

Wild animals are busy animals. They can't drive to the store to buy food. They have to find their own so they ferret out which plants to eat. Or, they hunt other animals. And, they have to avoid predators who would like to eat them. They need to find safe places to rest and to sleep. But what happens to captive animals, those that live in sanctuaries or on farms? Can they become bored? To keep captive animals' minds and bodies active and healthy, animal helpers provide enrichment. Which of the following do you think might enrich the animals' lives?



Do you like to play ball? So do animals! They chase, kick, and roll on special "Boomer Balls." Big cats' noses are 14 times "better" than ours are. Campers and volunteers place spices into cardboard boxes and paper bags. They toss these to the cats who will bat them around. Sometimes the cats even kick them like a soccer ball!

Animals like playing with stuffed animals, just as you do.

Do you like to finger paint? Many animals seem to enjoy "paw painting." This tiger seems tired after painting.



Just like domestic cats, big cats like to climb and sit high so they can see what's going on. Most big cat enclosures include tall perches for cats to sit and watch the world go by. Lots of trees make it easy for the big cats to climb.

Sanctuaries provide living areas similar to animals' native environments. Much as he would in the wild, this serval has come out of hiding to pounce on his prey.

Tigers love water; they'll even take bubble baths! This makes it hard to discipline them sometimes. When big cats fight, keepers might spray them in the face with water to separate them. But that doesn't work with tigers because they like it!

Animals are sometimes housed together to keep each other company.