



Ask Jessi 10!

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Hi, I'm Jessi, this is Animal Wonders, and today, I'm going to answer some questions from viewers like you because that's what we do on Ask Jessi days.

(Intro)

First question comes from Carolyn W @Englishbrkfstt, "Which animal are you most proud of their progress as an ambassador?" Ooh, good question. We call an animal an ambassador when they teach the public about their species through public presentations. When we rescue an animal, sometimes they're really easygoing and they can be ready to go in just a couple weeks, but sometimes it takes months or even years, but the ones I'm proudest of, I would say there's a tie between Joy the macaw and Seraphina the red fox, because both seem to have the odds stacked against them. It took almost two years for Joy and I to trust each other enough to go in front of an audience. Since then, she's grown more and more confident. Now, I can even take her in front of a group of excited six year olds and she's totally fine. I'm super proud of her, but Seraphina the red fox is tied with her because even though we've had Sera since she was a kit, she's such a pro at being ambassador that I just burst with pride. Most red foxes are quite skittish and will spook at weird noises or movements. Seraphina is like most red foxes but she's so good at being able to refocus her attention on her training and trust that I'm not putting in danger. When we first took her in, we were warned by other wildlife educators that red foxes would not make good ambassadors. They're just too skittish, but I'm proud to say that with the relationship we've established, Seraphina makes an excellent ambassador.

Alright, next question comes from @ConfusedRaptor, "Has Zoe learned any new tricks?"

Zoe is our red-lored Amazon parrot and she knows a handful of fun and useful behaviors, including waving hello, whistling, showing off her wing, hanging upside down by her zygodactyl feet, and calmly going into a crate. Zoe hasn't learned anything new in a while, but that's mostly because she went through this phase of becoming fearful of objects and new locations and then acting aggressively toward them and sometimes displacing her aggression on me. We took a break from new things and we've been re-establishing our trust bond. I guess you could say her new trick is just being relaxed with everything and trusting me enough that she's not so worried.

Okay next question comes from Cathy W, @Cathy_Wie, who asks, "What are some of the most interesting quirks the animals have?" Hmm. Well, Charlie our dog likes to curl up and sleep in boxes like a cat. Bindi the bearded dragon will only eat from this specific white dish. I've tried others and she just won't get near them. I just hope that this one never breaks. Chili Pepper the Patagonian cavy prefers kangaroo food over his own food. Kemosabe the prehensile tailed porcupine loves bananas, while Kizmit the African crested porcupine despises them. Sandy the sand boa will only eat a prey item that's a very specific size, shape, and color, and Lulu the half moon conure will eat grapes but not blueberries, papaya but not mango, and strawberries but not watermelon. I could go on all day about all the individual quirks the animals have, but...

Moving on to the next question that comes from Melanie

@Figmentation, "I'd love to know what kinds of clues the animals give to let you know that they've had enough, besides obvious ones like trying to get away."

Well, to me when an animal communicates that they're uncomfortable, it's pretty obvious, which makes it hard to answer your question because it's kind of like trying to explain color to someone who's color blind. When I get to know how a certain species communicates and then I get to know a specific individual by working with them closely, reading their body language seems to come as easily as seeing their colors. Each species has different

ways to communicate as well as each individual, so here are some general things to look for. Stiffening of their bodies and movements, which indicates heightened stress. Quick dilation or pinning of the pupils or "hardening" of the eyes communicates fear. Panting, gaping, or low growling shows increased stress. Ears, crests, or hair held straight up or held tight against their head or body can indicate alarm or agitation. Looking or leaning away from a situation says they want to leave the area. Nudging, nibbling, or pulling repeatedly tells me that they want to be done. There are lots of different ways that animals can tell us that they're uncomfortable. If I ignore their requests, it makes them feel like they need to take matters into their own hands which creates a relationship without trust. I've learned to be able to understand their communications and if I respond appropriately by taking them away from whatever's stressing them out and bringing them to a safe place, they'll learn to trust that I'll listen to them.

And our last question for the day comes from Richard Fernando, who asks, "What's your favorite food?"

Thanks for asking, Richard. Now I get to talk about my love affair with artichokes. They are so underappreciated and I really think that I could eat them all day, every day for the rest of my life. I could grill them, saute them, or pickle them, but my favorite way is to steam them and then melt some butter, add a little bit of balsamic vinegar and a splash of lemon juice and then I dip each leaf in and enjoy. They even have a built-in dessert, the heart, which makes them the perfect food. Some close seconds to artichokes are asparagus, onions, garlic, fennel, and yams. I'm a big fan of underappreciated vegetables.

Thanks for all the questions. If you have anything that you'd like to ask me, go ahead and leave it in the comment section below and if you'd like to keep learning new things about animals, you can join me on an adventure every week by subscribing. Thanks and we'll see you next time.

(Outro/Credits)

Just so cute, I love how she holds her food and she's so robust. I just, I just love how healthy she is. I do like to spend a lot of one-on-one time with Kizzie.