



Ask Jessi 1.5

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Hey guys, we had so many questions last time that we couldn't fit into one episode. So here we are making a second episode, and this is going to be called... Ask Jessi 1.5.

A lot of people have been asking about my diet.

I am not vegan. I am not vegetarian. I do raise my own chickens for their eggs and I support humane farming. And please don't call me a PETA person; I am not.

Next Question is from ciszhelion: How do you deal with the killing of animals to feed other animals?

That's a really hard one. Um, it's in my nature to want to care for every single animal no matter how high or low they are in the food chain. Or how big or small they are. Or how important or pivotal they are for the environment in which they live.

But the reality is it's impossible to feed every single animal if you have scavengers and decomposers and omnivores, herbivores, and carnivores all in the same collection.

The fact is that some animals eat other animals. And it's usually not a very pretty scene for the being-consumed animals when they do.

What I focus on is this amazing natural cycle. Every animal lives and dies. And it's how they live and die that's important to me.

A good happy, healthy life followed by a humane death is pretty much as good as it gets for all of us, right? So that's my goal when providing care for my animals.

Next! Hunter Www...Wit-ee-off...White-ee-oaf? What should a guinea pig's daily diet consist of?

Guinea pigs should get a high-quality guinea pig pellet. It's pre-made for you so it's pretty easy. Make sure you get a high-quality one though. And then you should also give them a mixture - a nice variety - of fresh vegetables and a little bit of fruit here or there.

Some good vegetables to feed them are yam and carrot, broccoli, uh, zucchini, and some good fruits are apple and banana. This is what we feed ours.

Next question, Cheeks, read it with me: from Gamesman one - or zero one if you prefer: Do you have any large carnivorous animals-mammals like wolves, bears or large cats?

Nope. We get asked that question a lot. You can find almost all of our animals on our website.

Sauragh Gaikwad: How many times have you been bitten by how many types of animal?

You know-- [laughs] I really embrace the saying where-- that it's always your fault when your bit by an animal. So it's really not cool to say, "Man, yeah, I've been bit by 100 animals." That was a silly impression. [Laughs]

Anyway, it's just not something to brag about. I mean there's two reasons that you-- working with animals that you might get bitten a lot.

One is that you just have no clue what's going on with animal behavior, so you're not reading their communications right. Or you just handle a lot of distressed animals and those situations sometimes...that's-- that's what happens. The animal is distressed and they're trying to defend themselves but you still have to interact with them and you end up getting bitten.

I've been bitten by, uh, my fair share of animals. Um, and I think that it should be measured by, like, not by the number of animals but more of, like, a percentage of your volume of animals. Yeah. The percentage rather than the number.

So the reason I say that is because I work with, uh, a bunch of psittacines and a lot of times they've been traumatized somehow in their home where they've learned that their human caretaker is just not gonna pay attention to their communications - their solid communications - so they've learned just to go for the bite. "Stay away from me," or whatever they mean. That's what they go to.

So that's what happens with me in the very beginning when we first get to know each other. And then after we work together and we get-- and they start understanding that I will listen and respond to their subtle communications, they'll start showing me those again so they don't have to resort to that just immediate bite. So it gets better.

So I guess what I'm saying is that it's a weighted question and is a lot more complicated than you probably thought you were asking. And most of my animal bites came from animals that thought I was food.

So here's a list of animals that I've been bit by: psittacines, many other birds, snakes, lizards, dogs, cats, horses, pigs, foxes, rabbit, hamster, rats, bettongs, hedgehog, frog, millipedes, crickets, and humans.

Next! Legocookiedoggie: Is it possible to get a pet fox like what you guys have?

Our red fox Seraphina is not considered a pet. She is ambassador for her species. So I guess the two main differences is one: she's a wild animal and she's illegal to own in most states without proper permits. And two: she's very very specifically trained to be comfortable in front of a large audience of people so that she can spread education and awareness and understand and compassion for her species.

However, there are still red foxes being bred in Russia. Albeit they're very difficult to get a hold of, but they're being bred specifically to be pets. They've been domesticated and that's an amazing, awesome science story if you're interested in how selectively breeding for behavior has resulted in physical characteristic changes. Really cool story.

Alright, Edward Mace asks: Your cat is gorgeous; what's her name?

This is Kiki and she is pretty awesome. Especially considering that she was born feral. She was taken in by a, uh, rehabber and she almost didn't make it because she was so malnourished and tiny. Um, but she, you can see, she's doing pretty awesome right now.

My son Jacob helped raise her and the two initiated each other on their various species. Jacob was really soft, you know, for a toddler and she was just so sweet. She loved being handled and she was incredibly patient with him and, uh, she even taught Jacob to say a word. Well he was saying "kitty" but it came out as "Kiki" and so that's how she got her name. Kiki.

Thanks for all the questions guys. I love 'em! Keep 'em coming. You can find me on Twitter, Tumblr and Facebook. Links are below and to join us on an adventure every week subscribe to our YouTube channel Animal Wonders Montana.