

# Interspecies Animal Friends



*As we all know, most animals stick to their own kind. Curiously, however, these animals have come to find friendship in unlikely suspects.*

## **Huahua and the Little Chick**

In China a pet Chihuahua named Huahua adopted a baby chick. Huahua took charge of the chick as soon as owner Liu Bangyang's daughter brought it home. The dog regards the chick as her baby and stands guard to make sure it is never harmed. Whenever the chick strays too far, Huahua picks it up gently in her mouth and puts it back in its cot. Liu, from the city of Guiyang, said: "We'll try our best to raise the little chicken, if that's what Huahua wants."

## **Owen and Mzee**

Many people have heard the incredible story of Owen, the baby hippopotamus that was separated from his mother during the 2004 tsunami and found an adoptive parent in Mzee, the 130-year old tortoise.

After his rescue, the baby hippo was taken to a protected area, which was also inhabited by Mzee the tortoise. Despite the tortoise's initial resistance to the curious hippo, the two soon bonded. Over time, Owen began to mimic his adoptive parent, and gradually, Mzee taught Owen, who was a nursing calf, what to eat and where to sleep.

Within a year, the pair became inseparable companions who ate, slept, swam, and played

together. Owen often played with the old tortoise by jumping on Mzee's back, even scratching the old tortoise on the neck. They surprised scientists with the strength of what appeared to be a genuine bond, as well as with the unique communication that developed between them.

## **Sai Mai and the Piglets**

For a couple of years now, a set of adorable pictures of a tiger playing with a litter of little piglets has been circulating the internet. The story accompanying the photographs is always different. Sometimes it is a tigress that lost her cubs and adopted the piglets, sometimes it is the piglets that lost their mother.

Unfortunately, the true story is somewhat less adorable. The images were taken in 2004 at the Sriracha Tiger Zoo in Chonburi, Thailand. Although the Sriracha Tiger Zoo hosts one of the world's most successful tiger breeding programs, unlike most western zoos it also offers circus and carnival-like shows, exhibits, and interactions, including the mixture of adults and young of different species in the same enclosures. The mixture of tiger and piglets depicted in the images was not a natural occurrence but rather



was premeditated as a form of visual entertainment provided by the zoo for the amusement of its visitors.

### **Finnegan the Squirrel**

Finnegan the squirrel was found injured and malnourished in the Seattle area in September 2005, when he was only a few days old. He was brought to local resident Debby Cantlon, who had a reputation for taking in sick and injured animals. Ms. Cantlon reported that her pregnant Papillon dog, Mademoiselle Giselle, repeatedly dragged Finnegan's kennel from across the house and deposited it next to her own doggie bed. After Mademoiselle Giselle gave birth to her pups, she continued to care for Finnegan, even allowing him to nurse with her own.

Read the article and listen to it online:

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