

Home &gt; Life &gt; Pets

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Community  
Green Living  
Travel  
**Pets**  
Work  
Money  
Best New Product Awards  
Readers' Stories  
Sleep  
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## Pages

[1. 5 of the most unusual pets: 1-2](#)  
[2. 5 of the most unusual pets: 3-5](#)  
[3. Where to find an unusual pet](#)

## Related content

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## 5 of the most unusual pets

Pet-care tips for 5 of the most unusual pets.

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By Vickie Reichardt



### Where the wild things are

Not every animal on Earth was meant to be a pet, yet people continue to seek out dangerous exotic species. Monkeys, boa constrictors, large reptiles and big cats (e.g., tigers) are being purchased, while native species such as raccoons or squirrels are

"rescued" from the wild and raised in captivity. [Kristin Williams](#), a spokesperson for [Ontario SPCA](#), says this is dangerous for you and for the animal. "The majority of risks are associated with not understanding the needs of the animal and an inability to provide the necessary care," she says. Aggression, disease and malnourishment are common problems when such animals are kept as pets, and it's impossible for an individual to replicate the conditions they would enjoy in the wild.

### Where the pets are

Regardless of which species you choose, the best place to start looking for an unusual pet is your local SPCA or [Humane Society](#), a reputable breeder (ask for references, inspect the facility and be wary of Internet sales) or a registered rescue organization. They'll be able to give you detailed information about your animal and provide additional resources – such as listings for pocket-pet vets in your area – to ensure you'll enjoy a happy, healthy life together.

### Last-ditch resort

If you have an unusual pet you feel you can no longer keep, do not simply release it into the wild. "The animals are unable to survive in the wild because they're not a native species or they've been domesticated and won't be able to survive," warns [Kristin Williams](#), a Ontario SPCA spokesperson. Instead, contact your local SPCA or a registered rescue organization, which can care for the animal properly.

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Page 3 of 3

[« Previous](#)

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