

LOVE IN THE WILD

mudpuppy

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Life and love on our planet are incredibly diverse. Over 1500 animal species have been observed in same-sex pairings exhibiting behaviors traditionally associated with mixed-sex couples such as parenting and mating behaviors. Many species show more than two biological sexes, change sex or can be multiple sexes at one time. Animals have shown acceptance and compassion to other species and members of their own species who look or behave differently. Our animal relatives remind us to show compassion to others and most importantly to ourselves.



Sea Otters: Sea otters have been observed holding hands when they sleep so they don't drift apart in the water.



Giraffes: Male giraffes affectionately rub their long necks together, a courting behavior exclusive to males, known as 'necking.'



American Alligators: Alligators are caring mothers who carry their young on their backs, on top of their heads, or even gently inside their mouths.



Gentoo Penguins: Same-sex relationships are common in gentoo penguins, who offer potential mates stones used to build circular nests. Same-sex penguin couples have shown to be attentive, caring parents when given the chance to adopt eggs.



Lesser Flamingos: Flamingos form same-sex couples and build nests together. When given the opportunity, same-sex flamingo couples have successfully cared for eggs and raised young.



Rhesus Macaques: These female monkeys play courting games with one another such as hide-and-seek and follow the leader.



Lions: Male lions form close, long lasting bonds with other male lions.
Cheetahs: Female cheetahs court each other with chases and play-fighting.



Sperm Whales and Bottlenose Dolphin: A pod of whales accepted a dolphin with an extra curve in his spine. Scientists suspect the whales were a good match for the dolphin's swimming pace.



Asian Elephants: Elephants are known for being highly intelligent, social and compassionate animals. They use their trunks to comfort stressed companions.



American Red Squirrels: Bonded female red squirrels have been known to rub noses, share a tree hole, and raise a litter together.



Plains Zebras: A Kenyan zebra was born with spots instead of stripes. Despite his unusual coat pattern, research suggests that he will be accepted by his herd and treated the same as any other foal.



Diana Fritillary Butterfly: In some species of butterflies, male and female animals exhibit different coloring. Individuals can show both male and female characteristics, such as having different colored wings.



Bighorn Sheep: Same-sex courtships regularly occur amongst the males.
Long-eared Hedgehogs: Females can form affectionate, long lasting relationships.



(Species left to right): Common Genet, Ring-tailed Mongoose, Goodfellow's Tree-Kangaroo, Red-legged Sun Squirrel, Ringtail, Common Marmoset, Banded Linsang, Margay, Northern Olingo, White-nosed Coati, Ring-tailed Lemur, Raccoon, Ring-tailed Ground Squirrel, Red Panda, Owston's Palm Civet.

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