

## Wonderful Animals I Would Like To Be

*by Liz Gibbons*

In considering what animal I would like to be I vacillate between being a domesticated animal and a wild animal. If I were to be a domesticated animal I would choose to be a dog. Dogs are very intelligent. They are loyal to their owner. They are playful. They can sense your emotions and will give you love by giving you their paw or resting their head on your body. Their sense of smell is very sensitive. Thus they are useful in searching for survivors at disaster sites, at following the scent tracks of people, and to sniff out drugs and other contraband. As a dog, I would prefer to be a breed of dog, such as a German Shepherd, to be trained as a guide dog for a disabled person.

But on the other hand I admire the freedom of wild animals. They follow their natural instincts and live in harmony with nature. Animals that represent freedom to me are lions and tigers. I admire the speed at which they can run and their gracefulness. But they spend much of their life resting and sleeping, so I would not really want to be a lion or tiger.

I would prefer to be an eagle. They symbolize great power and their ability to fly expresses freedom. There is much mythology about eagles. In Egyptian times the eagle was a symbol for the spirit and the soul. Eagles can soar to an altitude of 10,000 feet. Because of this ability they represent a connection between heaven and earth. To the Pueblo Indians the eagle was associated with the energies of the sun. To various Native Americans the eagle possesses mystical powers. Thus the Hopis and Pueblo tribes perform an Eagle Dance when they need divine intervention. This dance emulates the movement of an eagle. Eagle feathers are sacred to Native Americans. Because the eagle is protected in the United States it is a felony for anyone to possess eagle feathers who is not a Native American.

We can learn much by observing the animal world. Some animals are adept at adapting and surviving. Some are great protectors and nurturers. Others exhibit strength and courage or playfulness and gentleness. When we cease to look at them as subordinates, we can let them become our friend, teacher, or companion. They have the ability to revive our childlike wonder of the world and awaken us to the marvelous expression of life in a myriad of forms.