

Animal Care

Soozie has loved animals from her childhood. She at one time or another had a horse, a cow, and a goat, as well as many dogs. She remembers as a pre-schooler talking to squirrels (who she thought talked back to her). Her brothers gave her a bit of grief about sharing this latter experience with them.

Her love and concern for animals has continued all of her life. She worries about our outdoor pets (cats, dogs, and rabbits) in the wintertime and asks me to take special precautions for them. I tried to convince her that these were essentially wild animals whose fur was designed to protect them against the cold, but this argument didn't work. So I wrapped their doghouses in plastic weatherproofing and then wired a heater in our shed so that the dogs could have a warm refuge.

We have several ponds, and have enjoyed the fish, frogs, and turtles that lived in them. We love birds, and I have to fill several feeders with birdseed every few days. We like squirrels, too, but they are not favored such that they are allowed to get at the birdseed. We have birdhouses all over our yard, but the birds mostly like nesting in the trees or house ivy. The cardinals in particular love a bamboo patch that is their haven, where they flit all about, and where they have a noisy social hour at dusk.

We are sort of in the animal rescue business. We leave water out and scatter chips to feed deer that are being crowded out. We do this in part to try to keep them from eating our lilies, which is like "deer candy" for them. We take in rescue dogs and cats on a regular basis. I once made the mistake of mentioning that I saw a Great White Pyrenees in the middle of the busy interstate, and Soozie tried to get me to go back and get it out of harm's way.

On warm summer nights, I would have to let her out of the car to check the driveway for frogs, so that we would not crush them. Similarly, we can no longer take our fallen leaves to the street because we need to protect possible snakes and frogs that found a home in their midst.

So, I fuss a little when she wants to keep the heat lamp on the rabbits at times when it is only slightly below freezing, and I fuss a little when she gives the stray black cat tuna fish because it is so finicky. But then I think that because of this caring nature she will surely take care of me when I get old and need it. My work will pay off long-term, for she has revealed her loving and nature, and I know that she will always be this way.

It has been said that rescue animals are very grateful. And so shall I be.