

Animals That Thrive In The Most Unexpected Places

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Some animals choose their environments via migration, others evolved to adapt to where they live, still others just ended up there by mistake, but all of these have been able to make a go of their unusual habitats.

Goats in trees



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Your eyes don't deceive you — those are definitely goats in that tree. The nuts of the Moroccan *argania* tree (the same tree that provides argan oil for hair products) attract the goats, who are able to clamber up the branches (or, more unfortunately, are put there by locals for tourists to gawk at).

Wallabies in Ireland



[WIKIMEDIA.ORG](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Wallaby_in_Ireland.jpg)

Wallabies are associated with Australia, but for 25 years they've made Lambay Island, 10,000 miles away, their home. The Dublin Zoo had too many wallabies in the 1980s and moved them to this island an hour away off the coast. They've thrived ever since.

Pigs on the beach



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On a beach in the Bahamas, what a sight to see — not pigs flying, but pigs *swimming* in the aquamarine water. Nobody knows how they got there, but the island of Big Major Cay is home to a colony of feral pigs that amuse visiting tourists snorkeling alongside them. They normally hang out in the shade but emerge to take a dip and may even swim out to your boat to investigate lunch.

Fish out of water



[WIKIMEDIA.ORG](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Oopu_alamao_o.jpg)

A fish out of water is a dead fish — unless you're the o'opu alamao'o, a species of goby fish endemic to Hawaii. The fish literally climbs rocks using a suction cup on its belly to breed at the top of 'Akaka Falls. The eggs wash out to sea, where the young fish mature and then return to the falls to do it all over again.

Wild parrots in Los Angeles



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Spend any time in Los Angeles and you'll likely see – and definitely hear – the thousands of wild parrots that flock from San Gabriel Valley to Santa Monica. Some speculate the birds migrated from Mexico, but more likely they descended from birds that escaped or were let go years ago. Not only do they thrive, experts believe they may help repopulate their native homelands – the red-crowned parrot in particular is endangered in Mexico, but common in the City of Angels.

Moose on a farm



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In postwar Soviet Union, people thought moose could serve as a cow substitute providing meat and milk. But moose are too smart to meekly go to their death, and are big enough that they don't have to. Today the Sumarokovo Moose Farm does provide milk — and attracts tourists.



[WIKIMEDIA.ORG](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Ibex_on_a_dam.jpg)

Ibex on a dam

We've already seen how goats are great climbers. So is the Alpine ibex, which navigates the steep, narrow stones that make up this otherwise uninteresting dam in Italy. They lick the salt off the stones.

Hippos on an abandoned kingpin's estate



[WIKIMEDIA.ORG](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Hippopotamus_in_a_pond.jpg)

After police took out Pablo Escobar in 1993, his Colombian estate fell into ruin and his wild animals donated to zoos. That is, all except four hippos, which were deemed too dangerous to round up. They've thrived as feral hippos, and their numbers are around 170 today. Nobody has any idea how to control the now-invasive population, which is problematic since hippos are famously aggressive.

Monkeys in Florida



[WIKIMEDIA.ORG](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Homosassa_River_Lighthouse.jpg)

This tiny chunk of land in the Homosassa River is home to a family of spider monkeys originally brought to a wildlife attraction in a western Florida glade in the 1960s. When it turned out the monkeys were causing trouble and driving tourists bananas, the park's owner shipped them over to a small island nearby, where they could monkey around to their hearts' content. You can't visit the island but you can enjoy their antics from a restaurant across the way.

Bears in a moat



[WIKIMEDIA.ORG](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Two_bears_in_Cesky_Krumlov.jpg)

At Český Krumlov castle in Czechia, bears were part of the family and several made their home in its moat around 1700. Today four bears live there. The bear festival is held every year on Christmas Eve, when kids enter the enclosure to learn about the animals and (safely) feed them.