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Animal doctor



From pets' tails to poorly hamsters, TV vet Scott Miller answers all your tricky animal teasers!

Q

Why do cats and dogs have tails?
Daniel Maxwell, 8

Long or short, fluffy or thin, both animals use their talented tails to send messages, Daniel. A dog's wagging tail says it wants to be pals, while a cat holds its tail high to show it's happy. The tail (an extension of the backbone) also helps moggies and pooches to balance, which comes in handy when leaping, landing – or chasing their tail!



Q

Can owls communicate with each other?
Samuel Chadwick, 10

T'wit-t'woo wants to know, Samuel? Sorry, couldn't resist that! Owls 'talk' with all kinds of sounds and body movements. There's their famous hooting, but they also communicate through hissing, fluffing feathers, changing their posture and snapping their beaks. These birds of prey aren't just great communicators – they also have amazing hearing and eyesight, making them awesome predators. Yikes!



"Woo-who do you think they're looking at...?"

Q

My hamsters, TimTam and Topsy, have a squeaky cough. Could they be poorly?
Gabriel MacGregor, 8

Hamsters are pretty quiet pets – usually the only sound you'll hear from them is the squeaking of their running wheels – so you're right to be worried about them, Gabriel. However, these cute critters *do* vocalise from time to time – they squeak when making a mating call; they scream if they're scared; and cough or sneeze when they're sick. So take TimTam and Topsy to your local vet straight away and hopefully they'll soon be back to their quiet happy-hamster selves!

Do you have a question for our resident vet, Scott? Write or email it to him and mark your mail *Animal doctor* (see 'Write to us' box on top left).



AAA-CHOO!
Best get me to