

# Survival After Death of Non-Human Animal Consciousness

The connection between humans and animals is an important aspect of life (1). In cultures all over the world, people with close relationships to non-human animals experience them as family.

## Animal Consciousness

Animals are similar to humans in their perceptions, emotions, communication, logic, relationships, individuality, and psychology. The 2012 “Cambridge Declaration on Consciousness in Non-Human Animals,” stated that animals including “all mammals and birds, and many other creatures, including octopuses” experience emotion and are, in fact, conscious beings (2).

## Grieving Animal Loved Ones

People also grieve animal losses similarly to the deaths of human loved ones. However, because the severity of the loss for the human guardian may not be recognized or understood by others in modern Western societies, losing an animal may be more difficult than that for human losses.

Though the first modern pet cemeteries were established in the 1890s in New York and Paris, burying companion animals has been practiced by humans for at least 16,000 years (3). Often guardians use rainbow pinwheels to symbolize the idea of a Rainbow Bridge where companion animals wait to be reunited with their people; this indicates a belief in animal immortality (3).

## Evidence for the Survival of Animal Consciousness

Several areas of research support this idea that non-human animal consciousness continues past death including cases from channeled information and apparitions (4). Moreover, end-of-life experiences (ELEs) in the dying often include feeling a ‘comforting presence’ that includes departed companion animals (5). Beloved departed animals may also appear during waking visions at the dying patient’s bedside (6). Similarly, near-death experiences (NDEs) often include the person being met by a departed companion animal (7). In addition, regular people in everyday states of consciousness have reported hearing vocalizations or other common sounds associated with departed animals. People might see a form, feel a warmth or pressure on their body, receive synchronicities or other signs, or experience dream contact from animals. One of the Center’s “Audrey’s Project” videos features an experience of this type of after-death communication (ADC) with a horse named Coal (8).

## ***Mediums' Experiences with Animals***

Research with mediums has demonstrated that a variety of departed animals can be accurately described including dogs, cats, horses, rabbits, snakes, goldfish, birds, pigs, and monkeys (9, 10). Companion animals spontaneously appear in roughly 30% of mediumship readings though they are not usually asked for specifically; animals often just piggyback on readings for departed human loved ones (10). Windbridge Certified Research Medium (WCRM) Joanne Gerber has noted: “I do get occasional requests. However, like with humans, mediums cannot ‘call up’ a specific animal ... but I will make the attempt to see what comes through. I have found that it is most evidential if we do not know what breed, name, or what type of pet that the sitter wants to connect to” (10, p. 146).

## **Conclusions**

Animals are conscious beings and people grieve the loss of animals close to them like any death. Research on ELEs, NDEs, ADCs, and mediumship provides evidence that animal consciousness continues past death. The bond between humans and animals is a significant aspect of life and our emotional and spiritual connections with the animals we love survive past physical death.

## **References**

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