



## 2

## HUMAN FRIENDS

Plants and animals have played an important role in human life for as long as humans have existed. In fact, humans have used plants and animals for food, labor, tools and companionship over countless generations. Our society could not have advanced to the point that it has today. All animals have important roles in the ecosystem. All animals and plants in the ecosystem co-exist and balance each other. Since Stone age animals have helped humans to plough his fields, transfer his goods and carry raw materials. In Vedic period animals were important part of our social, economy and culture. Veda Puranas are filled with stories about relationship between human and animals. Animals' contribution to human life is even more than plants. They provide us food, clothing, medicine and also contribute in our economic activities. In this lesson we shall learn about the importance of animals and their contribution in our life.



### OBJECTIVES

After studying this lesson you will be able to:

- identify and categorize the animals around us;
- list the characteristics of these animals;



Notes

- describe the role of these animals in our life
- explain the role of animals in Vedic texts; and
- adopt ways to care for the animals.

## 2.1 CATEGORIZATION OF ANIMALS

We see different kinds of animals around us. Some animals are big while some are small. Animals are of different shapes, size and nature. Animals are very useful to us. They breathe, eat food, grow in size, move from one place to another in search of food and home and reproduce by either laying eggs or by giving birth to young ones. Animals are categorized as follows:

**Pet Animals :** These animals are kept for fun. The animals which can be kept inside the homes are called pet animals.



Cat

Parrot

Dog

Fig. 2.1 Pet animals

**Domestic Animals :** Some animals are kept on farm. They give us many useful things. They are called domestic animals. We should take proper care of domestic animals.



Goat

Cow

Fig. 2.2 Domestic animals

**Wild Animals :** Some animals wander freely in jungles. They are called wild animals, they cannot be tamed.



**Notes**

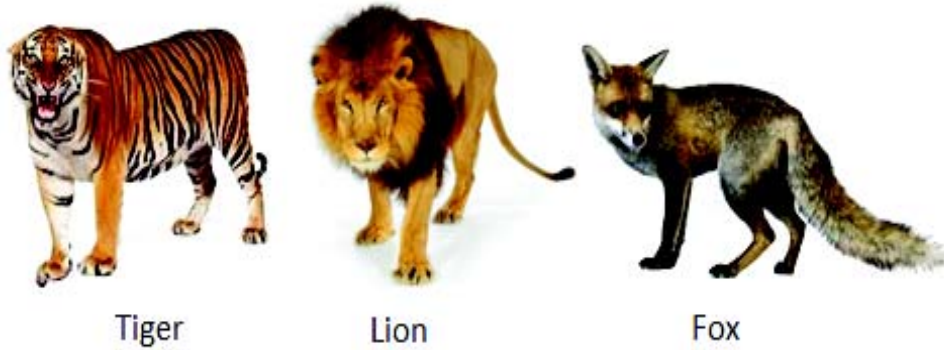


Fig. 2.3 Wild animals

**Milch Animals :** The animals which give us milk are called milch animals.

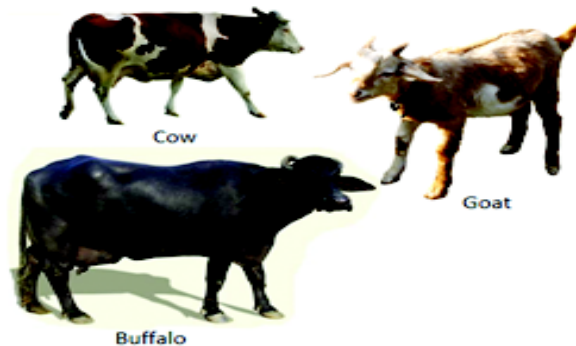


Fig. 2.4 Milch animals

**Mammals :** The animals like elephant, monkey, deer, bear, horse, goat, cow, human being, etc are called mammals. Mammals give birth to their babies and feed them with their own milk. Bat is a flying mammal. Whale is a mammal that lives in water.

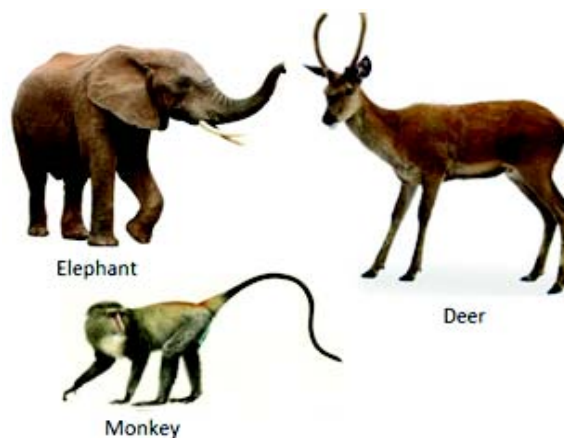


Fig. 2.5 Memmals



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**Amphibians:** The animals that can live both in water and on land are called amphibians. Tortoise, frog, crocodile, etc. are amphibians.

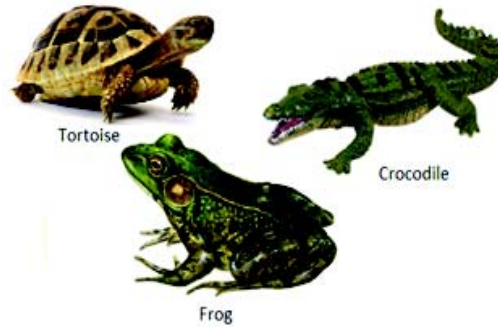


Fig. 2.6 Amphibians

**Birds :** Birds are the animals that can fly. Their wings help them to fly. They have two legs and two wings. They have feathers and a tail. They have a beak. They generally live in trees. Sparrow, owl, crow, pigeon, partridge, kiwi, etc. are birds. Most birds can fly.



Fig. 2.7 (a) Birds

**Some birds can swim in water.**



Duck

Fig. 2.7 (b) Birds

**Reptiles:** The animals that crawl along with the ground are called reptiles. Lizard, chameleon, snake and tortoise are reptiles.

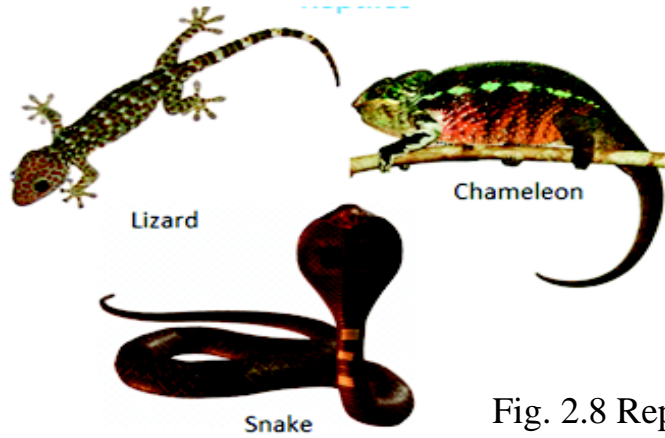


Fig. 2.8 Reptile

**Rodents :** Small animal with sharp teeth like rat and rabbit are called rodents.



Fig. 2.9 Rodents

**Insect :** Insects are small animals. We see insects all around us. Animal like honey-bee, ants, bug, butterfly, grasshopper, house-fly and cockroach are some insects. Their body is divided into three parts. They have six legs. Most insects have wings. Wings help them to fly.

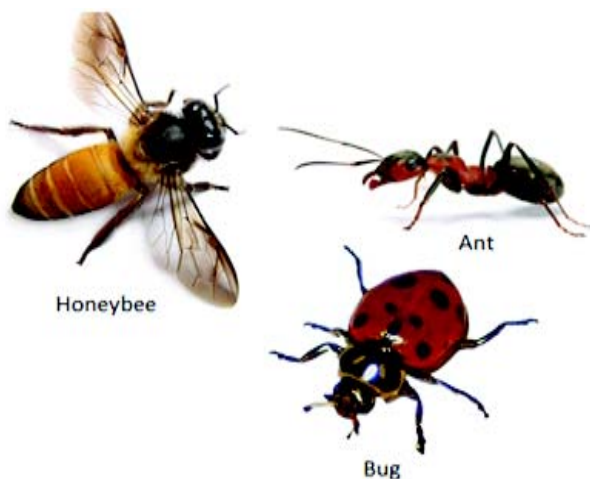


Fig. 2.10 Insects



Notes



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## 2.2 USEFUL ANIMALS TO HUMANS

Let us now study about some very useful animals around us.

**Cow :** Cows are really the most useful animals to humans. They provide milk. Milk can be used to make dairy products like ghee, cream, butter, yogurt etc. Even cow dung is being used as a manure and it is helpful in growing plants.

**Horse :** Humans are using horses for centuries for different purposes. They are being used as a mode of transportation. They also helped humans by pulling heavy loads and carrying wagons. They are also very helpful in farm work, ploughing, leisure riding, races, and companionships.

**Dog :** Dogs are not only the most popular pets around the world but also one of the most useful animals to humankind. Dogs also help humans in getting out of deep depression with the help of their companionship. They are capable of locating sound in 6/100ths of a second by using their swivelling ears like radar dishes.

**Sheep :** Sheep are one of the most versatile among all domesticated animals. However, sheep are well known for wool. Humans use wool widely in clothing.

**Donkey :** Donkeys are also one of the most useful animals to humans. Donkeys are very good at alerting you from any kind of danger. They are also used to carry people and goods up in the mountains. Donkeys are also one of the cheapest forms of agriculture power.

**Pig :** Pigs are most useful as picky eaters. They often eat all surplus crops and food by-products that humans will not eat. Pigs are raised both at the individual and industrial scale.



**Elephant :** Elephants are one of the most important creatures on planet Earth. One of the most important roles of elephants is to maintain the biodiversity of the ecosystem in which they survive. They are used by humans for labour and transportation. However, elephants are under threat because of the ivory trade and habitat loss.

**Camel :** Camel is also one of the most useful domesticated animals. They can survive for a full week without eating and drinking. Also, they can carry heavy loads up to 300 kilometres a day. Camels tell about direction so they help us in reaching the destination without getting lost in deserts. Camels droppings are used as manure and also as fuel. Camels milk is very rich in iron, minerals and vitamins and it is considered much healthier than the cow's milk because it has less fat.

**Goat :** Humans easily digest goat milk. It is one of the best alternates for infants and people who have a problem with cow milk. Cashmere goats produce the best fibre. It is also one of the best wool in the world. Humans also use goats skin to create boots, gloves and many other products.

**INTEXT QUESTIONS 2.1**

Fill in the blanks

1. All animals and plants in the ecosystem co-exist and ----- each other.
2. The animals which can be kept inside the homes are called -- ---- animals.
3. The animals which give us milk are called ----- animals.
4. .... are also used to carry people and goods up in the mountains.
5. Camels ..... are used as manure and also as fuel.



Notes

## 2.3 ROLE OF ANIMALS MENTIONED IN VEDIC TEXTS

The gods and goddesses of Indian Vedic Cultures travel on animals and birds. Different gods have different vahanas (animal vehicles). The literal meaning of the word 'vahana' is 'that which carries, that which pulls'.

### **Surya - Horses**

The sun god, Surya, mounts on a golden chariot, pulled by seven white horses.

### **Agni - Ram**

Agni, or the fire god, rides upon a ram.

### **Brahma - Swan**

Brahma, the god of creation, travels all over outer space on a swan.

### **Durga - Lion**

The goddess riding a lion may also symbolize that she has tamed the instincts of greed, lust and gluttony to rise to a spiritual height.

### **Ganesha - Mouse**

Ganesha, by mounting the mouse, thereby symbolically conquers impure desires, spiritual darkness and pride.

### **Indra - Elephant**

Indra, the god of rain and thunderstorms, rides a white elephant called Airavata.



**Kartikeya - Peacock**

Kartikeya, the god of war is seen in pictures as perched on a magnificent peacock.

**Lakshmi - Owl**

Lakshmi, the goddess of fortune, wealth and prosperity mounts the wise old white owl.

**Saraswati - Swan**

Saraswati, the goddess of knowledge, wisdom, learning, music and arts is seen with a swan.

**Shani - Crow/Raven/Vulture**

Lord Shani travel on crow.

**Shiva - Bull**

Shiva, the destroyer, rides a bull named Nandi. The bull being a strong animal symbolizes virility.

**Vishnu - Eagle**

Vishnu, the Preserver/Protector mounts an eagle-like creature called Garuda.

**Yama - Male Buffalo**

Yama, the lord of death, rides a black buffalo.

**Ayyappa - Tiger**

The tiger, which is the national animal of India, is the vehicle of god Ayyappa, who happens to be Shiva's son



Notes

These are just few of Indian gods and goddesses with their beloved animals. Vayu (the wind god) rides on a horse. Varuna (the water god) rides the waves on a crocodile. The river goddess Yamuna drifts on a tortoise. Bhairava, a manifestation of Shiva, has chosen a dog as his vehicle. The list is almost endless.

There many famous tales about the gods and humans and their special animals. Given below are some such stories.

### 1. Yudhishthra and his dog

After the great Mahabharat war, the Pandavas, left for the Himalayas. They were followed by a Dog. They started climbing the Himalayan mountains and soon one by one starting with Draupadi, they fell down and fainted and died. Now only Yudhishthra, the eldest of Pandavas, was left and keeping him company was the dog. Then one day suddenly Indra appeared before Yudhishthra in his chariot. Indra wanted to take Yudhishthra to heaven in the human form as he was the most pious among Pandavas and he was the one who had never strayed from the path of Dharma.

Yudhishthra refuses to enter the chariot without his brothers and Draupadi. Indra assures him that he will meet with them in heaven as they have already reached heaven.

Yudhishthra then asks the Dog to enter the chariot. But Indra objects to it. Indra states that we eat food by sitting on the floor and it is not possible to have a dog roaming in the same place. He also indicates that the presence of a dog will defile heaven. But Yudhishthra is adamant; to him the dog appears as one who has been devoted, loyal in the time of loss of his brothers and Draupadi. He was faithful and loving in the hour of entire solitude.



Finally, Yudhishtira decides to not to go with Indra and decides to stay with the Dog. The dog was none other than Yamadharma himself, Yudhishtira's father. He appeared before Yudhishtira and said, "You are indeed a great man, a righteous man; your compassion for all living beings is exemplary appreciable. A dog has been as dear to you as your own brothers. Your conduct will remain a shining example to all men for all times. Now, you can mount the chariot without any hesitation."

## **2. Lord Krishna and the cows.**

Lord Krishna was called Gopala when he was a baby. Gopala literally means "protector of cows". Gopala was such a lovable little baby that all the cows in the vicinity loved him more than they loved their own calves.

Cows are the support of all the worlds for by their milk they nourish terrestrial beings and by their ghee offered in sacrifice they nourish the denizens of the celestial realms. Nothing can be superior to cows.

Lord Krishna states in Srimad Bhagavad-Gita: chapter 10, verse 28  
dhenunam asmi kamadhukdhenunam -among cows, asmi-I am,  
kamadhuk-the wish fulfilling cow

"Among cows, I am the Kamadhenu, the wish fulfilling cow"

## **2.4 WAYS TO CARE FOR THE ANIMALS**

It is always a good to show kindness to animals, It is easy to give an extra snuggle to our own pets, but here are some more ideas that you can put into practice:

- Spend some time with your special pet.
- Volunteer at an animal shelter.



Notes

- Adopt a pet.
- Foster a pet.
- Make your space more hospitable. (By adding bird feeders and bird baths to your yard),
- Spread the word. Let others know how important it is to be kind to animals, and lead by example.
- Choose cruelty-free products.
- Foster, adopt a dog or cat from your local shelter.
- Do what you can to preserve the sea.
- Leave wild animals in their natural habitat.



### INTEXT QUESTIONS 2.2

Match column A with column B

A	B
1. Surya	(i) bull
2. Shan	(ii) crocodile
3. Saraswati	(iii) eagle
4. Lakshmi	(iv) mouse
5. Shiv	(v) elephant
6. Vishnu	(vi) lion
7. Ganesh	(vii) horse
8. Indra	(viii) owl

9. Durga (ix) swan  
10. Varuna (x) crow

**WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNT**

- Categorization of animals around us.
- The characteristics of these animals.
- The role of these animals in our life.
- The role of animals mentioned in Indian Vedic texts.
- Ways to care for the animals.

**TERMINAL QUESTIONS**

1. With suitable examples list the different categories of animals around us.
2. List any five animals of your area how they are useful to us.
3. List any ten gods and goddesses with their Vahans ( Means of transport).
4. Suggest five ways we can adopt to take care of the animals around us.

**ANSWERS TO INTEXT QUESTIONS**

**2.1.**

1. balance
2. pet

Notes





3. milch

4. donkeys

5. droppings

**2.2.**

1. - (vii)

2. - (x)

3. - (ix)

4. - (viii)

5. - (i)

6. - (iii)

7. - (iv)

8. - (v)

9. - (vi)

10. - (ii)