

Animal Astronauts

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Liz's Blog Space

August 6: Animals in Orbit—Fair or Unfair?

Monkeys, dogs, cats, guinea pigs, frogs—did you know they've all been launched into space?

Fifty years ago, people didn't know how space travel might affect humans. Could they survive the launch and re-entry? What would microgravity do to them? What about space radiation?

So animals were launched into space to study the effects of space on their bodies. This data would then be used to determine if humans could survive the trip. However, many animals died in the process. In 1957, the dog Laika, the first animal to orbit Earth, died when her spacecraft overheated. Other animals couldn't withstand landing and also died.

Today, animals are still sent into space to take part in experiments. "Is that fair? Animals have rights, too!" cry opponents of this practice. "It's cruel to send helpless animals into space!" Supporters have been speaking up, as well: "Animal astronauts have helped us learn more about how living things survive in space! Because of the success of animal flights, we have learned about the effects of microgravity and developed technology that we use daily."

What do you think about sending animals into space? Are there any alternatives available? Anyone else want to comment? Click [here](#) to share your opinions.

