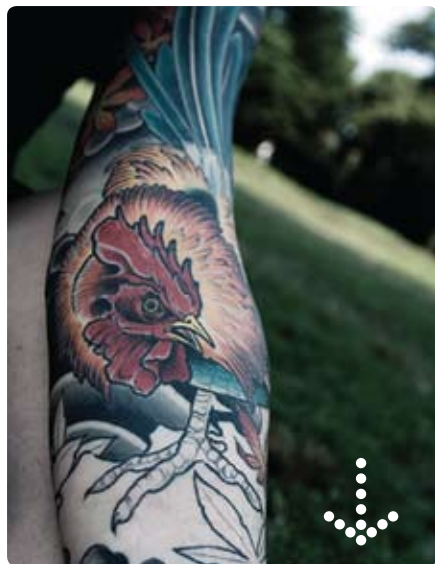


## Tatt's What We're Talking About

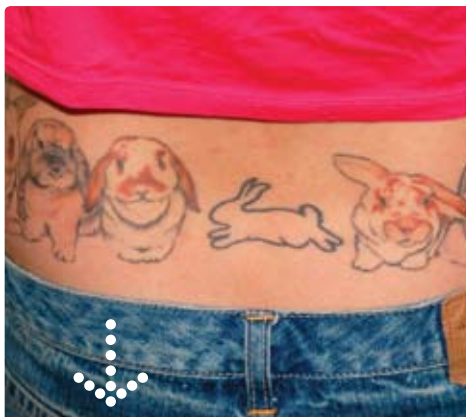
Readers bare their arms (and legs, and backs) to unveil their hearts

We asked to see your ink, and you obliged by rolling up your sleeves, sometimes even taking off your shirts altogether. In response to our request, you sent us photos of your animal-related tattoos and told us the stories behind them—sometimes sad, often touching, always indicative of your love for and commitment to animals. Thanks to all of you who shared your artwork and stories. Below are a few of our favorites—the ones we had space for!



All of my tattoos are animal-related! This rooster, nearly completed, was done by Seth Wood. For work I run a low-cost spay/neuter program in New York City, and in my spare time I work with and foster chickens. They are usually lucky enough to go to Farm Sanctuary. This rooster ... is based on Manny, whom my co-worker found perched on a frozen chain-link fence in an abandoned lot in Harlem one February morning. He was so cold that half of his comb fell off from frostbite. Manny stayed with us for over a month, sitting on my shoulder or helping himself to my meals, until we had a great home for him. He crowed happily all day long, reminding us all of his presence. He was one of the friendliest, kindest creatures I have ever had the pleasure of knowing.

— Aimee Hartmann, Director, Mobile Spay/Neuter Clinics, ASPCA, New York



Just like tattoos, rabbits are addictive. My love of rabbits began eight years ago when I adopted Marbles. I loved him so much that I wanted to help others. Despite being the third-most-abandoned pet, there were few resources in Ontario to help them. With much hard work and determination, I founded Rabbit Rescue Inc., Canada's first registered charity for rabbits.

Whether we are assisting individual rabbit owners, or assisting shelters with large-scale seizures, my own beloved pet bunnies remind me why I work so hard at saving other rabbits. My tattoos depict my special friends, both past and present.

Just when I think I can't face any more cruelty, knowing a glimpse of my furry friends is never far away gives me the strength and courage to go on. I just have to look in the mirror, and the reasons I keep fighting stare back at me.

— Haviva Lush, Executive Director, Rabbit Rescue Inc., Milton, Ontario, Canada

We wish we had more space to print everything that was sent in! To see more of your wonderful tattoos and read the stories behind them, go to [animalsheltering.org/ink](http://animalsheltering.org/ink).



One of the best experiences of my life as a professional animal caretaker was working at a wildlife rehabilitation center in Canada for three months. The majority of the patients were premature harbor seal pups that came in severely dehydrated and underweight. We were responsible for tube feeding [and] supportive care as well as weaning them and making sure they were able to be released back into the wild for a second chance at life. To ensure the survival of these animals we started our day at 7 a.m., pulling 50-pound boxes of herring out of walk-in freezers and putting said herring through a meat grinder to be blended ... with several other ingredients to create their formula. We did this several times a day before each feed. The last feed of the day was [at] midnight. There are no words to describe the feeling of seeing them released back into the wild when they came in half dead. Not all of the seals we worked with survived, but most of them did. There was one I was particularly fond of who unfortunately did not make it. I got him tattooed on me in memory of him, to celebrate him and to always remember the greatest opportunity I've ever had.

— James Gottlieb, Wild Animal Keeper, the Bronx Zoo, New York