

ANIMALS WITH AMAZING ABILITIES.



Most people have mixed feelings about rats and avoid them if they can. Bart Weetjens thinks that we must treat rats as heroes.

Bart started an organisation called APOPO in Tanzania. Bart's organisation trains African giant pouched rats to sniff the ground in order to find underground landmines left in the area past wars. Many of these landmines are still active. They often explode, killing and injuring thousands of people each year. Villagers avoid places where the dangerous landmines are. But much of this land could be used as valuable farmland if the mines weren't there. These rats are helping villagers get their land back.

The giant rats are never mistreated. None of them die doing their work. They even have sunblock put on their ears and tails while they work. And when they find a landmine, they get a treat!

While rats aren't usually seen as heroes, some domestic animals, like dogs, often are. There are many stories about dogs that save lives, but dogs have another lifesaving skill that we're still learning about. Just like landmine-sniffing rats, dogs have an amazing sense of smell. They're now being trained to sniff out chemicals from the body that are connected to certain diseases, sometimes even before doctors or laboratory tests can find them!



So, the next time you see a rat or dog, don't be afraid. Remember, these animal heroes can save lives.

1. Answer the questions:

1. What is Bart Weetjen's organisation? What does it do?
2. Why does Bart think that rats are heroes?
3. How do landmines make life hard for farmer and villagers?
4. What lifesaving skill do dogs have?

5. What is one thing that both rats and dogs can do?

2. Complete the table. Write two problems and two solutions.

PROBLEM	SOLUTION

3. Think and answer the questions:

1. Did the Reading change your feelings about rats? Dogs? Explain

2. What other animals do you know about that have helped people or saved lives? How did they help

3. Imagine you train animals to help people or save lives. What kind of animal would you train? Why? How would it help?