

LEGO® Animals

By Kristijan Vuletin

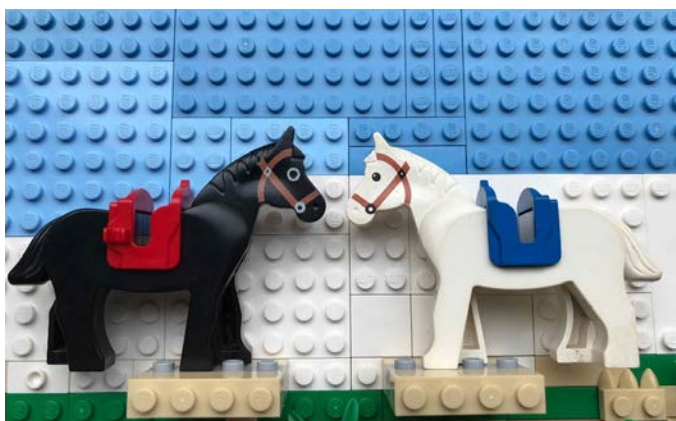


Which came first: the chicken or... the horse? Or was it Fabuland? It may not be the question of all questions, but the first animal to appear in a LEGO® set was – a horse. It was way back in 1984 in the Castle theme. But let us go back further in time: if we want to be 100% accurate, the first animals appeared between 1979 and 1989 in Fabuland. We are not talking about pure animal figures here, but rather a blend of animal heads and humanoid bodies. These lovable figures were featured on the first pages of LEGO® catalogues, and just looking at them will for many of us bring back fond memories of entering the world of the brick.

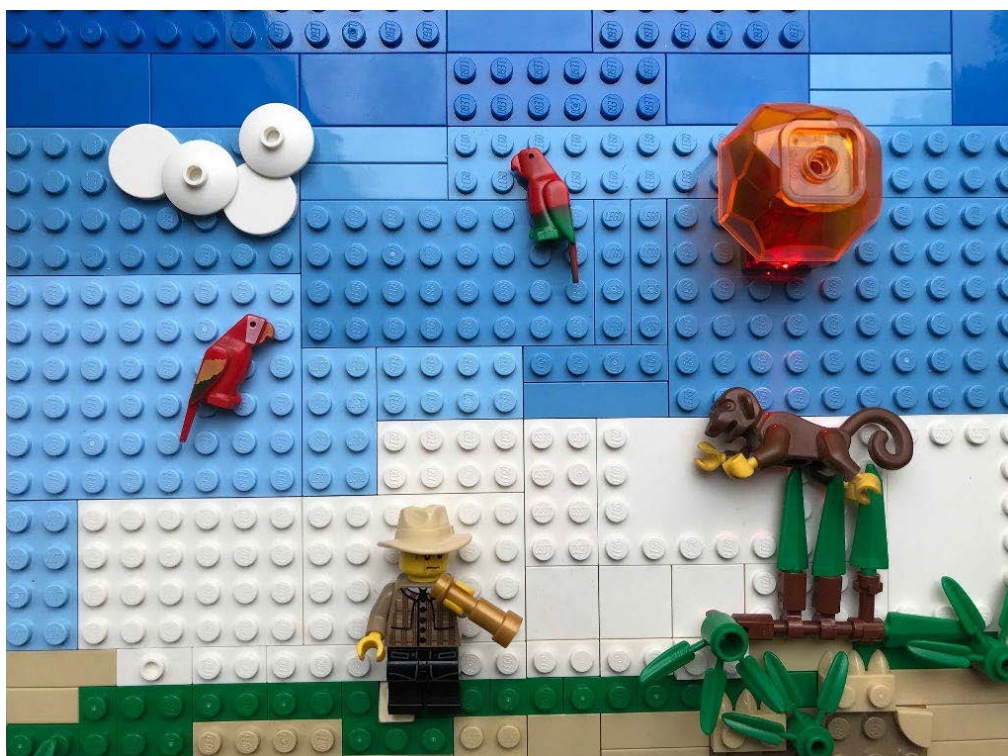


Source: <https://hiveminer.com/Tags/fabuland%2Cminifig/Recent>

Now it is time to move on to 'proper' animals and the way they entered their LEGO® life. As stated above, the Castle theme brought the first animals—horses—in 1984. At first they were black and white, while the brown version came somewhat later, in 1986. They remained unchanged for almost a quarter of a century, only to receive a minor facelift in 2010 – the eyes were altered. From a black circle with a white outline, they became more 'realistic', and since 2013 they have also had movable rear legs.



Other animals did not appear until 1989, when the Pirates theme brought in monkeys, sharks, birds and octopuses. Although the first bird (from 6270 Forbidden Island and 6285 Black Seas Barracuda) was a parrot by shape and colour, the same mould has since been used as a generic bird and has appeared in many colours.

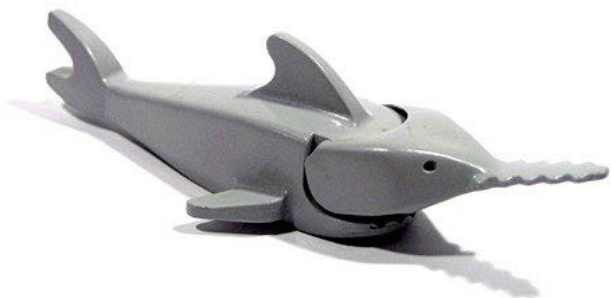


Belville spawned cats and dogs in the nineties, and they have appeared in many themes as well as many colours, ultimately becoming a part of the standard LEGO® System themes. Just as with many other animals, their roots can be traced to Fabuland.



(one of the "I'm ready to eat now" cats and the police dog from 2011)

Thanks to Aquazone (1995-1999), more creatures of the sea appeared: dolphins, sawfish and mantas.



As for small animals, the nineties brought crabs, scorpions, spiders, snakes, starfish and bats.



All animals mentioned are single pieces, apart from the sawfish, which is basically a shark with a different upper jaw. The more complex animals from the 90s era are the dragon and the crocodile.



The new millennium has seen quite a bit of novelty in the LEGO® world, in the company itself and also in the animal kingdom. TLG signed a contract with Warner Bros, which marked Harry Potter's entrance into the brick world. Harry brought with him some new mythical creatures, such as the Hippogriff, the Hungarian Horntail, and the Basilisk (or Fluffy) – the three-headed dog.

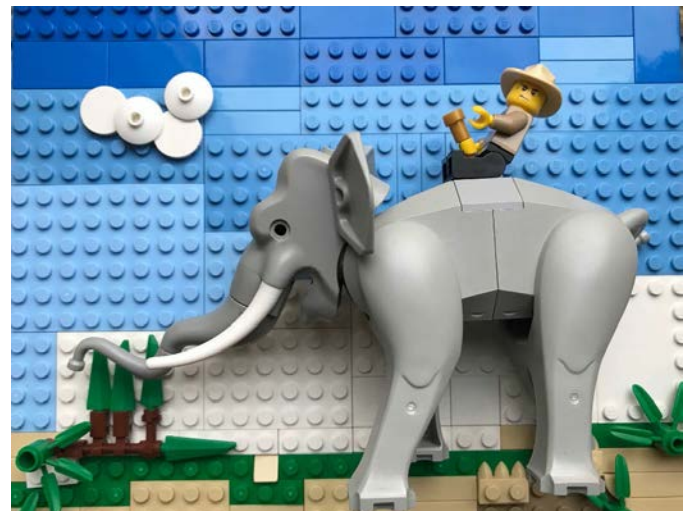




Animals, in a more traditional sense, from this era are rats (in Harry Potter since 2001), frogs (Belville, 2000), elephants (Adventurers, 2003), polar bears (Arctic, 2000), wolves (appearing in many themes since 1976; later known as police dogs) and cows (since 2009).



In the Vikings theme from 2005 we got three new dragons, and the interesting thing about them is that they were designed specifically for these sets and not meant to reappear in another theme.



Speaking of design exclusives, one of the rare animals (if not the rarest) designed for a single set is the lemur from 3828 Air Temple, appearing only in this 2006 set.

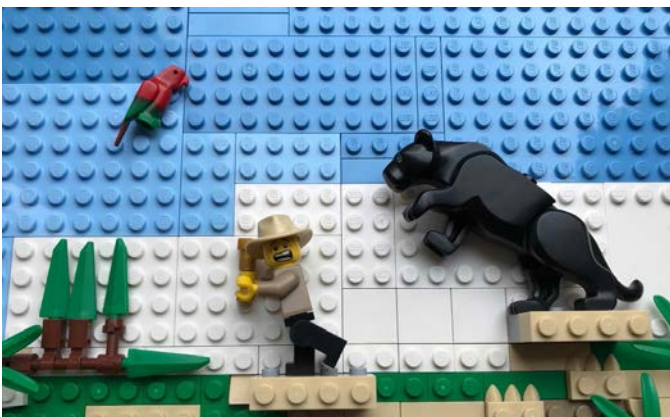


One of our nightmares' worst residents have to be sharks, and they have been living in the LEGO® world since 1989's Pirates.



Apart from appearing in another colour (white), sharks also had a redesign in 2008 in the Agents theme.

In 2017 in the Jungle, a subtheme of City, the newest animals of the LEGO® world are black panthers, mountain lions, tigers and leopards.



LEGO® dinosaurs have come in many editions through Dino Island, Dino and Dino Attack themes. Dino Attack was known in Europe as Dino 2010, and the name was not the only difference – instead of huge weapons, these sets had hooks and cages for catching the dinos.



Finally, dinosaurs were also a part of the Studios theme, which was launched in 2000 and focused on stop-motion films.

Looking at the fourth iteration of the popular T-Rex, it is hard to imagine that the first time it ever appeared in a set was in



1997... in DUPLO.

So as you see, LEGO® animals have grown not only in numbers, but also in shapes, colours and through tiny improvements. For many they are often the main reason to buy a set, and the value of several have grown over the years thanks to rarity or large demand.

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