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OCTOBER 31, 2007

Private jets for furry trust-funders



According to OneSky Jets, a private jet charter company in the US, 15 per cent of its customers say their main reason for chartering a jet is to fly their dog, cat or other pet around.

I have observed [before](#) that the twin phenomena of growing dispersion of wealth and sentimentality towards animals is starting to produce bizarre effects. Leona Helmsley, the hotel magnate, left her dog Trouble a \$12m trust fund when she died earlier this year.

OneSky does come up with some plausible reasons why people charter jets for their pets. It is very hard to squeeze them into the passenger cabins of commercial flights, the authorities only allow pets to travel in aircraft holds when the outside temperature is not too hot or cold, and there have been a lot of pet deaths in transit.

Still, if the figure is accurate, it says something remarkable, and a bit disturbing, about how much people who can afford it will splash out on their pets. OneSky cites the case of a woman from Chicago who spent \$12,000 to fly her two elderly dogs to Maine. That's a lot of dog biscuits.

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I am the FT's chief business commentator and this blog is about business, finance, media, technology and related matters. I live in New York so there is a bias towards US topics but I range more widely. Comments and criticism, which hopefully are at least as interesting as anything I write, are welcome. There is more about me [on my columnist page](#).

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