

Domestic Rabbit Fact Sheet (*Oryctolagus cuniculus*)

Rabbits are long eared herbivorous (eat only plant matter) mammals with a keen sense of sight and smell and hearing. They have powerful strong legs that they use for hopping and digging burrows.

All the pet rabbits we have today are descended from the European wild rabbit. They live underground in warrens or burrows. Males are called bucks, females are called does and the babies, born naked, deaf and blind, are called kits. Does have many large litters a year. Rabbits have many predators including foxes, raccoons and dogs.

Like rodents, rabbit's teeth continue to grow so they need to gnaw on things to wear them down. They eat grass and hay. I give mine pellets and sometimes carrots as a treat.

Although rabbits in the wild live only about a year, a healthy indoor rabbit will live an average of 5-10 years.

Hares are different than rabbits because their kits are born fully furred and active and they make shallow nests on the ground. This is also true of the Eastern cottontail.

If well cared for, rabbits make an excellent pet because they are quiet, friendly and playful.

Box Turtle Fact Sheet

Box turtles are reptiles which may live to be more than 100 years old! They live most of their lives in a fairly small area.

Most states list them as a protected species, so you should not bring one home if you find it in the wild. The biggest cause of their dwindling numbers is fragmentation of habitat. While a female may lay hundreds of eggs in her lifetime only 3 or 4 babies may make it to adulthood. Taking care of them properly as a pet is very difficult.

Box turtles got their name because when they are frightened they can pull in their head, tail, and limbs into their shell and clamp it shut.

When they are young, box turtles are mainly carnivorous, eating things like slugs and worms. As they grow older they eat more plant matter and especially like red things, such as strawberries and tomatoes.

Box turtles hibernate during the winter.

They live on land but like to soak in water sometimes.



Hedgehog Fact Sheet

A hedgehog is a small mammal covered with a thick coat of sharp spines. Often mistaken as a relative of the porcupine which is a rodent, hedgehogs are actually related to moles and are *insectivores*. In their natural habitat, the hedgehog diet consists mostly of insects, slugs, eggs and even baby birds.

The hedgehog sleeps in small burrows or nest of grass and tangled leaves under shrubs, rocks, or hollow logs during the day and comes out at night to eat insects (nocturnal). They are found naturally in Europe, Africa, and Asia, and have been introduced to New Zealand. Most of the pet hedgehogs in the United States are African Pygmy Hedgehogs.

Hedgehogs cannot see very well but they have a keen sense of hearing. Occasionally a hedgehog will produce foamy saliva when stimulated by strong smells or tastes and smear it all over their body. This act, called self-anointing, is little understood. Some species can swim and climb, but mostly they stay on the ground.

I threatened. the hedgehog freezes and rolls into a ball with its spines sticking out for defense. They do not have many enemies!

Hedgehogs usually have 4 to 6 babies which are called "hoglets". They are born naked with ears and eyes closed. Adults are solitary.

Hedgehogs in the wild live from 3-8 years; in captivity they may live up to 10 years.



Domestic Ferret Fact Sheet

The domestic ferret has the formal name of "mustela putorius furo" which means "stinky little thief". They should not be confused with the endangered "Black-footed Ferret" which is a completely different species.

In many ways ferrets act like kittens that never grow up. They have lots of energy, curiosity, and potential for chaos all their lives.

They have poor eyesight and can only see in red and blue, but their sense of hearing and smell is very keen. They are cousins to badgers, otters, weasels, minks and SKUNKS and all have a musk like odor.

Domestic ferrets live for about 6-8 years although some live up to 12 years.

Males are called "hobs", females "jills" and the babies are called "kits". A group of ferrets is called a "business".

Although they sleep 18-20 hours a day, ferrets need lots of attention and lots of time outside their cage to play.

They are meat eaters and excellent hunters.

Chinchilla Fact Sheet

The chinchilla is a rodent that lives in colonies high in the Andes Mountains of Western South America.

Chinchillas make their dens in rock crevasses and in burrows. This little mammal can jump 6 feet straight up!

Few chinchillas remain in the wild (they are an endangered species) due to being hunted for their fur by man to make coats, but they are common in captivity. Ten were brought to the United States in 1923 and almost all the chinchillas in captivity are their descendents. They are the softest animals in the world.

Chinchillas are primarily plant eaters (herbivores). They do not drink much water. Like all rodents, their front teeth continue to grow throughout their lives, and they must gnaw and chew to wear their teeth down.

Chinchillas range from 9-15 inches long plus a tail that is 3-6 inches. The blue-gray coat is extremely soft and dense. The coat protects the chinchilla from the extremely cold weather of the high Andes and helps prevent water evaporation. Keen sight and acute hearing warn the chinchillas of predators.

Owls, foxes, cougars and mountain lions prey upon chinchillas.

Females give birth to a litter of 1 to 4 young. Newborns have hair, teeth, and open eyes at birth. Newborns can eat plants at birth, but also drink their

