

ALL ABOUT Adopting a Ferret

Although they're small, ferrets can be a big responsibility! In support of Adopt a Ferret Month, Oxbow designed this guide to help prospective pet parents through the process of adopting a ferret, and to provide some tips and information that should be considered throughout the adoption process.

BEFORE ADOPTING: CONSIDERATIONS

- **Research ferrets before bringing one home.** Ferrets are inquisitive, social, and mischievous. They are an utter delight, but familiarize yourself with their care and personalities. Will you have enough time to provide the interaction and care they need to thrive?



- **Ferret bills add up.** Can you provide the funds needed for their care? Ferrets require high-quality food, large living spaces, lots of enrichment, litter, litterboxes, and regular veterinary care. These are all expensive, ongoing, and necessary costs.
- **Ferrets are a family commitment.** Even the smartest children typically don't have the maturity to be the sole caregiver for another living thing. A ferret needs daily social interactions and this should not be a one-person job. Ferrets should be part of the family!
- **Ferrets shouldn't be kept in an enclosure all the time.** They need time to explore and socialize. Since they're inquisitive and have little fear, they will get into the smallest spots. It's important to ferret-proof your home to help ensure your feisty friend's safety.
- **Ferrets are very social animals** and need daily interaction (or better yet, interaction multiple times a day). It should be part of your daily routine to spend time with them beyond the time you feed them, change their water, and scoop their litterbox.
- **Find a local ferret-savvy veterinarian.** Find a vet who has experience with ferrets that you can trust. It's important to do this prior to there being an emergency. Ferrets should also have regular check-ups, just like your dogs and cats.
- **Do you know who will care for your pet if you go out of town?** Speak with family and friends before adopting to ensure they're open to pet-sitting. Some rescues also offer boarding services.

WHERE SHOULD YOU START?

- **Google search** "ferret rescue near [your town/city]." You can also search "ferret rescue" on social media platforms to see what rescues might be in your area.
- **Petfinder** is a great resource to find rescues. This website also lets you learn about individual animals before contacting the rescue.
- While less common than other pets, many **humane societies** take in ferrets that need a home. They may also provide suggestions for other rescues and resources.
- **Ask friends and family.** It's possible you can find a ferret who needs to be rehomed through word of mouth and adopt them before they even enter the shelter.



While a young kit may be at the peak of health, learn about common illnesses and diseases that can occur as ferrets age. Insulinoma and adrenal gland disease can be common in older ferrets.

With good care, and depending on an animal's unique genes, a ferret can live to be at least 7 years old. Make sure you're ready for this commitment!



PRECAUTIONS

- **Unfortunately, grifters exist!** Grifters may act like a rescue to “flip” animals they find for free, buy from an auction, or use unscrupulous means to obtain, selling an animal quickly without conducting a health assessment or providing any necessary medical care. If a purported rescue won't answer questions, or if you're not allowed to see the ferret's living conditions, you may want to find alternatives.
- **Consider a short quarantine.** While reputable rescues do their best to not adopt out sick animals, if you have a business of ferrets at home consider enacting a short isolation period with your new ferret. If they're sick with something contagious they can then be treated before joining their new friends!

The environment you provide to your pet is all they know about the world. Make sure their world is happy, healthy, and enriching!



QUESTIONS TO ASK THE RESCUE:

- **How do I make an appointment** to see ferrets up for adoption?
- **Can I see the facility where ferrets are kept?** (Keep in mind, some rescues only keep animals in foster homes and don't have a facility; regardless of where the animal is kept, the environment should be clean, safe, and temperature controlled.)
- **Does this ferret have any special needs or particular health issues?** What was their life like before coming to the rescue?
- **What kind of health checks are done** before pets are considered ready for adoption?
- **What are this ferret's likes, dislikes, and general personality?** Are they shy or outgoing? Do they like to be handled? Are there any specific behavioral issues that you need to be aware of?
- **What veterinarian does this ferret see?** Have there been any recent visits, and what were they seen for?
- **What cage, food, hay, and other products do you recommend? Is this ferret litter-trained?**
- **What food is this ferret currently eating?** Can you take some food home so to help with diet transition and prevent stomach upset? (It's courteous to offer the rescue a small monetary donation in addition to adoption fees to make up for the amount of food you are taking home)

WELCOME HOME!

Congratulations! Your adoption application was approved! These steps can help your new friend adjust to living in your home:

1. SET UP THE ENCLOSURE BEFORE BRINGING THEM HOME

This will allow them to settle in right away. Let them explore and get to know their new home so they start to feel comfortable.

2. BE PATIENT AND GIVE THEM SPACE THE FIRST FEW DAYS

It depends on every individual's personality, but your new ferret may need more time to adjust before they're okay with being handled. This has been a big change for them and they may be feeling a little shy!

3. FIND OPPORTUNITIES FOR PLAY AND INTERACTION

Let your ferret play while you're getting ready for work or school in the morning, include them in family movie night, or let them help you make dinner. Get them involved in fun enrichment and begin training to make your interactions extra delightful. Ferrets are guaranteed to keep you laughing!