



Domestic Ferret

Mustela putorius furo



Linguine

I was born October 6th, 2019 and came to the Racine Zoo on December 20th, 2019.

I live with my brother and sister in the small mammal building by Walkabout Creek. My siblings and I are also educational ambassador animals; meaning you could meet us on programs!

You can tell me apart from my siblings because I am the darkest colored and have a black "mask" around my eyes.

Fettucine

I was born October 6th, 2019 and came to the Racine Zoo on December 20th, 2019.

I live with my brother and sister in the small mammal building by Walkabout Creek. My siblings and I are also educational ambassador animals; meaning you could meet us on programs!

You can tell me apart from my siblings because I am the largest and my fur is completely white!



Rotini

I was born October 6th, 2019 and came to the Racine Zoo on December 20th, 2019.

I live with my two brothers in the small mammal building by Walkabout Creek. My siblings and I are also educational ambassador animals; meaning you could meet us on programs!

You can tell me apart from my siblings because I am the smallest and have lighter gray fur (I am also the only girl of the group)!



FERRETS AT A GLANCE

- Ferrets have long claws for burrowing and like to sleep in dens and other enclosed areas.
- Like skunks, ferrets have scent glands near their anus and will release secretions when startled.
- Long tubular bodies and short limbs allow them to move freely in confined spaces and turn around in narrow tunnels.

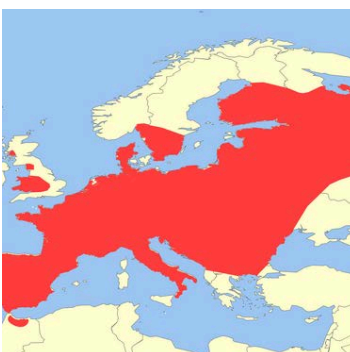


up to 18in long
up to 5 lbs

Avg. life expectancy in native habitats:
5-10 years

Avg. life expectancy in human care:
up to 12 years

WHERE ARE NATIVE FERRET HABITATS LOCATED?



This species is domesticated from the European polecat, whose range goes throughout western Palaeartic region to the Urals in the Russian Federation. Most wild ferrets live in grasslands, meadows, wetlands, and forest edges. Relatives, like the black-footed ferret, live in prairie dog burrows.

Domestic Ferret Behaviors

STASHING

The word ferret in Latin means “little thief.” Ferrets love to steal and stash items away.

We will often grab pieces of our ferret diet and hide them around our habitat to enjoy later in the day.



PLAYING

They're playful, and love to play in tubes, hide in dark corners and chase balls. Ferrets are curious and love digging and trying to escape.

We often get to go for “ferret playtime” in our education classroom. They set up a variety of toys and fun activities for us to explore!



SLEEPING

Ferrets are crepuscular, which means they are active at dawn and dusk. They sleep 14-18 hours a day.

We can often be seen cuddling together in our home. Our keepers give us sweatshirts to crawl inside on sleep in to feel safe!



SCENT MARKING

Ferrets perform a variety of scent-marking actions including wiping, body rubbing and chin rubbing.

Scent marking helps us communicate with each other, and helps us feel comfortable in our home. We prefer to be quite stinky!



- Ferrets were domesticated thousands of years ago to control the rodent populations in barns and warehouses. They are descendants of the European polecat.
- Ferrets, and other weasel species, perform “weasel war dances” to distract and confuse prey while they close in on them from several directions. This consists of wild thrashing, flipping, and rolling movements. In domestic ferrets, this is typically seen as play behavior.
- The word ferret in Latin means “little thief.” Ferrets love to steal and stash items away.

Domestic Ferret Conservation

Although domesticated animals, ferrets face threats in the form of irresponsible breeding and practices within the pet trade.

This species of ferret is not listed on the CITES list due to it being a domesticated species.

How can we help?

The only wild species of ferret in North America is the black-footed ferret. Through conservation programs conducted in facilities across the country, including several AZA zoos, over 200 black-footed ferrets now make up the wild population in the western United States. Supporting AZA accredited Species Survival Plans is one of the best ways to bring species back from the brink of extinction!