

Paw Print Issue #26 July 2013



Hot, Hot, Hot!

As I write, New England is suffering the 4th heat wave of this summer. I recently spoke to a lady whose ferret had not been eating. We talked about the typical reasons a ferret might lose his appetite and she was given lots of feeding tips. A few days later, she called to say he was eating better. It occurred to me to ask, "Do you have air conditioning?" Her answer was no.

Her ferret had stopped eating during one of the heat waves, and started again when it got cooler. While I'd like to think it was our advice that helped - and it probably helped some - the answer could have simply been that the heat was bothering him. Please remember that even if you love the high temperatures and don't mind if your hair frizzes into a hank of steel wool, high temps are not good for ferrets. Nature designed them to live in temperate zones. There are other things to be concerned about in summer, too. The article below has ways to protect your ferret all through the season. Stay cool!

L. Vanessa Gruden, Shelter Director

Summer Health

Summer presents unique challenges to your ferrets' safety & health. Here are some important tips to help prevent illness:

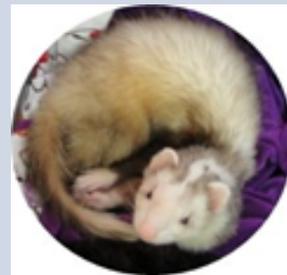
Air Conditioning. Is an air conditioner preventative medicine? Yes! Anytime the temperature is over 85 degrees (29 Celsius) your ferrets are in danger of heatstroke. In a heat wave, when the overnight temperatures do not drop enough, the danger increases greatly. Fans will not keep them cool enough - remember, because you sweat through your skin, air flowing over your body will help cool you, but ferrets do not sweat. It is false economy to avoid using air conditioning - a small window unit is only about \$100 and the cost to operate can be as low as \$25 per month. Compare that to the hundreds of dollars in vet expenses it could cost if even one of your pets becomes sick; and heatstroke CAN kill your ferret.

Mild symptoms include lethargy and loss of appetite. More dangerous symptoms are heavy panting, mucous from nose/mouth, extreme lethargy, unconsciousness, or seizures. If you see these, get to a vet ASAP.

- Older or very young ferrets are most at risk.
- Make sure your pets have plenty of fresh water. Add a couple ice cubes for a fun, cool toy.
- Keep cages out of the sun; move them temporarily to a basement if necessary. A bathroom with a tile floor is another cool place.
- Use natural fiber bedding; some ferrets enjoy sleeping on a small sheepskin or flokati (woven natural wool rug).
- Never leave your pet alone in a car even if the temperature seems OK and it's in the shade - the sun moves and cars heat up FAST.
- Never keep your ferret outdoors during heat waves without ways for them to get cool - underground "dig holes" are often used in Europe and Australia.
- If you must travel with your pet, bring ice packs - you never know when an accident or traffic jam may strand you on the road.

Outdoor Adventures. Many people enjoy bringing their pets along on vacation or on trips to the beach or park.

- Avoid too much sun. Ferrets, especially those that are white, silver, or those with thin hair due to age or adrenal disease, can be sunburned. Keep them in shade as much as possible.
- Albinos have very sensitive eyes and should be kept out of direct sun during the strongest hours of the day.
- At the beach, ferrets might snuffle a lot of sand as they happily dig. Watch to make sure they don't get so excited that sand goes up their nose. Hot sand can burn their paw pads, also.
- Never take your pet outdoors without a harness & leash. They can move much faster than you think, especially if frightened.
- Always test the harness indoors before venturing out to make sure it's secure.



Did you Know Summer is the BEST Time to Adopt?

Every animal shelter fills up during the summer months. Kids go off to college or people move and animals are abandoned. Fewer folks adopt, too, because of vacations or outdoor activities. So the selection of animals for anyone thinking about adding to their furry family is GREAT.

FACT has lots of ferrets for adoption, including young, healthy, well-behaved wuzzles. **E-mail us at info@ferret-fact.org** for an application.

You can see the current list of ferrets **here**. If you're not nearby, please contact your local shelter; they're sure to have animals available, also. Thanks!

Special Ferrets

Shaylee was found outside and brought to the New Haven Animal Shelter. She had a golfball-sized tumor on her shoulder that had ruptured. Their shelter couldn't pay for surgery; FACT took her in and had the growth removed. You can read more about Shaylee on our Facebook page. Shaylee's tumor has been analyzed and is benign.

Shaylee is barely a year old and loves to hop & play with other youngsters, but she isn't hyperactive. Her stitches are out, her wound is healing, and when fall arrives we expect all of her hair to grow back. Now Shaylee just needs a wonderful, new home! Shaylee isn't on Petfinder as yet, so here's your chance to adopt someone truly special. Contact us for an application! Info@ferret-fact.org

Bugs! Summer is flea season! Once fleas invade your home, they require a major effort to eliminate. To keep these pests out:

- Always use flea products meant for ferrets or kittens ONLY. Products for dogs are much too strong and can make your ferret very sick.
- Do not “double up” on products – for example, using a “spot on” preventative plus flea spray. The insecticides in more than one can cause an overdose.
- Use flea spray before you bring your pet outdoors. Avoid spraying in their face.
- Another option is to flea bathe after bringing your pet inside. If your pet has been outside for an extended period, like on a camping trip, be sure to leave the shampoo lather on for at least 4-5 minutes to kill both the adult fleas and any eggs they might have laid.
- If you plan to take your pets outdoors a lot, talk to your vet about using a “spot” product that is applied only once a month. Veterinary products are usually more effective than those sold without prescriptions, and your vet can advise on the correct dosage.
- Have dogs or cats that go outside? Make sure they are treated – spot products are easiest – so they don’t bring fleas inside to your ferrets.
- Consider using a natural flea product around your doors all summer. Wildlife or feral cats foraging around your doorway may leave fleas that will hitch a ride indoors on your socks or pants. An interesting tip: those annoying black ants that you see in the spring are GOOD – they eat flea larvae in your yard.

Mosquitoes carry heartworm, which ferrets can get. Patch holes in window screens. Avoid standing pools of water in your yard where mosquitoes will quickly breed. Consider putting up some bat houses! Bats are great mosquito killers.

Ticks can attach to ferrets, also. Luckily, most of the flea remedies available work on ticks. If one gets on and engorges, use tweezers or a special tool to pull it out, making sure you remove the whole tick. Hint: baby ticks will look like tiny white bumps – it’s when they fill with blood that they turn black and grow larger.

Cuterebra is a type of fly that lays its larvae just under an animal’s skin. Usually seen in livestock, a ferret that has been outdoors can also be bitten. As the larva grows, it causes a large bump with a hole in the middle. It should be removed by a vet as the larva can die inside and cause infection.

Little food bugs will invade wherever food crumbs are, especially in hot weather.

- Promptly sweep up munched food bits.
- When you clean, look under EVERYTHING –ferrets have an amazing ability to get food under cabinets or inside places you would never think possible.
- Keep food stored in secure containers with tight lids.

Summer is a fun time, but it’s no time to relax vigilance! Keeping your ferret well is a year-round task.



Events

FACT will be at the Petsense store in Norwich, CT for their adoption weekend, September 7 & 8. is a chain that sells NO pets, only pet supplies.

We’re hoping to set up interviews for the weekend before - because if you pick up your new furry friend at the store, Petsense will give you a gift of food & supplies valued at more than \$100!

Wish List

Here’s some items we’re ESPECIALLY in need of right now!

Postage Stamps - any denomination! Got any penny or 10 cents stamps around? We’ll use them!

Staples Rewards - Any unused Rewards bonuses from their store loyalty program can be donated. We REALLY need a new printer and those Rewards are just like dollars. Not a member but go through lots of ink or toner? Become one - it’s free - and Staples will recycle your ink and toner and give you \$2 per cartridge back as a Reward. Just send us the printed Reward or the code.

Thank you!



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