

Paws-It!

Washington Ferret Rescue & Shelter

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Deafness isn't a defect.

Written By: Christine Auda

Have you fallen in love with a fabulous fuzzy at your local shelter only to find out his cute little ears are incapable of hearing you call his name, or even scream it for that matter? He's stone-deaf, full of love, but having a hard time finding his forever home because potential adopters fear parenting may be both difficult and futile. The good news is that sharing your home with a deaf ferret is a fairly easy and rewarding experience. Once armed with a few tips, you can turn this seemingly overwhelming situation into a "happy ever after" love fest.

Believe it or not, deafness in ferrets is fairly common. A deaf ferret usually has a genetic defect called Waardenburg Syndrome. Amazingly enough, about 75 percent of "blaze" and "panda" colored ferrets are deaf. This defect causes the white "badger stripe" down the face of a

ferret. Mutations of this stripe show up in panda ferrets which have white faces and heads.

A deaf ferret is just like a hearing ferret in every way except that he can't hear. He loves, plays, causes mischief and wants your attention like his hearing brothers and sisters.



However, it's important that you gain his trust and make him feel as secure as possible. This occurs through special training, socialization, a calm environment and loving contact.

One of the best ways to train your deaf ferret is through sign language. You can choose one sign that you'll continue us-

ing every time your little furball gets into trouble. It may be best to sign, make an angry face and add in some scruffing, too. Your training will go like this: Sign, angry face and scruff. Re-do the sign and turn your ferret facing away from the crime scene and point for him to "go." If he returns to the mischief, repeat the sequence.

There will be times that your sweet fuzzy will be missing in action. The good news is you can train him to come out of hiding by using a flashlight or laser pointer. (Never shine the light in a ferret's eyes!) You can set up training sessions by offering him a treat, like Ferretone skin and coat supplement, and by giving him loving attention. As with any training, it's best to practice each day so your little one gets used to it. Before you know it, should he get lost, you'll be able to

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How to Contact Us!

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Shelter Email:
washingtonferret@yahoo.com

Website:
<http://washingtonferret.org>

have him come to you as soon as you flash the light or laser. Have the bottle of Ferretone open so that he can smell the luscious treat waiting for him. This technique can be lifesaving in emergency situations, as well.

It's easy to creep up on an unassuming deaf ferret, so remember to signal him first so he doesn't try and nip you out of fear. Hitting the floor is a fine way to signal him, because he can feel and respond to the vibrations. Also tapping your deaf ferret's cage or blowing on his fur (never the face) before touching him helps him to become aware of your presence so the he won't be as startled and will be less likely to nip. This also serves as a gentle wake-up call for your fert. It's best that you choose one type of alert and stick with it so he doesn't get confused.

If you find your deaf ferret is a deep sleeper, you may have to nudge him softly to wake him for

playtime. Otherwise, he may sleep right through his favorite time of day, playtime with you! Give him extra love and hold him closely to help increase trust. It may sound odd, but it helps to talk softly in a



sweet manner while holding your deaf fert. He can feel the vibrations in your chest and throat, and that will help him bond and trust you even more.

If you have other ferrets at home, it's vital that you observe

your deaf fuzzy while he's playing with his ferret friends. He may play rough with them because he cannot hear when another ferret vocalizes that he's had enough, and another ferret might get hurt accidentally. It's up to you to carefully observe this behavior, otherwise you might not realize what's happening until there is a problem.

On a positive note, a deaf ferret may actually be less excitable than a hearing fert once he is assimilated into your household. He can't hear loud, offensive noises such as barking dogs, blaring alarms, horns, or loud children, for example. He'll only respond to what he sees and smells, potentially making him more easy going. Also he may be a better sleeper because of his so-called defect. If you choose to adopt a deaf ferret you may have a more peaceful animal to love. Now that's news worth "hearing"!

What's New?

BIG News: We're Moving!

It's official, we'll be moving in the next few months to Kirkland. Watch our website for updates & a special edition of the newsletter will go out as we get closer to the big move. We're looking at moving during the month of May. We're very excited to have a permanent home for the shelter!

Thank you:

Big thank yous go out to our new weekly shelter cleaners (Karen, Toni & Robyn) and to our wonderful article writers (Robyn & Christine)! And a big thank you to all of the volunteers that help the whole shelter run so smoothly. We couldn't do it without you :)



Protecting your ferret; Creating a poison-free home. *Written By: Robyn Haaf, RN, BSHS*

Spring weather is just around the corner and thoughts of spring cleaning, gardening and home improvements are going through our heads. With all that activity going on, keep in mind some of the hazards that may arise for our furry friends.

Blooming plants go hand in hand with spring weather so be aware that many of those beauti-

ful bloomers can be poisonous to ferrets and other animals. Azaleas, heliotrope, daffodils, amaryllis, primrose and tulips can be fatal if ingested. Many potting soils contain ingredients such as perlite, which are potentially dangerous if inhaled or ingested. A more complete listing of resources for plants follows this article.

Foods that we commonly have

around the house at this time of year can prove dangerous to ferrets as well. Chocolate or any candy with Xylitol is toxic for ferrets, dogs and cats. As little as ½ ounce per body weight can cause problems and negatively affect the pancreas. Teach children and adults that too much of a good thing is dangerous to your ferrets.

Cleaning agents under cup-



boards or in closets can cause stomach upset, diarrhea or severe burns in the mouth. A ferret's favorite game is to get into a cupboard and knock over the containers. Spilling a small amount can be dangerous and difficult to detect in the darker areas. Other common household items that can be toxic include mothballs, potpourri and essential oils, fabric softener sheets, batteries, Play Dough (high levels of salt) and pennies, which contain life-threatening amounts of zinc.

Ferret Disaster Kit

Mudslides. Power outages. Gale-force winds. Earthquakes. Volcanic eruptions. Flooding. Chemical spills. Fire. All these unexpected occurrences require evacuation of people and pets at a moment's notice and sometimes less than that. Stop for a minute and think...in less than five minutes, can you put your hands on everything you would need for your ferrets' comfort and safety during a disaster? Yep. That's what I thought.

Well. Let's roll up those sleeves and get started.



Automotive products should be stored away from ferret-accessible areas. Motor oil, gasoline and especially, antifreeze can be deadly to ferrets. As little as one milliliter of antifreeze (three – five drops) can kill a ferret.

Rat, mouse and slug bait all contain sweet-smelling ingredients to attract the unwanted visitors. Make sure your ferrets are kept well away from these products. Ferrets don't care if something in the corner is poisonous; they just want to taste it.

Cleaning solutions for carpets leave a residue or high amounts of perfume that can potentially cause respiratory difficulties for ferrets. Chemical out-gassing from new carpets is more highly concentrated near the source, and if inhaled over a long period of time, can create illnesses that are difficult to diagnose.

Ferret-proofing a home is very

Plastic grocery bags – double them up and use as grab-n-go containers for flashlights, hard-soled shoes or slippers and extra bottles of water. Tie them to a bedpost or duct tape them to a mattress. It's hard to lose a bed in the dark.

Prepare an emergency kit for ferret food, medicines, water containers and vaccination records. Use large ziplock baggies for anything that won't survive getting wet. Keep it all in one place such as a plastic box with a tight fitting lid. Rubbermaid makes a million various sizes and won't mind taking your money for them. Remember to keep it light and portable. You may be running with this.

Try to have 3 – 5 days worth of food and medicine to take with you. In multiple ferret households this may translate to several large bags of food (aren't they all multiple ferret households?) so think like a ferret and figure out alter-

similar to childproofing except that ferrets can fit into a space the size of a quarter while toddlers have those opposable thumbs to help them into trouble. Get down at ferret level to see what is accessible and tempting to your fuzzy babies and take away the temptations and the opportunities. Keeping the home safe reduces that nagging worry in the back of your mind and frees you up to think of other, more enjoyable activities.

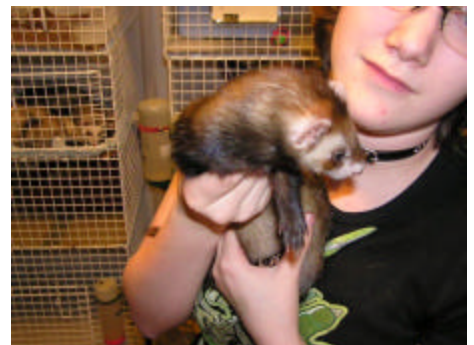
More information can be found at these resources:

www.napcc.aspc.org
www.texasferret.org/news/199801.shtml
www.hsus.org/pets/pet_care/protect_your_pet_from_common_household_dangers/foods_potentially_to_pets.html
www.ferretdepot.com/poisonousplants.shtml

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native places to cache the food... friends and family, local storage unit, a retired school bus, under the car seats---you get the picture. Set up a rotation system for the food and water so that it doesn't grow old and stale.

Look into securing the taller ferret cages to a wall to avoid tumbling the ferrets around during an earthquake. Travel carriers should be close by and easy to grab. Toss the ferrets in and worry *later* about any fighting that may happen. Better to have grumpy ferrets rather than the alterna-



tive. Pillowcases (without the pillows) will serve as a quick carrier bag for 2 – 3 ferrets, as will gym bags, duffel bags or backpacks. Avoid garbage bags because they tear easily from sharp ferret claws and they don't allow enough oxygen for little ferret lungs.

Be prepared to find temporary shelter for your ferrets with neighbors, family or friends. Have a plan in place for someone to check on your pets in case you can't make it home due to roadblocks or lack of transportation. Finally, keep multiple copies of veterinary records, microchip numbers, current pictures and contact numbers in as many places as you can and update them when changes are made.

During Katrina, hundreds of heartbroken evacuees were forced to leave their beloved pets behind and were never able to find them again. Some cities have changed their regulations and policies to

allow pets to be evacuated as well but don't expect it to apply to every situation. These steps will help you and your ferrets stay safe in the event of an emergency and help reduce the stress and trauma of separation.

Being prepared for disaster keeps you, your family and your ferrets safer in an unexpected situation. Should the unthinkable happen and your ferrets are separated from you, there are organizations that help rescue and recover ferrets (and other pets) in disaster areas.

www.ferretcongress.org International Ferret Congress – their mission is to enhance the welfare of ferrets, provide communication and information to owners and veterinarians and creators of ELF – Emergency Love Fund.

www.petfinder.com Lists shelters and classifieds for those who have lost pets or are looking to

adopt.

www.noahswish.org Noah's Wish – a simple and straightforward mission statement – to keep animals alive during disasters.

www.uan.org United Animal Nations – they focus on animals in danger or in need of intervention to improve their lives. Think of them as Humane Society officers with lots of legal and monetary backing.

<http://www.creatures.com/WA.html> Washington Online Pet Resources – multiple links to organizations in Washington State and to resources in other states.



Ferrets Seeking Homes ...

Adoptable Ferrets

Please see the [adoptable pet list](#) on our website for current availabilities. Adoption fees are \$100 for one ferret, \$150 for two, and we have a [foster program](#) as well. All ferrets have been vaccinated against Canine Distemper & Rabies and have been spayed/neutered and descented (the latter is unless otherwise noted).

Bones & Widget could not stay in their home and have come to the shelter to be adopted. Bones is a 2 year old silver/sable boy and Widget is a 2 year old dark sable boy. They are sweet, sweet boys and would make great first ferrets for someone.

Charlie & Waffles were turned over to our shelter from Animal Control. They seem like sweethearts and we'd love to see them

get into a new home.

Codo & Podo are adorable ferrets. They are UTD on vaccines, have been spayed/neutered and are all set to go to their new home.

Dante is a 6 year old lovebug of a ferret. He has been an only ferret for some time, and will likely need to find a home by himself. He is a very nice boy!

Harvey is a 4.5 year old silver mitt male. He is a cuddly & kissy ferret that would prefer to be an only child.

Jekyll, Hyde, Tyson & Hannibal are newer residents at our shelter. They're from the UW, and two of the boys are very sweet, and the other two are (presently) nippers. They get along well with other ferrets and are currently learning their man-



ners in the shelter.

Loki (DEW, m, 4 yrs) & **Chai** (sable, f, 4 yrs) are older ferrets looking for a home. They are healthy, fat & fluffy at this time and would be great first ferrets for someone.

Pearline is a beautiful dark-eyed white ferret. She doesn't particularly care for other ferrets, but has a wonderful temperament



with humans!

Pepe (sable, m) & **Panic** (sable/white, f) just arrived at our shelter. They're well-mannered and would love to go to a new home together.

Pikachu is a 2.5 year old sable female and **Rayden** is a gorgeous champagne male. They were turned in as part of a group of four when their owner could no longer keep them. They are used to being spoiled rotten and would love to find a home of their own soon!

Romeo & **Spaz** are twin sable boys with bibs and white kneepads. They are both sweethearts and are all set to go to a new home.

Roxy & **Foxy** are two cute little spitfires. They are young, and are pretty nippy still. They will need a ferret-savvy owner to work with them. Foxy bites when scared, and Roxy is very mouthy/nippy in general, but she's just having fun and it's simply a matter of teaching her manners.



We'd love to see them go together, as they so enjoy each other's company, but they can be split up if necessary.

Thomas is a 1 year old champagne boy. He was a stray in from a local shelter and he is now looking for a new family. He has been vaccinated, is neutered, likes other ferrets and has a wonderful temperament.

Toodles is a 3 year old dark sable girl that doesn't care for other ferrets. She loves people though and enjoys spending all day playing with the volunteers and being a lap ferret. Are you looking for a sweet girl to join your family?

Vlad & **Slinky** are 2-3 year old chocolate colored ferrets. They would love to find a home of their own with humans to spoil them rotten. They've had a rough go of it these past few months and sure deserve a good home.

Foster Ferrets

Note: We do not charge an adoption fee for our foster ferrets, though many of them will require a vet visit (or several!) in their golden years. The Shelter provides medical care and any medications, obtained at the shelter, that your ferret will need in exchange for a monthly donation to help cover your ferret's medical costs. Even just a few dollars, once a month, helps keep our foster program running, so that we are able to continue helping elderly/ill ferrets.

Ike is a 4 year old sable male & **Sara** is a 3 year old chocolate girl. Sara was recently been diagnosed with adrenal disease and will need to return to the shelter once each month for a Lupron injection.

Mina (chocolate, f, 3 yrs) & **Neo** (silver, m, 4-5 yrs) were surren-

dered together. They enjoy the company of other ferrets and are very sweet. Neo will need to return to the shelter once each month for a Lupron injection.



Mish & **Mash** are twin sable boys. Mish is a sweetheart and is very cuddly. His brother, Mash, can bite very hard. They will need a ferret-experienced owner to work with Mash until he gets over his need to bite people. He is getting better with extensive handling, but he still needs work. Both are being treated with Lupron for adrenal disease and are doing just great.

Ranger (sable, m) & **Peaches** (albino, f) were surrendered together over a year ago. They are both around 3-4 years old. Peaches has cataracts in both eyes and has limited vision. She may also bite if scared. Ranger is a chubby cutie and is a sweetheart. They do not care for other ferrets, and will need to be an only pair.



Washington Ferret Rescue and Shelter
18724 Bothell Way NE
Bothell, WA 98011

We're on the Web!
www.washingtonferret.org

A 501(c)3 non-profit organization

Yes, I want to help Washington Ferret Rescue & Shelter!

Enclosed is my donation of:

- \$5.00 ()
\$10.00 ()
\$15.00 ()
\$20.00 ()
Other ()

Please make your donation payable to Washington Ferret Rescue & Shelter (or WFRS) and mail to:

18724 Bothell Way NE

Bothell, WA 98011

Contributions are tax-deductible under 501(c)3 regulations of the Internal Revenue Service. Appropriate receipts will be mailed for your records.

Our Wish List:

Donations of time or money are always gladly accepted & appreciated!

Hammocks, Security Cubes—homemade or store bought, we can always use hanging sleep sacks of some sort.

Wood stove pellets for litter (found at Safeway, local hardware stores, the Grange, etc.)

Cages or carriers—clean or dirty, we don't care!

Volunteers to wash laundry, scoop boxes, scrub cages and cuddle ferrets.

More foster homes! Do you have room in your home for a few extra fuzzies for a few days/weeks? Do you have any medical training or are you interested in learning? Let us know!

Ferret Food (Mazuri, Totally Ferret, Marshalls & The Ferret Store's Superior Choice)

() I am moving! Please see below:

() Yes, I know of someone else who would like to receive the newsletters.

Please send one to the following:

Name:

Address:

Phone:

Email:
