

# Paws-It!

## Washington Ferret Rescue & Shelter



Volume 10 Issue 1

### The Scoop on Poop!

Being a ferret owner, you're bound to hear talk or will be the one talking about ferret poop. Consider yourself as doing rather well if poop doesn't come up in *every* conversation surrounding your ferrets! That aside, here's the scoop on poop...

Don't be afraid to take an honest look at your ferret's litter box. Depending on what kind of food you're feeding your ferret, his stools should generally be brown, round, and stay the same general size.

Finding a surprise snack on the floor may result in the appearance of some funky colors, but on the whole, you're looking for a good, solid, brown stool. Irregularities in size & color should be noted and discussed as soon as possible with your veterinarian.

Green stools mean that that food has spent a short time in the intestinal tract. This can be caused by anything from switching foods too quickly, to stress, to major diseases like lymphoma. It's a very non-specific symptom, so please do *not* panic just yet.

Green is often seen in conjunction with diarrhea in ferrets. Frequent diarrhea can be very dehydrating, so please see your vet if this happens more than twice in a short period of time.

Black & tarry is usually in-

dicative of digested blood. Ferrets that do not eat can develop bleeding ulcers which, if enough blood is present, can result in black tarry stools. This is another "see your vet ASAP" issue.

Bright red blood should send you running to the vet. If there is a significant amount of blood and there is no notable irritation to the anus, there is indeed a very big problem that needs to be addressed immediately (i.e. there could be bleeding anywhere along the GI tract, your ferret could be having a massive hemorrhage, etc).

Seedy stools (stools that look similar to bird seed), are a sign that the food wasn't properly digested nor absorbed. Seedy stools can sometimes occur if the ferret has eaten something that doesn't quite agree with him, or they can occur while a ferret is getting progressively better from an illness. Keeping an eye on him to be on the safe side is a good idea. You should also consider a very bland, easily digestible diet as opposed to his normal kibble.

Little or no stool can either be a sign of an obstruction (meaning the ferret has eaten something that is now clogging up his plumbing somewhere along the line) or can be the result of the ferret not eating enough. Both cases warrant an immediate trip to the vet.

*Written by Megan Reuther*

Intestinal blockages usually require an X-ray or a barium series to be seen, and then oftentimes correctional surgery.

Not eating enough will require forced feedings and some critical nursing care until the ferret is feeling better.

During shedding season it is not uncommon to see hair in your ferret's stools. Giving your ferret a hairball remedy (Cat Lax, Ferret Lax, Vaseline—it's all the same stuff) regularly can help keep his intestines flowing in the right direction. Too much hair in his system can also result in an obstruction—so helping the hair along is in your and your ferret's best interests!

Getting your ferret to go *\*in\** a box is entirely different matter ... at least you know what to look for when you're cleaning up those little 'oopsies'.



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### How to Contact Us!

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## What's New?

### General Update:

We've reached 100 again! That's 100 ferrets adopted this year alone. We also currently have 100+ ferrets in foster care around the Pacific NW. Wow! Thanks everyone for your continued efforts & love!

### Ferret Lovers Meet-Up:

The fourth Saturday of every month is International Ferret Lovers Meet-up Day! Go online to vote for your area's meeting location at: <http://ferret.meetup.com!>

## Thrifty Things

You love those little fuzzies, but they're starting to chew a hole through your wallet (yes I'm talking figuratively, not literally). Here are some money-saving tips I've used to provide a comfortable home and stimulating playground for the seven ferrets that own me.

### BEDDING

#### Sweatpants Tubes

Cut the leg off of an old pair of sweatpants you have in your Goodwill/Salvation Army pile. Cut two 5-inch lengths of wire from a coat hanger with wire snips. Hang the sweatpants "tube" with two of the pieces of wire; one on one end and one on the other. Adjust to the appropriate height (preferably with a ferret inside to get the proper "droopage" on the tube). Crimp the wire together with a pair of pliers to avoid the little fuzzies injuring themselves on the wire. Cost=ZERO

#### T-shirt hammocks

Same principle as the sweatpants tubes, but with more lengths of wire to hang them. It's also not necessary to hang ferret bedding....they're perfectly happy to curl up on the floor of a cage as long as there is some type of cloth to burrow under.

### TOYS

#### Plastic extravaganza

Save all of your grocery or drugstore plastic bags. Cut the handles off to prevent your fuzzies from getting strangled while playing. Cost=ZERO (except for your grocery trip)

#### Socks

If you often come up with odd socks because your washing machine eats them, or because you lose them, use the unmated pair as the coolest dangling toy in the

### An original ornament:

Take care that the fur-monkeys stay out of your tree this year. What keeps your tree green may also make your pets sick. And watch those rubber-obsessed ferrets, as tree lights typically have the same texture.

### Madigan Army Hospital:

Thank you's go out to Madigan for visiting! We enjoyed showing off our ferrets & facility and having you guys get to know a little more about our silly fuzzballs in turn. Please come again!

world! Just watch for those teeth and claws as your ferts jump for the sock. Cost=ZERO

#### Winebox Mazes

I buy wine by the case, and the wine case boxes are a big hit with my ferrets. Make it even more fun by hiding treats in different compartments. Cost=ZERO (except the wine!!)



#### Costco Boxes

Next time you make a Costco run, and the bagger asks you if you want boxes, say "Yes!". Flip the boxes upside down, and you've created a dark cave for dooking. If you're really lucky, you'll get a box that has dips on two sides, which gives two exits and entrances for wardancing ferts. Cost=ZERO (except the Costco trip)

#### Biodegradable Peanut Boxes

Every once in awhile, when something is shipped to you, it will be packed with biodegradable peanuts. If you're in doubt, put the foam peanut in water...if it disintegrates, it's of the biodegradable variety. Save 'em up, stick 'em in a box, and throw your ferret in. (the regular Styrofoam peanuts make me nervous due to ingestion concerns). Cost=ZERO

### Happy Tales:

Would you like to share your experience adopting, fostering or sponsoring a ferret with us? We'd love to hear from you!! If you'd like to participate, please send your story & a picture or two to [liane@ferretlovers.com](mailto:liane@ferretlovers.com) & we'll get them posted right away!

### Giving Tree:

Would you like to play Santa to some less fortunate furballs? If so, visit: <http://givingtree.friendsoffuzzies.com/>

Written by Leanna Aker

#### Bobbing for Toys

You can multitask with the little jingly balls you may have already purchased. Fill a large Tupperware, Corningware, or plastic container full of water, and then throw the toys in. Did you know ferrets like to snorkel? Cost=ZERO (assuming you've already purchased little jingly toys).

### LITTER

#### Wood Stove Pellets

If you've never discovered the joy of wood stove pellets, you should! I started out with recycled newspaper bedding, and the smell really got to me. Not only do the wood pellets smell better, but they also disintegrate after your ferrets tinkle, so it's easy to see where to scoop. It's also only about THREE dollars for a 40lb. bag. I have seven ferrets, and that much litter lasts me about 2 weeks. You do the math. Cheap! Cost=\$3/bag.

### FOOD

#### Mazuri

OK, food does cost money—this one isn't a freebie, but if you're one of the die-hard "Totally Ferret" followers, Try mixing the Totally Ferret with Mazuri. You can buy Mazuri at local feed stores (I purchase mine from Reber Ranch in Kent). It's \$30 for a 20lb. bag. There's no doubt that Totally Ferret is superb, but you'll save some money by mixing the two. One of my seven ferrets thrives on Totally Ferret, and the rest are happy with Mazuri. I give them all a mix of the two (probably about 7 parts Mazuri to one part Totally Ferret). Cost=\$30/bag.

So hopefully these tips will help save your wallet (though I can't do much about the ferrety teeth holes that may already be there. ;-)

## Please don't give me as a gift ...



'Tis the season to be gift-giving. So what about a ferret? Giving animals, and more specifically ferrets, can be a poor choice as a gift

for more than one reason.

Most children can be taught, but can not be expected to innately have the knowledge to clean litter boxes on a daily basis; see that the ferret has been out & about that day; refill food & water dishes; and all the other ins & outs of ferret care. Parents, you need to be aware that if you choose to buy or adopt a new pet for your child, it is up to you to take on the responsibility for the new addition to your family.

January typically begins a new season of ferret dumping—the month where our Shelter begins to see the results of Christmas presents gone bad. We'd like you to consider adopting over buying a ferret, of course, but it really should be a family affair. Our volunteers are happy to have your whole family come out to meet & play with the ferrets and can help you decide if a ferret is the right pet for you. We've heard every excuse that folks use when surrendering their pets. Whether it's time, money or allergies, we'd like to prevent potential surrenders if at all possible, right from the get-go.

Ferrets should not be considered low-maintenance pets. I would personally consider them as time-consuming as a dog, possibly even more so. They need a rich environment, and daily play-time

where they can run about, be silly and have time to interact with you. Ferrets are definitely not the sort of pet that can be caged for days at a time and left unattended. Bored ferrets can often become destructive to your property or become depressed—neither of which is a pretty sight.

Because of their curious nature, ferrets can and do get into areas that they shouldn't be in. They need to be closely supervised or provided a "ferret-proof" area to play. This requires some time getting down on their level and really looking at their environment for hazards. Careful planning in this area prevents future accidents that can either be harmful or deadly to your new pet.

Ferrets need their litter boxes scooped daily to monitor for health concerns. Ferrets slip downhill very quickly, and the litter box often provides the first inkling that there might be a problem. Daily monitoring of how much the ferret eats & drinks are equally important.

Ferrets need to eat a high quality food that has a higher level of fat & protein than say a food pulled off the shelf at your local grocery store. These foods can be rather expensive, so that is something to keep in the back of your mind as well.

Litter can be relatively inexpensive depending on what type you buy. Wood stove pellets, when in season, are only around \$4 a bag (40lbs). Finding stores that carry them during the Summer can sometimes be tricky, so a more costly source may need to be used.

Then there's the cage to consider. Ferrets will most likely need a cage, unless the person has already heavily researched

*Written by Megan Reuther*

ferrets and has prepared a ferret-proof area for them to be in. A cage can run you anywhere from \$30 at your local shelter to several hundred dollars at a pet store or online. Note that you're unlikely to recoup that initial cost should you, or the person, and the ferret later need to part ways.

Thus far, that sounds like a pretty big commitment, right? Also, please consider that ferrets generally live for 7-10 years. Are you, or is the person you're giving the ferret to, ready for that length of commitment? Will sports practice, teen antics or other school activities get in the way three or four years down the road? What about college? Are you ready to take on being a ferret parent once your child has gone off to school?

Ferrets in their golden years tend to incur some medical costs. They're prone to adrenal disease specifically, that could run whoever receives this bundle of joy some cash that he or she may not be ready to put out. This is not including annual exams and vaccinations.

So you see, it's not about the initial purchase after all. There's more to it than that. Please be aware of the dangers of giving a ferret as a gift to an unprepared ferret parent!



## At the Bridge ...

We would like to remember those fuzzies who brought us so much joy... Their time with us was too short.

**Audrey**—Audrey was part of our Adrenal Study here at the Shelter. She was adored by her foster mom, Sarah, and lived in the laps of luxury before her tiny body finally gave out.

**Sophie**—Sophie will be missed dearly by Cara & Jeff. Sophie was an old lady, easily 9 years old when she passed. She had a wonderful life in her forever home. It just won't be the same without her.

**Maude**—Hella & family, furred and skin, will miss Maude running around

doing "Maude stuff". She leaves a ferret sized hole in her foster family's heart, but she will never be forgotten.

**Spunky**—Spunky was dropped off on the doorstep of our Shelter with his brothers, Freckles & Skippy. Spunky had a large, inoperable tumor protruding from his abdomen. We gave him all the love we could, and made him comfortable, but unfortunately we lost him. He will be missed by his foster family & his buddies.

**Rascal**—We lost dear, sweet Rascal. He went into a severe depression that we were unable to bring him out of. Rest well, little one.

**Fido**—Karilee & family said their good-byes to Fido recently. Thank you so much for taking such wonderful care of the boys.

**Harold**—Harold was an older boy that had the wonderful opportunity to end up with Cara & Jeff. He passed unexpectedly one evening and will be missed.

## A day in the life of Winky...



Dooks to you all, my name is Winky. Back in May or so of this year, my hooman surrendered me and my wrestling buddy, Dobby, to WFRS. Actually, he and I had different names at the time, but our new hoomans decided that they wanted to name us after the house-elves in Harry Potter. \*sigh\*

So we went home in July...woo-hoo! We got a *four-story cage!!!!* And we got tubes and dig boxes, and little treats, and hoomans to tickle our tummies! Dook dook!

Well, things were great...for about 3 weeks or so. Then I overheard my hoomans saying things like "They're so cute, don't we need one more?" The next thing ya know, they had packed us into a little crate and were driving us back to WFRS. That was a scary day for Dobby and me...I wondered if she was taking us back because we pooped too much in the corner!

We arrived at WFRS, and the most horrendous thing happened. Our hooman put us in a large playpen with ferret after ferret after ferret. I screeched and screeched and threw a big fit to let everyone know I didn't like any of the other ferrets. *Just my Dobby*, I kept repeating to myself, *Just my Dobby*. Like a mantra, I kept reciting it while ferrets came and sniffed me.

Apparently my mantra didn't work. Stupid hoomans.

They got out this deaf ferret who was known as Larry. The volunteer at the shelter thought that if she put a deaf ferret in with me, he wouldn't hear my screeching and ignore me. I ignored him and he ignored me. The next thing ya know, we were all packed back in that crate. I slept the whole way home, it was so traumatic.

Well, we were going to make sure that our hooman knew Larry was not to be one of us. I talked Dobby into terrorizing the deaf guy (though I did most of the terrorizing). I'd sneak up on him

(because he was deaf, remember?) and I'd sniff, sniff, CHOMP on the guy's neck. Pretty soon, Larry was moping and was pretty depressed. We weren't about to let little Larry play in any ferret games with us. Humph! While Dobby and I dooked and wrestled, Larry would just speed bump and watch us.

My hooman was very upset, and when I heard her say "This isn't going to work out, is it?", my whiskers perked up... *It worked! It worked!* But what she said next was mortifying... "Maybe we need to go back and get his friends". You see, they had taken Larry away from two of his buddies to join our play group.

They didn't take us back up to meet any more ferrets, but I know we were in trouble when those stubborn hoomans loaded the carrier into the car. They came back with *two more ferrets*. And oh boy, let me tell you, these guys were something. This one little guy had a smushed up face. He wheezed all the time, and kept backing into me with his butt to get me irritated. Not to mention he STANK! He is one of "those" ferrets that still has their scent glands. He was uncoordinated, and kept wheezing and jumping all over the place. For some odd reason, my hoomans thought he was cute.

The other new addition is the worst ferret I've ever met. My hoomans changed his name from Nickels to Norbert after the dragon in Harry Potter (their fascination with Harry Potter is starting to make me ill, to tell you the truth). Norbert dooks incessantly and *thinks* he is the alpha ferret. I tried to show him the error of his thinking by hissing and fear pooping. I even tried puffing up my tail really big, but he just kept dooking and grabbing my neck. He even broke the skin!!! Fortunately, my hoomans were smart enough to get us separate cages. (I don't understand why they like him anyway...he's a big ankle biter).

The crazy thing is, stupid Larry (renamed Flobber) didn't even recognize his buddies for two whole days. What a

Written by Leanna Aker

dimwit.

After lots of bitter apple, Ferretone and spray bottles, my hoomans gave up trying to get us to get along, and resigned us to separate playtimes. Dobby and I together again to dook and hide. Oh joy!

Two more happy months passed, and I saw my hoomans loading the carrier in the car again. I woke up Dobby and told him what was going on. He seemed not to care and fell right back to sleep (Dobby has been eating too much in preparation for winter, and has gotten to be a big hammock potato... lazy ferret.)

Enter Felicia and Freddy to the picture. My hoomans said they were fosters. Older guys. Felicia was the skinniest little thing I've ever seen. Freddy had this dumb-looking black nose. At least my hoomans weren't trying to get Dobby and I to get along with the new guys.

Dook. Hiss.

They *are* trying to get us to get along with the new guys!

They started out by separating our cage.... The new guys were our room-mates to the North. That dumb Freddy can't use a litter box to save his life. All I kept smelling was his poo. Then they would let us out together. I focused on Felicia first, as she was small and weak. I scared her into the tube maze several times, but my hooman kept putting me in time out for doing it. My hooman had very clearly not accepted that I am in charge. I'll show her by pooping in the corner.

Dang, I'm in time out again.

As I end this story, I find I spend more and more time in time out. I try to be really cute and war dance around for her, but she just won't let me terrorize the new guys. Flobber, Skrewt, and Norbert just laugh at me from their cage....they've gotten their revenge. Dobby just keeps trying to talk me into being nice, but I'm way too stubborn for that. I'll wear my hoomans down yet....you just watch!

## 12 Steps to Paradise ...

**12 Steps to Paradise:** *Converting Your Second Bedroom into the Perfect Ferret Haven.*

Step 1: Move the bed into the garage. Forget about having company.

Step 2: Set-up your office in a corner of your living room. Who needs work space.

Step 3: Rip out the carpet and lay down linoleum, unless you think it's fun cleaning poop out of the rug.

Step 4: Re-glue loose linoleum that the

ferret has managed to rip up. Then, unglue curious ferret from the floor.

Step 5: Throw out couch, it was in tatters anyway.

Step 6: Invest in a futon to sit on, keeping the boxes for the ferrets to play in, of course.

Step 7: Purchase a gate to keep the ferrets \*in\* the room. And band-aids to patch yourself up when you trip over the !@#\$\$ gate.

Step 8: Feel guilty about leaving the

*Written by Susan Montana & Megan Reuther*

ferrets closed in only one room & decide to let them have the run of the house.

Step 9: Invest in several hundred litter pans.

Step 10: Litter box training boot-camp for naughty ferrets.

Step 11: Decide to try newspapers in lieu of boxes all over your home. Why is there black ink everywhere?!

Step 12: Give up & buy the ferrets their own house complete with staff.

*Ahhh.... Paradise!*

## Ferrets Seeking Homes ...

### Adoptable Ferrets

**Max**—Max is a feisty 8 month old light sable boy. He's only found a few ferrets that he actually likes, but would do great on his own.

**Mischief, Mali & Mayhem**—This 3some is so much fun! Mischief and Mayhem are both dark sables & Mali can be considered more of a chocolate. They do wonderfully with other ferrets and would definitely love to get out of the shelter & into a new home.

**Keith & Felix**—These two boys are chalk full of energy! They're three years old, but still play like kits. Come see them today!

**Mars**—Mars is a 1.5 year old sable boy. He likes \*some\* ferrets, but is rather particular.

**Python**—Python is an adorable 3 month old silvermitt. He loves other ferrets and spends every waking minute playing up a storm.

**Speed**—Speed is a cute dark sable girl that's around a year old. She can be a bit nippy, but we believe that with some gentle handling, she'll settle right down.

**Possy, Missy, Demeon**—Possy is a take-charge albino gal. Missy is slowly turning from silver to white and Demeon is the fluffiest & softest dark-eyed white I've seen! This 3some gets along great with each other & is a lot of fun!

**Sid**—Sid needs to go as an only ferret. He doesn't particularly like other ferrets, and prefers to be by himself. He's around 3 years old & is a chocolate cutie.

**Penny**—Penny was turned over to our

shelter because her parents didn't pay her vet bill—thus, she's worth a pretty penny! She's about 6 months old and is in great shape. Very cute dark sable girl.

**Koopa, Sasha & Tiki**—This 3some is all chocolates of some variety, & they range in age from 1-3 years old. They're all very soft & chubby now that it's winter. Come see them today!!

**Oliver, Joy & Speedy**—This trio is a bit older, and in need of some TLC. They're all very nice, dark sable ferrets that would love a new home.



**Ted Bear & Bandit**—Ted & Bandit are two silly ferrets that would love a new home. Ted is a chocolate male & Bandit is a silvering sable female. Both get along well with other ferrets.

### Foster Ferrets

*Note: We do not charge an adoption fee for our foster ferrets, though many of them will require a vet visit or two in their golden years. The shelter provides medical care and any medications that the foster ferret will need for a low monthly donation of \$5 for medicated animals or \$10 for medications & a vet visit. Even this little amount, once a*

*month, helps keep our foster program running, so that we are able to continue helping elderly/ill ferrets.*

**Freckles & Skippy**—Freckles came in almost completely naked from adrenal disease. He has been started on Lupron & is slowly growing a new fur coat. Skippy appears to be completely healthy and is the rambunctious one of this duo.

**Manic & Panic**—Manic & Panic are both older ladies. Manic is a fluffy chocolate girl, and Panic is mostly bald. She may be a silvermitt, but we're waiting for the Lupron to kick in before we'll know for sure. They're pretty spunky for older kids, and love to play.

**Spooky**—Spooky is a 9 year old albino boy with adrenal disease. He does well with other ferrets, but due to his age, we'd like to keep his stress down to a bare minimum.

**Shadow**—Shadow is a 6 year old lady. We're not sure what color she'll be yet, as she's quite naked at present. She has been started on Lupron and is doing very well thus far.

**Jack**—Jack is a 4 year old chocolate boy who was recently surrendered to our shelter. He's a big-time kisser and will need to go as an only ferret.

**Lilly**—Lilly is a little balding girl that recently came into our shelter. She gets along pretty well with other ferrets, and would love a new home. She's been started on Lupron injections and will need to continue them for life.

Washington Ferret Rescue and Shelter  
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Bothell, WA 98011

**We're on the Web!**  
**[www.washingtonferret.org](http://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:

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