

January / February 2009

Paws-It!

Washington Ferret Rescue & Shelter

Volume 38 Issue 1

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How to Contact Us!

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206.442.2025

Shelter Email:
washingtonferret@yahoo.com

Website:
<http://washingtonferret.org>

What's new?

Washington Ferret Rescue & Shelter Creates Partnership with Coldwell Banker Bain Associate Jim van der Voort

Coldwell Banker Bain has formed a unique partnership with the Washington Ferret Rescue & Shelter in an effort to help raise money for the non-profit organization.

Each time a WFRS member, or friend or relative of a member, buys or sells with Coldwell Banker Bain sales associate Jim van der Voort, he/she and Coldwell Banker Bain will donate an amount equal to 10 percent of the commission from the transaction to the WFRS.

Coldwell Banker Bain established this "Community Partnership" program 14 years ago as a way for its company and agents to give back to the organizations that are committed to the welfare of our communities. Coldwell Banker Bain agents have donated a total of \$500,000 to more than 200 non-profit organizations in the greater Puget Sound area.

For more information on the WFRS partnership, send mail to washingtonferret@yahoo.com.

Coldwell Banker Bain is the top-producing Coldwell Banker affiliate nationwide and the Puget Sound leader in luxury real estate. Founded in Seattle in 1972, the firm now serves the Puget Sound region from 14 residential offices and Oregon from 13 offices, where it operates as Coldwell Banker Barbara Sue Seal Properties.

January Flooding at Ferret City Shelter - by Kevin Farlee, President, WFRS

On January 8 at just before 11 AM (PST) I got a call from Barb Clay informing me that Ferret City Shelter, run by Lacey Ruddell was being flooded, and was in fact under around 2 feet of water. 50-70 ferrets needed to be evacuated ASAP. Knowing that I'd be tied up in a meeting for most of the next hour, I contacted Cathy Johnson-Delaney, the vet for our shelter. I informed her of the situation, and we quickly devised a plan for housing a large number of ferrets at our site. She was to contact Lacey and keep me in the loop.

Cathy informed me that Lacey was without power, and that the ferrets NEEDED to be evacuated. Current access involved walking for several miles through up to knee-deep water, or taking a boat. I contacted Lacey directly as soon as I was able. She informed me that they were in the process of moving ferrets from her shelter building to her house, which was in slightly better shape. I let her know that we could take whatever ferrets she needed temporary housing for. At that point she was still assessing how many ferrets could be housed locally in volunteers' houses, and how many would need to be transported.

By mid afternoon, Lacey had placed approximately half of her shelter ferrets in local foster homes, and had moved the remaining 50 or so into her home, which was about 1 foot above the current flood waters. After several discussions, it was decided that Cathy would drive up that afternoon, and take 20-30 ferrets back to our shelter for temporary housing. Meanwhile we had volunteers in the shelter setting up temporary cages for the new ferrets to be able to house them safely and securely. Cathy ended up bringing back 24 ferrets, which we were able to keep in our shelter's cages. They were cared for right alongside all of our own ferrets, but kept for Lacey to bring back as soon as she was able (we were not adopting them out, just keeping them for her).

Lacey did an incredible job getting her shelter cleaned out and rebuilt, and all 24 ferrets have now moved back to her shelter, which is up and running. You can see pictures of the disaster at <http://www.ferretcityshelter.org/flooddisaster.aspx>



Ferret Event



FERRET RACES!

**Saturday March 14. 11:00AM at the Kirkland Petco
12040 NE 85th St, Kirkland, WA**

Bring your ferret for fast racing fun! Prizes will be awarded! Join in the furry festivities and meet other ferret owners. WFRS will be there!

***Participation dependent upon current vaccinations and socialization.**

Opinion

The Joys of Owning an Old and Sick Ferret

by Kevin Farlee

OK, am I nuts or what? What could possibly be good about having one of your ferrets get sick and old? What kind of sick person would wish that on any creature?

It's not that I would ever be happy that one of my furry friends has problems, but that there is certain joy in the extra intimate relationship that grows when you give one of your babies intensive care over a long time. That's what I'm trying to describe here.

Many people who haven't had anything but young, healthy pets can't fathom anything positive in having a needy animal, but if you have the heart for caring for a special needs animal, there are big rewards.

There is also heartbreak, to be sure. I'm not trying to sugar-coat anything here. It's a roller-coaster that can leave you wrung-out at times. There are times when you don't ever want to go through it again, especially when your loved one eventually does pass. But, after the pain fades some, you remember the good parts:

Usually, any special-needs animal has, well, special and extra needs. That means you spend more one-on-one time with them than you otherwise would. You are more tuned in to their needs and condition than you might otherwise be. I remember the early mornings when I used to sit with Jerry, feeding him his soup separately, and making sure he ate enough & got all of his meds in. Just sitting there and looking into his eyes after he finished, is a memory I'll treasure.



Especially with ferrets, sick or special-needs ferrets are much more likely to have slowed down, and be willing to sit or even sleep on your lap for longer periods. For someone who has only kits, that's pretty much unheard-of. Again, it's a special bonding time.

Just the fact that they let you baby them, and let you know that they're feeling bad is pretty amazing when you stop to think about it. You've all heard if not experienced a ferret that hides a weakness, illness, or injury. Their natural instinct is to avoid revealing themselves as weak or vulnerable. The fact that they trust you enough to let you in on how they are feeling is a special trust given, and should be held sacred.

Even as you grieve a little bit for every downturn, you also celebrate every upturn. Nice poops are a cause for joy, whether they're in the box or on the floor. Seeing your baby eating on their own is a special wonder.

For me, I love learning all that I can about what makes these little guys tick. With these special guys, I learn volumes from my vet about what is going on, how to recognize significant changes, and how to help them myself, and when it's time to call in the vet's help.

So, although watching one of your babies grow older and get sick can be heartbreaking, it can also be richly rewarding. I wouldn't trade that time for anything.

Furry DIY - pH Balanced Ferret Shampoo

I've always been frustrated by the lack of fragrance-free or natural ferret shampoos. I'm allergic to most fragrances (and various other chemicals) and use only unscented products on myself. One of my furry boys also has sensitive skin, so I decided to try something homemade. However I couldn't find a single recipe for ferret shampoo online! There are many recipes for human and dog shampoo, but I knew that these formulas wouldn't be pH-balanced for a ferret. I started looking into the whole pH issue.

What I found, through research and litmus testing of 23 products, is that "pH balanced" is largely a marketing gimmick that can mean several things, but often means "pH neutral" (pH 7). Since ferret skin, like most mammals, is slightly acidic (averaging around pH 6), this means that many products are not really balanced to ferret skin. For example, tearless formulas are usually pH neutral to match the pH of eyes, *not skin!* This means that they wouldn't be any better than dog or baby shampoos, which are also usually pH neutral.

An exception to this was Johnson's Baby Wash, which *is* actually the correct pH for a ferret! (Note that this is the Baby Wash, not Baby Shampoo- I didn't test that.) Cat and kitten shampoos were almost always the correct pH, so they would be fine, provided that they are not tearless. Adult human products were usually too acidic, (which is why they sting your eyes) so these should *always* be avoided.

However, apart from Johnson's Baby Wash, most of my low-fragrance options were very expensive, so I decided to adapt a popular dog shampoo to fit a ferret's pH. Ounce for ounce the cost beats all ferret shampoos sold in pet stores, it's simpler and cleaner, and best of all- you won't believe how easy it is to make! Enjoy your fragrant ferrets!

If you like this DIY, please rate, comment, or link to the article on eHow to help support the shelter! Thanks!

http://www.ehow.com/how_4799735_ph-balanced-ferret-shampoo.html

Recipe for Ferret Shampoo

Things you'll need:

25 oz Seventh Generation Dish Soap, Free & Clear or Lavendar/mint - \$4 at Target
8 oz Pure Glycerin - \$8 at pharmacy or beauty supply
1/3 packet True Lemon OR 1/2 tsp lemon juice
16+ oz Empty shampoo or dish soap bottle
Graduated measuring cup
Measuring spoons
Optional: funnel

Instructions:

Step 1 - Pour half (12.5 oz) of the Seventh Generation Dish Soap into the empty bottle. I am allergic to most fragrances, but I found the Lavendar/mint to be fine, and a nice compliment to a ferret's natural scent.

Step 2 - Add 4 oz of pure Glycerin to each bottle. This gentle emollient (skin softener) can be found in many pharmacies near the Epsom salt and witch hazel.

Step 3 - Add 1/6 packet of True Lemon to each bottle (see measuring tip below)
OR Add 1/4 tsp lemon juice to each bottle (see measuring tip below).

Step 4 - Cap each bottle and shake vigorously!

You now have a ferret shampoo that is slightly more acidic than ferret skin. (This is to accommodate for the incorrect pH of rinse water.)

Please note: Because this is balanced to skin, and NOT to eyes, do not get this (or any other) shampoo in your ferret's eyes.

Step 5 - Label each bottle as Ferret Shampoo, so that there's no confusion (though it wouldn't be a big deal if someone used it to wash their dishes or hair :)

Step 6 - If you are using a soaking bath method, add 2 Tbsp of your shampoo to a sink or kitchen basin full of water (about 9 liters) to create a pH balanced bath. (Add after water to avoid making suds.)

Step 7 - And to be REALLY thorough, add 1/3 pack True Lemon (see measuring tip below) to a sinkful or basinful of rinsewater to make it pH balanced also.

Once again, **do not get this rinse water in your ferret's eyes.** While it is not as far off neutral as seawater if mixed correctly, there is no need to dunk your ferret's head under and it will distress your pet.

Measuring Tips:

1/6 packet of True Lemon = 1/2 tsp if the pack is mixed with 2 Tbsp water

1/3 packet of True Lemon = 1 tsp if the pack is mixed with 2 Tbsp water

To measure 1/4 tsp, mix 1/2 tsp lemon juice + 1/2 tsp water, then use 1/2 tsp of the mixture

This recipe is *only* for Seventh Generation Dishwashing Liquid. If you want to substitute a different kind of dish soap (an organic one, for example) be sure to test its pH by diluting 1/2 tsp in 1/2 cup of water and using a test strip or kit (ex. Wardley Junior pH Water Test Kit - \$4 at Petco). If it isn't very near neutral (7) then you will have to adjust the rest of the ingredients to compensate! I recommend going for "sensitive skin" and low-fragrance CLEAR detergent-based products, because these are more likely to be pH neutral and will work with color-changing pH tests. Soap-based products, even "gentle" or organic ones, (such as Dr. Bronner's castile soaps) are usually very alkaline, are hard to rinse off, and would dry out skin and fur *even with the correct pH.*

Furry Review - Petmate Kennel Cab, Small - \$23.99 (on sale for \$19.19)

I recently bought the small Petmate Kennel Cab from Petsmart for \$19.19 on sale. I wanted a hard travel crate that would accommodate one ferret and a little litter box and hammock for vet visits and car trips, and this seemed to fit the bill. In addition to the reasonable price, I was impressed by the fact that the top and bottom nest *and snap together*, with the door sandwiched in between. This is such smart, tidy design that it caught my attention among all the other cat and dog crates for sale. Upon further investigation, I discovered that the crate comes with a small food and water dish that attaches to the door, further increasing the value. When not in use, it fits into the little storage compartment on top- another smart design feature!

The crate is made well; it doesn't have the sharp edges and cheap construction that some crates do, despite its light weight of only 2.7 pounds. It has a seat belt slot on top that makes car travel so much easier, and shoulder strap eyelets (though I never used them.) The fact that the ventilation holes continue all around the sides and back gives plenty of hammock attachment points, which is also something many other crates lack. The handle is comfortable, and snapping the crate together and apart is fairly easy on the fingers and fast. Petmate offers replacement parts, such as latches, food trays, and doors for sale on their website, in case anything goes missing, which is nice. The crate is also rated for airline travel, though I think its a tiny bit too small for long trips (but who can afford to fly with pets these days anyway?)

I found a little plastic container (Prevail Disposable Washcloths) for a few dollars at Bartell that I cut down to make a litter box, and I was able to alter a sleepsack to be a hammock (and rug). My mischievous little fellow wasn't able to pry the food dish off of the door, though he was able to move it enough to spill some of the water. I put a stop to that with a piece of tape- so no big deal. All assembled, with ferret included- it still only weighed 7.5 pounds!

Considering that this crate is half the price of competing products, and seems like a better product by far- I'd highly recommend it! I'm sure the next larger size would be good for two or three ferrets to travel in comfort as well.



Do you have a ferret-related product that you would like to review for the WFRS community? Send your review (preferably with a couple of pics) to Jessica at ferretnewsletter@gmail.com

Ferrets Seeking Homes

Please see the adoptable pet list on our website for current availabilities. Adoption fees are \$100 for one ferret, \$175 for two, and we have a foster program as well. All ferrets have been vaccinated against Canine Distemper & Rabies and have been spayed/ neutered & descented (unless noted).



Spike (dark sable) and **Lady** (sable) are two sweet-natured middle-aged girls (4y) who are depressed being at the shelter. They are bonded and will need to stay together. Please help us keep their stay here at the shelter a short one!



Frederick is a 2 year old dark sable boy & **Nicole** is a 2 year old light sable girl. They are bonded and will need to go to a new home together. Come see these cuties soon!



Connor is a 3 year old chocolate boy. He's very sweet and loves to play. He would love to go to a home with more playmates, if possible.



Bandit and Snowflake are three beautiful girls all 3 years of age. Their colors are silver, albino and champagne with bib & mitts. Come visit them on Saturday between 10 and 3pm!



Stoker & Le Stat are two big handsome boys between 3 and 4.5 years old. Stoker is the champagne & Le Stat is the sable with a bib and kneepads.



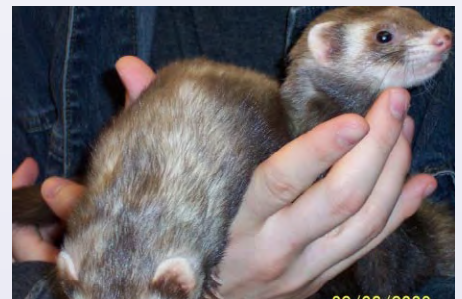
Looking for a fun group? This is it! All three are silver. **Bonnie and Clyde** are 3 years old and **Elmer** is almost 5.



Meet **Monster & Minion!** These boys are 3 & 4 years old with a lot of fun and love to give.



Smokey and Bandit are both 2 years old. They are looking for a stable home that can provide an abundance of love mixed with gentleness and understanding.



Itchy & Scratchy are two petite girls. Both approx. 4 years old and full of energy.



Ferrets Seeking Homes

Salt is a 4 year old silver female and **Pepper** is a 3 year old sable female. Extremely sweet girls.



Meet **Roxie & Capone**. More about them coming soon!



Smokey is a 3.5 yr old sable female and **Bandit** is a 3.5 yr old silver male. Great group, stop by and meet them on Sat. 10-3pm.



Coco and Coon are two cuddly and affectionate girls. These two are cage mates and should not be separated.



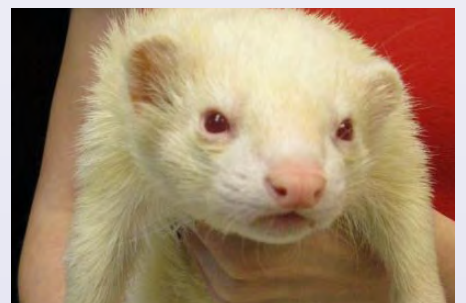
Cooper is a 10 month old bundle of energy! He's very friendly, likes to climb and is curious about everything.



Dax, Xylan and Roxie are all between 3 and 4 years old. This is an extremely friendly and energetic group! Dax is a champagne male, Xylan is a female chocolate and Roxie is a female albino.



Ann and Andy are a 1 year old silver female blaze and a 2 year old male sable. Ann is rambunctious and curious while Andy is a little more laid back. Come meet these two cuties this weekend!



Jaws and Tank are 2 friendly and energetic boys. Jaws is a 4 year old albino and Tank is a 4 year old chocolate. This is a wonderful, energetic pair!

Ferrets Seeking Homes



Dot and **Psycho** are two rambunctious girls. Dot is a 2 year old silver, and Psycho is a 1 year old sable. Dot has an issue with nipping and should go to a patient owner willing to train her.



Teddy is a dark sable boy and **Lilly** is a silver mitt girl. They're both 3 years old. These two fuzzies are cage mates and should not be separated. Please help us keep their stay here at the shelter a short one!



Bailey is a 4 year old dark sable girl with a blaze and **Ripley** is a 4 year old dark sable girl. They're very sweet and friendly and love to play! Previous owner says they have lived with cats.



Spaz is a cuddly 5 year old male sable. Come meet him Saturdays between 10 and 3.



Louie is a 1 year old sable boy and **Jimmy** is a small 1 year old silver boy. Both have a lot of energy and are lots of fun to play with! Jimmy has a birth defect which makes him unable to open his jaw all the way, so he needs to eat softened food and will need a little extra TLC.

Lil' Bit is a 1.5 year old silver girl with a blaze and **Thievin'** is a 2 year old silver mitt boy. These two are both biters, and Lil' Bit is deaf. They will need to go to a patient, experienced owner and should not be around small children. These two should not be separated.



Chompa is a 4 year old albino boy and **McLovin** is a 2 year old dark sable boy. These two are full of energy, but have a biting problem. They are great, happy boys, they just need patience and training. These two should go together to a home with an experienced owner.



Please view the [*adoptable pet list*](#) on the WFRS website to see more wonderful ferrets who are available for adoption.

Thank you to the loving families who have provided forever homes for needy fuzzies in the past!

Fuzzy Photography

Do you have a great picture of one of your fuzzies looking especially adorable or getting into (safe) ferrety mischief? Send it, along with a description or one or two paragraph short story, to Jessica at ferretnewsletter@gmail.com



Left: from Lisa Brennan, pics of her two sweet girls, Leila and Ginger. Leila is from Muskegon, Michigan and Ginger was adopted in Seattle, WA. Ginger passed recently; she will be missed!

Right: sent by Tony Grimes, the owner of Mocha, a two-year-old girl who likes to sniff boots- or should I just say "who is a ferret"?



Left: Judy Ernst, Sugar and Cookie (Sugar is the Sable girl), send greetings from Southern California!

Thanks for the updates and cute pics everyone!

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

Enclosed is my donation of:

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

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

**13603 100th Ave NE
Kirkland, WA 98034**

OR

Use any credit card to donate through WFRS's Paypal link now!

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 money or time are always needed and greatly 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, Bothell Feed, etc.)
- **Cages or carriers**- clean, 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, 8 in 1's Ultra & Ultimate Blends)

() 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:

OR

Email the above information to WFRS: washingtonferret@yahoo.com

Thank you for your support!