

Three Rivers Ferret Council
Mini Newsletter

September 2011



Instead of our regular meeting, come to:

**THREE RIVER FERRETS FOLLIES
FALL PICNIC & FUN MATCH!!**

Sunday, September 18, 2011
11am - 5pm

Silent Brook Barn, South Park

100 Acres Drive- across from the ice skating rink.
BRING YOUR FERRETS (OR JUST YOURSELF) FOR A
FULL DAY OF FAMILY FUN

Last newsletter I talked about all the happenings that will be going on at the Ferret Follies. Its going to be so much fun. Ask your friends and family to come, too. You don't need to be a ferret owner to come and have fun. Tell them it's a guaranteed fun day at the Ferret Follies.

We will be having a potluck lunch. If would you like to contribute, please go to <http://tinyurl.com/trfc2011> and add it to our food list.

Ferret games this year are: Pop goes the Weasel, Chariots of Fire, Cup Tip Surprise, Look-alikes, Ferret Jockey, Turtle or Taxi, Flower Pot Dig, and Tube Races. Lots of new ones. Games are \$1.00 each.

We will have a nice raffle with lots of ferret items. And a 50/50 drawing.

There will be a small fee of \$4.00 for members and \$5.00 for non-members. Children under 7 is free. The entrance fee comes with 3 free raffle tickets.

For more information go to www.3rfc.org and click on the picnic under Events, or send email to picnic@3rfc.org.



The Scoop On Ferret Poop

by Mary R. Shefferman

I have become one of those "weird" ferret people who openly discusses the shape, texture, and color of my ferrets' poop. It's become routine: I scan all the poop in the litter box when I scoop it out every day. I find myself glancing at the litter boxes every time I pass them "just to check." It's a good habit to pick up if you're a ferret parent.

There's a simple explanation. Ferrets have a quick metabolism; food passes through a ferret in 3 to 4 hours. It makes sense that the first place you'd notice that something is amiss is in the poop. A ferret's poop can tell us if the ferret is feeling all right or if he's feeling under the weather. With the short digestion time, we can easily narrow down a timeframe during which the ferret took ill—or swallowed something she shouldn't have.

Off-Color Poop

OK, so you'll reluctantly begin looking at the poop in the litter box a bit more closely, but what should you look for? How do you know if something's wrong? Any off color poop (green, yellow, black) or poop that's runny or seedy should be investigated. A little soft greenish poop from time to time is no big deal. Like people, sometimes a ferret eats something that doesn't quite agree with him (like a piece of people food or food for another pet, for example).

If you have more than one ferret, you need to try to figure out which one made the "bad" poop. Often, just watching them will give you an idea of which one isn't feeling well. The ill ferret might not be playing as much as usual or may just *seem* sick (you know your fuzzies best). It also helps to have an isolation cage. You can separate out the ferret you suspect is ill and monitor his eating, drinking, and pooping. If there are two or three very loose poops (diarrhea) in a row, your ferret needs to see the vet.

Black, tarry poop is a sign of digested blood. You usually see this if a ferret has an ulcer. This, too, requires an immediate trip to the vet. If your ferret has an ulcer, you may notice him not eating well and you may notice him grinding his teeth (which is a sign of stomach or intestinal pain).

Foreign Objects

Ferrets are ferrets, so no matter how well you think you've ferret-proofed your home, they'll find something they shouldn't.

It's their nature. When you look through the contents of your ferret's litter box, look for any kind of foreign objects in the poop.

Although a foreign object in the poop might mean your ferret passed whatever he shouldn't have eaten, you always need to make sure. Try to figure out what the foreign object is (foam insole, latex toy, fabric) and check if the part missing is what was in the poop.

If you think your ferret might still have some of the foreign object inside him, give him some Ferret Lax (about a 1-2 inch ribbon) and watch him closely. If you see any vomit in the ferret area, take the ferret with the suspected blockage to the vet immediately. If your ferret is eating and drinking normally, continue to monitor his poop.

Fur

One thing that might seem like a foreign object but technically isn't is fur. We noticed it much more often when we had a bunch of ferrets who would groom each other. But a single ferret can still swallow a lot of fur during shedding season. Always give your ferret(s) a hairball remedy (Ferret Lax or other brand) when he is shedding. If one ferret in the group is shedding, assume all your ferrets need hairball remedy.

Something to be aware of whenever you give hairball remedy: your ferret will have some loose poops when he passes the hairball remedy. This is normal.

Other Oddities

What about other poop problems? Consistently passing skinny poops or tiny poops may indicate a partial intestinal blockage. In such a case, you should have your ferret evaluated by a veterinarian. Seedy poop (it looks almost like your ferret ate birdseed) is a sign of incomplete digestion. It can happen from time to time, but, again, if it occurs consistently, take your ferret to the vet.

Pooping in unusual places can also be a sign of a problem. Some ferrets choose to communicate with us by leaving little "presents." In some cases, it's just an annoyed ferret; in other cases, your ferret could be trying to tell you she's not feeling well.

Whether you like it or not, being a ferret parent means having to inspect the litter box. The good thing about checking out your ferrets' poop is that you'll be able to spot problems quickly, before they become ferret health disasters. Remember that our little fur-friends are small and the sooner they get help when they need it, the better.

Gone But Not Forgotten

We are remembering the ferrets that have crossed over the Rainbow Bridge.

Our condolences to their owners. If you would like your ferret to be remembered, send the appropriate information to trfc@3rfc.org



Vinnie - Susan George
Bailey - Zay and Dana
Cammie - Shelter
Baby Girl - Becky and Flo

UPCOMING EVENTS

TRFC Halloween Party & Ferret Costume Contest Oct. 16, 2011 1pm - 4pm

Our annual Costume Contest for ferrets will be combined with a Halloween Party for the Human. Prizes will be awarded to the top 3 costumes. Human costumes not required, but will be duly photographed and appreciated.

As always, the Pampered Fuzzy Store will be set up, along with a small merchandise raffle and potluck lunch.

UPCOMING AFA SHOWS September 24th, 2011

8am - 6pm
Gilbertsville, Pa.
Fall Ferret Fandango
Pennsylvania Ferret Club and Shelter
Gilbertsville Fire Company
1454 E. Philadelphia Ave.
Gilbertsville, Pa.

CONTACT PFCS at PFCS

PO Box 5074
Limerick, Pa. 19468
(610) 495-1509
Or online at

<http://www.ferretclub.com/contact-us/>
for fastest response.

Recent rescue stories

First there was Sparrow. She was turned into the Humane Society because the man "couldn't handle her". He was using gloves! She promptly bit two people at the HS and she was slated to die due to "lack of room." Luckily, the ferret community came together and convinced the HS not to kill and test, but to do the 10-day quarantine. Since she's been at the shelter, she has nipped several volunteers, but has never bitten me. The only time she bites seems to be when you reach into her cage. Easily preventable. She is young, healthy and lively. I think part of her nipping is youth and part that she is frightened easily.

Then someone found four ferrets abandoned in an apartment. They were lovely ferrets, sweet and gentle, but left to die. All their belongings were packed up as if the person was going to take them, and never came back. Two have already been adopted, but we have two left. We named them Kirby, Wasabi, Amigo and Ellie.

Only a few days after that, someone called to say they found a ferret walking on a 4-lane highway in Monroeville. She was a sweet and extremely frightened little thing, but did not bite. She came to me a little thin but in good health (except for very long nails and ear mites). Two days later, someone else called to say they found a ferret on the same stretch of highway. This one was male and very thin. He'd somehow crossed the highway! I don't know why he wasn't dead. We assumed they were from the same group, and when we showed them to each other, the boy stretched his neck out and kissed the little girl! I hope there were only two. It hurts my heart to think of other ferrets lying dead on the side of the road. We named these ferrets Emily and Travis.

A few days after that, I got a call from the Humane Society to pick up two ferrets. They'd been there over 10 days and no one adopted them. They were going to be euthanized due to lack of space, so I got them. The Humane Society's exotics room is overflowing with rabbits. I restrained myself from offering to help free up some cages. LOL. I don't understand why you would kill \$150 ferrets in order to keep \$10 rabbits. Oh well, just my prejudice, I guess. These were named Kali and Ratchet.

The shelter is stuffed. The shelter mom is exhausted. Sparrow brought in some nasty sneezing thing that spread like crazy. Most of the ferrets are better now, but a few are still on meds. That was not fun. It took a LONG time to medicate 27 ferrets before work!

It breaks my heart to hear of so many people giving up or throwing out their ferrets. They are such sweet little souls that it is hard to imagine what must be going on in a person's life to abandon them. I won't even discuss what kind of person would dump them neat a highway.

All these ferrets have unique and striking personalities. Wasabi is slow and sweet. Kali is fast, dark and feisty. Travis is a clown. Emily is delicate and gorgeous. Check out the shelter website and look for them. Better yet, come and see for yourself. I could also use some help getting photos. It takes hours to do by myself. It took 2 ½ hours to photograph 8 ferrets and edit the photos. That doesn't count uploading them and describing them.



TRFC YAHOO GROUP DISCUSSION LIST

Tap in a wealth of advice and information. Join the TRFC Yahoo discussion list! It's easy - just ask Barb (bcarlson@andrew.cmu.edu) for an invitation link, click on the link and you're done!



New Members: 0

Renewed Members: 0

Need to Renew: Lisa Wolfgang and Rhonda Wilson

Total Members: 27

Raffle Donations

The TRFC uses the money from the monthly raffle to pay for the hall rental. If you have (or make) something nice you think someone else might like, please consider donating it for the raffle.

Ferret Awareness Days

September 24 at Petland, Pittsburgh Mills 12-3 pm

If you are thinking of buying or adopting a new ferret, please stop buy and talk to Kathy and her helpers. We have literature about the Three Rivers Ferret Council and the Hide-E-Hole Ferret Rescue as well as information about ferrets and their care. Feel free to stop by with questions.

Hide-E-Hole News - Between 8/1/11 - 8/31/11

Ferrets in: 10; **Deaths:** 1; **Ferrets Returned to Shelter:** 0; **Ferrets Adopted:** 2; **Ferrets in Foster Care:** 10; **Ferrets in Shelter:** 12.

Supplies needed: Wood pellet litter, paper towels, EVO Dog little bites. Since the TRFC is a 501(c)3, and if you keep your receipts, you can write them off on your taxes.

Volunteer Opportunities: Cage cleaning, need help Wednesdays, Friday or Saturday. Help also needed for FADs.

Go to www.hide-e-hole.com for news about the shelter and ferrets.

www.3rfc.org
trfc@3rfc.org
A 501(c)3 Non-Profit
Organization

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