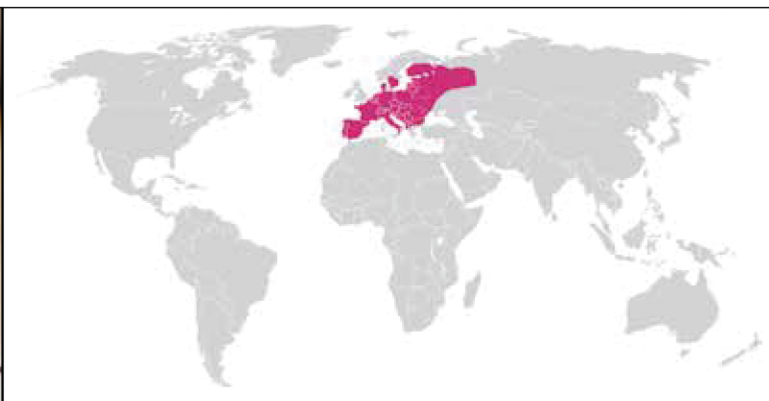


EUROPEAN FERRET

updated March 2017



Range	Europe, except most of Scandinavia
Habitat	Forest zones and open plains
Diet (wild)	Small rodents, frogs and fish
Diet (captivity)	Feline cat food
Description	Length: 15–20 inches; weight: 2 pounds. Long bodies with short legs, dark mask around eyes. Dark fur on backs with yellowish fur underneath. Small ears and thick whiskers. Males usually bigger than females.
Lifespan	Wild: 1–2 years. Captivity: 10 years
Reproduction	After a gestation period of 34–37 days, the female gives birth to 4–8 young. Females can produce 2–3 litters per year. Like most mammals, males do not assist in the care of the young and live in separate burrows from females. Male ferrets have a hooked penis. After penetration of the female, they can't be separated until the male releases. Young domestic ferrets are cared for by their mothers until they are about eight weeks of age.
Behavior	Nocturnal hunters, ferrets have teeth adapted for killing and cutting up prey. Their flexible backbone allows them to move through tight spaces. and sharp prominent claws assist in digging. Ferrets have been semi-tamed and are used for hunting to catch rodents.
Our animals	2 females. Born: 01/2011; 09/2012
Cool stuff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The name “ferret” is derived from the Latin <i>furittus</i>, meaning “little thief,” a likely reference to the common ferret penchant for secreting away small items. • Aside from selection towards particular fur colors, domestic ferrets closely resemble their wild ancestors, European polecats. Pet ferrets can revert back to a wild state within two weeks if they escape. Ferrets were likely domesticated from European polecats over 2,000 years ago. • A healthy domestic ferret will often sleep 18–20 hours per day. Domestic ferrets are naturally crepuscular, having activity periods during dawn and dusk, but will often change this activity period depending on when their owner is around to give them attention. Domestic ferrets are playful, fastidious and will seek attention. They will often interact with other ferrets, cats, and dogs in a friendly manner. They are naturally inquisitive and will tunnel into or under anything. They can be taught tricks and will respond to discipline. Domestic ferrets have an instinct to urinate and defecate in the same places and therefore can be trained to use a litter box. • Black-footed ferrets, a close cousin, are one of North America’s rarest animals. Thanks to a successful breeding program at Omaha’s Henry Doorly Zoo started in 1991, the black-footed ferret has made a dramatic comeback.

Phylum
ChordataClass
MammaliaOrder
CarnivoraFamily
MustelidaeGenus
Mustelaspecies
M. putorius furo