



Gerbil

Gerbillinae



What is the history of my relationship to man?

Gerbils were first introduced to the pet industry in 1964. These were the Mongolian gerbils. Their value as pets was soon appreciated and they are now found in pet shops all over the UK and USA. It is illegal to purchase, import, or keep a gerbil as a pet in the U.S. state of California.

Habitat / Climate

Arid
Desert like conditions

Where am I from?

Sometimes called sand rats or desert rats, gerbils are found in the dry, sandy areas and grasslands of western Asia and Africa.



Who are my relatives?

Once known simply as "desert rats", the gerbil subfamily includes about 110 species of African, Indian, and Asian rodents, including sand rats and jirds, all of which are adapted to arid habitats.



Other family members:

- Gambian Rat
- Porcupine
- Mara Mara

Breeding

A litter will be of about 4-8

How am I born?

Litters of 1 to 14 young are born as often as once a month during the first two years. When first born, gerbil babies are blind, deaf, hairless, and helpless.

How long does it take me to grow up and how long do I live

By three weeks some of them may have one of their eyes open. Around this point, they begin to be weaned, eating food and not relying so much on milk. Gerbils may live four to eight years in captivity, depending on the species

Breeding Season

A	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
N	E	A	P	A	U	U	S	E	C	O	E
	B	R	Y	N	L	L	E	C	T	V	C

Names for:

- Adult male- Buck
- Adult female- Doe
- Young- Pup
- Group:- Family

What kind of family life do I

Colonies usually live together in a tunnel that varies from a single short burrow to multiple intersecting tunnels. Most are primarily diurnal

What do I eat and when do I eat?

Sunflower seeds, pumpkin seeds, and peanuts are favorites of most gerbils. They also enjoy fruit peels such as that from a banana. Avoid lettuces, as the nitrates can prevent oxygenation of the blood, and citrus fruits.

Who are my predators?

Snakes and other Desert predators.



Comments:

The Great Gerbil, or Rhombomys opimus, originally native to Turkmenistan, can grow to more than 16 inches.