



Introduction Guide To The Care Of Steppe Lemmings

Scientific Name: Lagurus lagurus

Life Span: Approx 1-3 years in captivity

Size: They are usually between 8-12cm long, with a very short tail that will measure no more than 2cm's

Appearance: The steppe lemming or steppe vole is a small, plump, light-grey rodent, similar in appearance to the Norway lemming, but not in the same genus. Steppe lemmings are relatively small, about the size of a Dwarf hamster. They are long and slender not dissimilar to the appearance of a Chinese hamsters body. The coat is a grey brown with a slight buff to it, there is a black dorsal stripe present which reaches from between the ears to the end of the tail, the fur is soft and dense. The feet of a steppe lemming unlike many other rodents are grey, the feet also have fur on the soles. Steppe lemmings have a very short almost non existent neck, it would appear that the head is attached to the shoulders, they have long whiskers and small ears and eyes. The legs are also short and the feet have strong claws designed for digging.

Temperament and Handling: Steppe lemmings are relatively easy to handle if started from a young age, can make a wonderfully tame pet. Steppe lemmings rarely bite and when they do it is usually a nip which isn't strong enough to break the skin. Generally in captivity and in the wild steppe lemmings are a very sociable species and will live in small groups or larger colonies. In captivity they will happily live in groups if introduced from a young age.

Housing: Due to their small size the only really option for steppe lemmings is a glass or plastic tank, as a rule steppe lemmings should be given as much substrate to dig in as possible, preferably at least 6 inches deep. They will also appreciate branches, logs and tubes to hide in or under. They should be kept on a peat substitute or shavings, for nesting material they should be given soft meadow hay. They will use the hay as both nesting material and as a food source. A nest box is not necessary although if provided it will be used, when housing in groups it is better to provide several nest boxes as fighting over nest boxes may occur.

Heating and Lighting: (see above)

Feeding: Steppe lemmings should not be fed a basic hamsters or other commercial rodent mix, it is believed that they are sugar intolerant and if fed sugar they are prone to diabetes. It is not 100% confirmed as to whether they are sugar intolerant or prone to diabetes when fed sugary food,



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however it has been noted that diabetes more frequently occurs in animals which have been fed on a high sugar diet. In the wild they do not eat any sugary foods and there for have adapted to live without it. In the wild their diet consists of roots, grasses and sedges, plant tubers, bulbs, green vegetation, and only a limited amount of seeds. Insects are probably also taken occasionally. Steppe Lemmings, for their size, consume large amounts of food, but too 'rich' a diet can lead to the animals becoming overweight, causing the breeding rate to fall and shortening life span. Steppe lemmings must have clean, fresh water available at all times as for their size they consume vast amounts of water. You can also feed lemmings, a basic seed mix including budgie mix and foreign finch mix. They can also have small portions of vegetables once or twice a week.

Please note that this is only an introductory guide based on our opinions and experience, we advise you to continually research and learn as much as possible from as many sources as you can, every animal is different and new care and information is always being developed and found 😊