

Fennec Foxes as Pets

By Comfort for Critters

Fennec Foxes, the smallest breed of fox in the world, are native to the Sahara Desert in Africa, though they have been bred in captivity in the US for several decades. They live 10-15 years, are only 4 pounds when full grown, and they eat bugs, worms, tiny lizards and occasionally fruit. Their large ears are designed to dissipate the desert heat, and to listen for their tiny underground prey.

Though they are adorable creatures, you'll see that they can be challenging to keep as a pet. They are quite shy and do not like to be held for more than a few moments. They also do not respond to typical pet training methods and cannot be potty trained. In fact, their waste (which smells like a skunk) is used in their marking technique (to show ownership).

Fennec Foxes must be kept indoors in a climate of 65-80 degrees. They can hang out in a large ferret-type cage when unsupervised, but they need to be out of the cage, as much as possible, to stay somewhat friendly.

Supervision is required because, although they don't interactively play with their owners, they do like to dig (ie. dig up carpets, floors and into furniture). They also can, and do, bite - especially when startled or when they just want their own space. Their vocalizations can be very sweet, from low guttural barking sounds, to a chirping trill, to a sound that's a cross between a purr and a growl.

Despite being a handful, they do have their admirers. Fennec Foxes cost approximately \$1,500 and generally people will be placed on a waiting list for a year or more to obtain one from a breeder. Kudos goes to the animal shelters which provide a safe place for these wonderful creatures.

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