



Siberian Chipmunk



Chipmunks are member of the Rodent family, closely related to Squirrels and Marmots. Siberian chipmunks are the only species whose natural habitat is outside North America. It has been found in Eastern Europe but this is a result of escaping from captivity.

Their name is thought to originate from the Native American word “Chitmunk”, which means “red squirrel”. They are omnivorous which means they eat both vegetable and animal matter. Their diet usually consists of seeds, grains, fungi, worms, insects and bird’s eggs. They are food

hoarders and help the spread of plants and fungi as they do not always eat the food they have stored before it germinates.

Chipmunks build burrow systems with many entrances, which can be more than 3.5m in length. They are known for keeping their living areas very clean and tidy with separate tunnels for sleeping, eating, and even a latrine area.



Did You Know..?

- **Siberian chipmunks have two different voices! One sounds like a 'cheep' similar to that of a bird call and usually means they are frightened. The other is more of a deep croaking sound believed to be one way they call between mates....**
- **Chipmunks take an average of 75 breaths a minute...**
- **One chipmunk may store up to 8 pounds of food in its burrows...**
- **Chipmunks can change colour? They are cryptically coloured which means that they camouflage their fur to fit in with changing habitats and seasons...**



Rabbits



Giant Continental



Broken Blue Mini-Rex



Blue Mini-Rex



Himalayan



Castor Rex



Rabbits

We have 5 different rabbit species here at Belmont Farm; two Himalayan Rabbits; two Castor Rex's; one Blue Rex, one Broken Blue Rex and one Continental Giant Rabbit.

The Castors and blues are all Mini-Rex varieties and have been nicknamed 'Velveteen Rabbits' because of their plush velvet fur. These breeds are popular for showing and excel in the sport of 'Rabbit Hopping'.

Rabbits appear similar to rodents in many ways. However they are classified as lagomorphs, along with hares and 'pikas'. There are 80 different species of lagomorphs which all possess a second set of upper incisors and a light skull structure which is their main differentiation feature to rodents.

Rabbits and hares are among one of the most hunted animals on earth so their physical features reflect their need to perceive danger and avoid predators. They all have large ears, providing excellent hearing, eyes positioned high on each side of the head to give almost 360° vision and long back legs to enable them to run fast.



Did You Know..?

- **A Continental Giant Rabbit in Worcester weighs 3 stones and measures 4ft in length....**
- **Rabbits breed very quickly. A female rabbit can have 20 babies a month in the breeding season.**
- **The largest litter of baby rabbits is 24. It has happened twice. Once in 1978 and again in 1999...**
- **The longest rabbits ears recorded are 31.125 inches long. They belong to an American rabbit, 'Nipper's Geronimo'...**



Ferret



These carnivores were domesticated from wild Polecats by at least 2,500 years ago.

Humans use them to hunt Rabbit and other small mammals. Their fur comes in a number of colours: black, brown, white, or a mixture. Being carnivores they have enlarged upper and lower 'Canine' teeth that are used to hold prey animals.

Male Ferrets are larger than their female counterparts and can be up to 50cm long. Ferrets live up to 7 – 10 years.

Ferrets are members of the same family as Weasels, Otters and Badgers and share common features such as long bodies, short legs, strong claws and glands that are used in scent marking territory and trails.



Did You Know...?

- **When excited, Ferrets perform a 'War Dance', involving arching of the back, wide mouth gape, and turning their heads from side to side quickly...**
- **Tripping up over their own feet and rolling around on the floor often follows the above dance!**
- **A ferret called Freddie was registered as an electrician's assistant with the New Zealand Electrical Workers Union...**
- **The word 'Ferret' comes from the Latin for 'Little Thief'..**



Peach Faced Lovebird

The largest species of African Lovebird, Peach or Rosy Faced Lovebirds are native to the Namib Desert in South West Africa. They are the most commonly held species in captivity.

Females are slightly larger and greener in colour, while males are smaller and brighter. They are very lively and inquisitive birds and can make fantastic pets if handled from a young age.

Each bird has its own distinct personality, where some are calm and enjoy human company others are very stubborn and prone to biting. Lovebirds like to chew things... Their cage, furniture, electrical wiring, people...





Budgerigar

Native to Australia, budgies are the most popular pet birds because they are small and easy to look after.

Their slightly smaller and less colourful wild cousins are found in scrub, woodland and grassland environments and eat mainly grass seeds. They are very easy to tame and breed.

The '*Cere*' on the head is the area that contains the nostrils, and is a different colour in males and females.

Adult males have a light to Royal Blue cere while in female it is a pale Brown to White.

This makes it easy to tell the sex of a Budgie over six months of age.

They are important animals in science, having been flown into Space before humans.





Did You Know..?

- **Like other Parrot species, they are very vocal and can be taught to Speak, Whistle songs and Mimic other sounds.**
- **A Budgie called 'Puck' is still the world record holder for speaking, as he knew 1,728 different words, more than any other bird...**
- **A bird uses its beak like a hand to carry out all sorts of tasks from catching and holding foods to preening its feathers and building a nest.**
- **The size and shape of a bird's bill depends mainly on what it eats and where it finds its food.**



Cockatiel

The Cockatiel is a miniature Cockatoo, naturally found in the Australian 'Outback'. Like other members of the Cockatoo family it has a crest upon its head that is raised when the bird is surprised or excited!



They have become popular pets, second only to the Budgerigar in popularity among birds. Their temperament largely depends upon how they are reared and where some are very outgoing and gregarious, others are shy and avoid contact with humans.

Patient owners can be rewarded with birds that become tame very quickly and like other members of the Parrot family, Cockatiels are excellent mimics, learning commonly heard phrases, snippets of music, even the sound of car alarms and ringing telephones.



Did You Know..?

- **Cockatiels are the only species of cockatoo that can begin to breed in their first year...**
- **They are very sociable birds and will get depressed if they are left alone for long periods of time. But they also make good friends with Budgerigars and other small Parrots..**
- **Unlike other birds, cockatiels don't mind sharing their cage with one from the same gender. So you can have two males who will not fight over territory.**



Guinea Pig



Despite their name, these animals are not really pigs nor do they come from Guinea! They are a Rodent from the Andes Mountain Range in South America, but are found worldwide (except Antarctica). They can survive in almost every habitat, from the cold climate of the arctic tundra to the heat of the desert regions.

They are a protein source for the native people of the Andes but are also part of their religious traditions and folk medicine.

Guinea Pigs are naturally docile and respond very well to feeding and handling. They are easy to care for and very bright! Guineas can learn very complex routes to find food, which they remember for months. They are very talkative and make a number of noises when they are excited, startled, or simply happy.

Despite their differing lifestyles all rodents possess many common characteristics. Most have a long tail, clawed feet, long whiskers and teeth special for gnawing.



Did You Know..?

- **Just like Humans, they must eat fresh vegetables because they are unable to make Vitamin C...**
- **Unlike most other Rodents, young Guinea Pigs can run when they are only 3 hours old...**
- **Rodents' 'Incisors' (front teeth) never stop growing, so they have to gnaw or chew on hard or woody food every day...**
- **The Moche people of ancient Peru are believed to have worshipped guinea pigs...**
- **Guinea pigs make 'friendships' between themselves when housed together...**



Chinchilla

Originally hunted for their fur, Chinchillas come from Chile in South America. They are members of the Rodent family of mammals, their closest relatives being the Viscacha, which is an animal similar to a rabbit.

They are named after the Chincha people, who wore clothing made of their soft, dense fur. They started to be farmed for their pelts when they became less readily found due to over hunting.



Wild Chinchillas live in burrows for most of the day, as they are 'Crepuscular', meaning they are most active in the morning and evening. They do not like to be disturbed during the day.

Chinchillas do not generally like to be handled, although with lots of patience when they are young they can become very attached to their owners.

They need lots of exercise and are sociable animals so should not be kept alone. In captivity they can live for up to 20 years.



Did You Know..?

- **Chinchillas like to take dust baths, just like birds...**
- **Dogs aren't the only animals that bark! Chinchillas do to, along with a range of chirps and squeaks...**
- **The oldest Chinchilla in the world is 28 years old...**
- **The largest Rodent ever was as big as a Hippopotamus!**