

Organiser

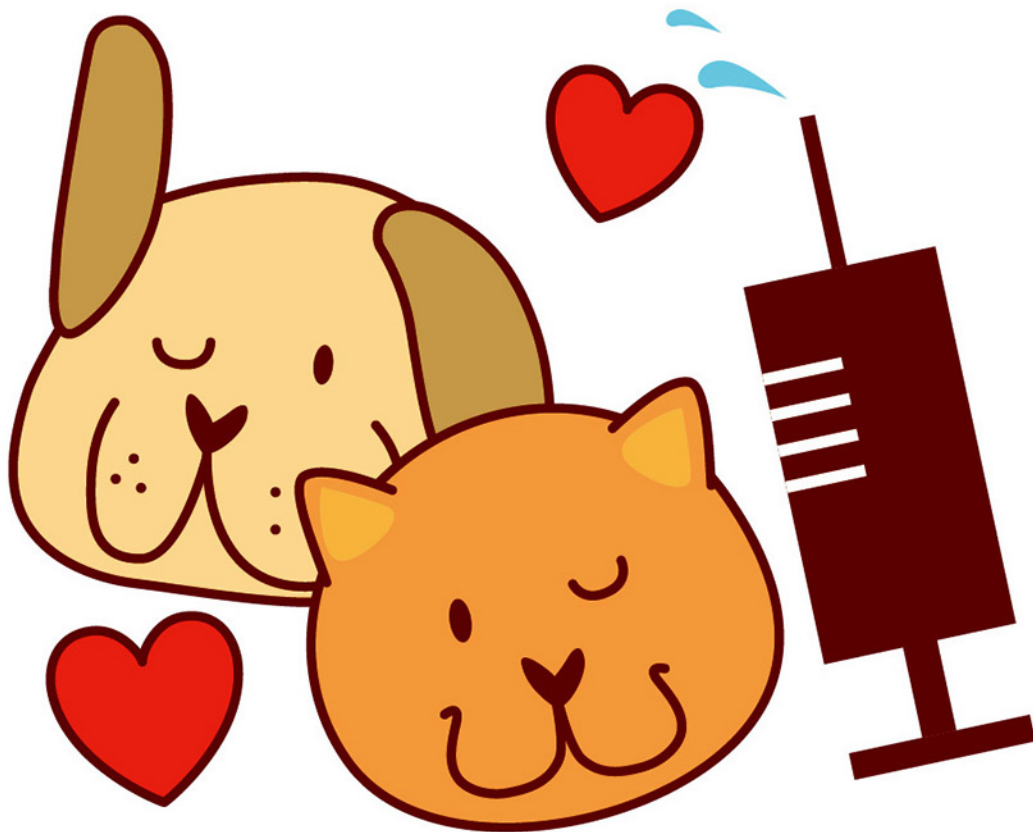
Funded by

**Responsible
Pet
Ownership**
Children's Kit



The Hongkong Bank Foundation
滙豐銀行慈善基金

What Animals Need



This Children's Kit is sponsored by the Hongkong Bank Foundation to be given free to any interested parents of children who want to acquire a pet either through the SPCA, other animal-welfare organisations or pet shops. We encourage you to study and discuss the contents with your children before making any decisions.

Education Department

The NEEDS OF PETS

Every living thing on earth has certain basic needs which are essential for its survival.

Animals need to drink and eat, sleep and rest, socialise, exercise and reproduce. However, each individual type of animal has in addition its own special needs for it to grow and live happily.

Animals that live in the wild have evolved to fulfil their own needs, but pets rely on their owners to meet these needs for them. Doing this properly is what is meant by Responsible Pet Ownership.

So if you are thinking of having a pet, you first need to consider whether you can really provide everything necessary for its healthy and happy survival.



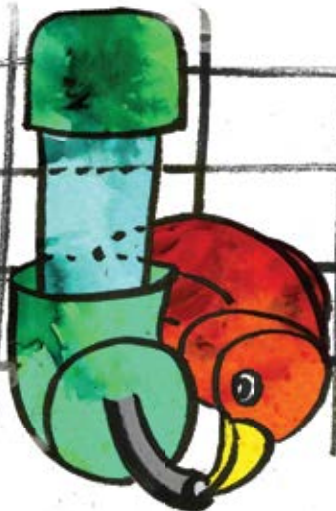
BASIC NEEDS

Any animal you take home as a pet **will have basics needs** for survival. You must:

1. Provide clean water at all times and give the right type and amount of food daily.
2. Create a comfortable and suitable living environment.

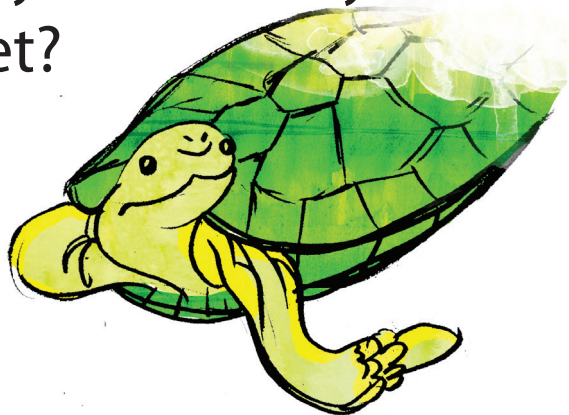


3. Arrange regular health checks and vaccinations and ensure the animal is healthy and happy.
4. Care for its well-being and let it behave in a natural way.
5. Provide a place for the pet to hide if required where it will feel safe and secure, and not frightened.



Do you know how long you are likely to need to care for your pet?

Remember, animals can live a long time. Having a pet is not a short-term but a life-long commitment. A pet-owner has to make sure that the needs of the animal are satisfied every day so that it can live happily.



Different animals have different life spans. Turtles can live up to 30 years or more, some even live to be 100. Goldfish may live for around 20 years, and common mammals, such as cats and dogs, often live for 12 to 16 years. Rabbits live on average 6 to 8 years; hamsters 18 months to 2 years; and chinchillas 10 to 15 years. Lovebirds have a lifespan of between 10 to 12 years and frogs of 4 to 15 years.



As each species of animal requires its own special attention, the time involved to meet these specific needs will vary. It is very important for potential pet owners to research the needs of a particular animal before bringing one home and not to rely entirely on the advice of other people.

What would happen if you failed to take good care of your pet?

If you don't care properly for your pet, the animal will feel unloved and will be very miserable. It may also suffer physically from your lack of care – and even die. This will be entirely your fault.

It is the responsibility of the owner to provide the pet with all its basic animal needs, as well as finding out if it has any specific needs and providing these as well.

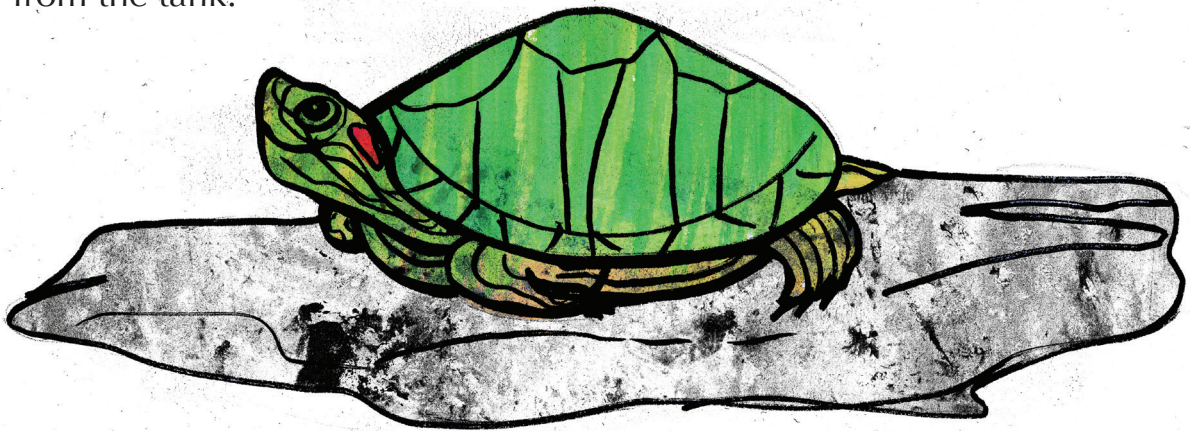
The purpose of this booklet is to give you a general idea of the needs of different types of common pets. However, this is not a comprehensive guide to all pets and it is your responsibility as a pet owner to find out as much information as possible about your chosen animal before bringing one home.

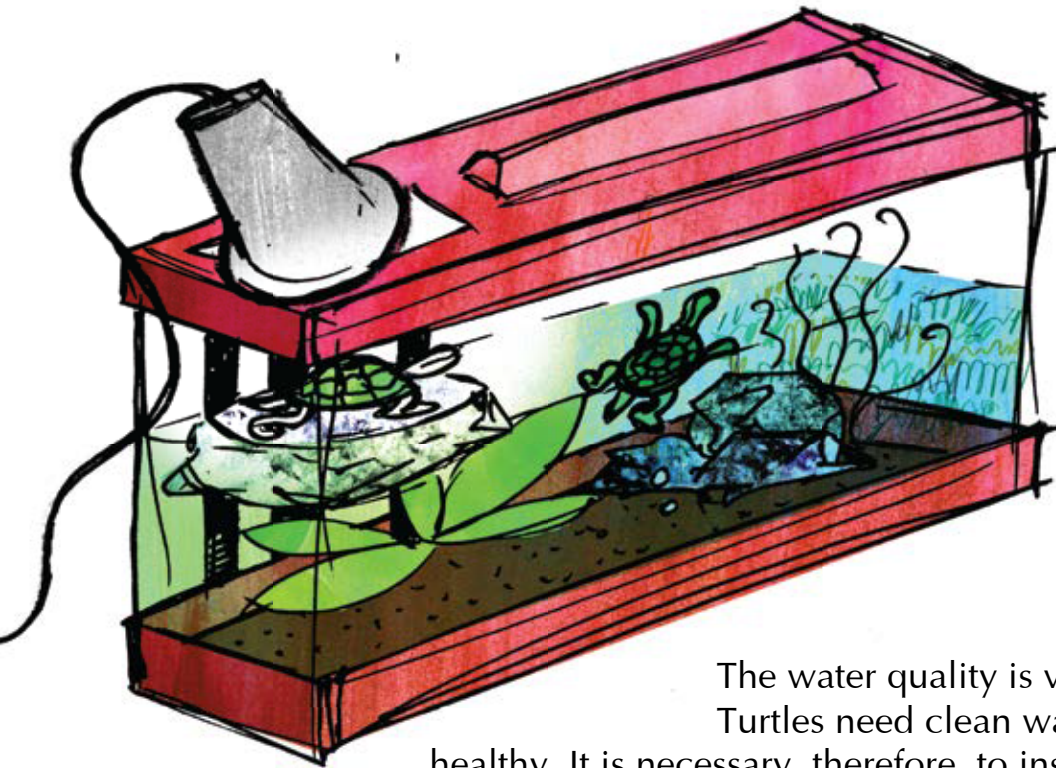


The RED-EARED TERRAPIN

Red-eared terrapins are reptiles with a lifespan of 20 years or more and have special needs. They cannot regulate their own body temperature and so it is essential that owners provide both a warm (UV lamp) and cool (water) place in their tank so they can warm up or cool down to their required temperature range.

It is thus important for owners of pet turtles to provide an indoor habitat that mimics the turtles' natural environment. A good-sized glass aquarium offering plenty of room for the turtles to swim and with a platform above water to sunbathe under the lamp and rest is a must. Make sure the platform is not too high otherwise the turtles may escape from the tank.





The water quality is very important. Turtles need clean water to keep healthy. It is necessary, therefore, to install a filter and water pump to maintain water cleanliness since turtles dirty the water easily. Even with a filter, the water needs to be changed frequently. It is essential to provide proper UVB lighting to prevent diseases of the shell and to enable the turtles to get heat if they are cold. If their temperature drops too much their metabolism will shut down.

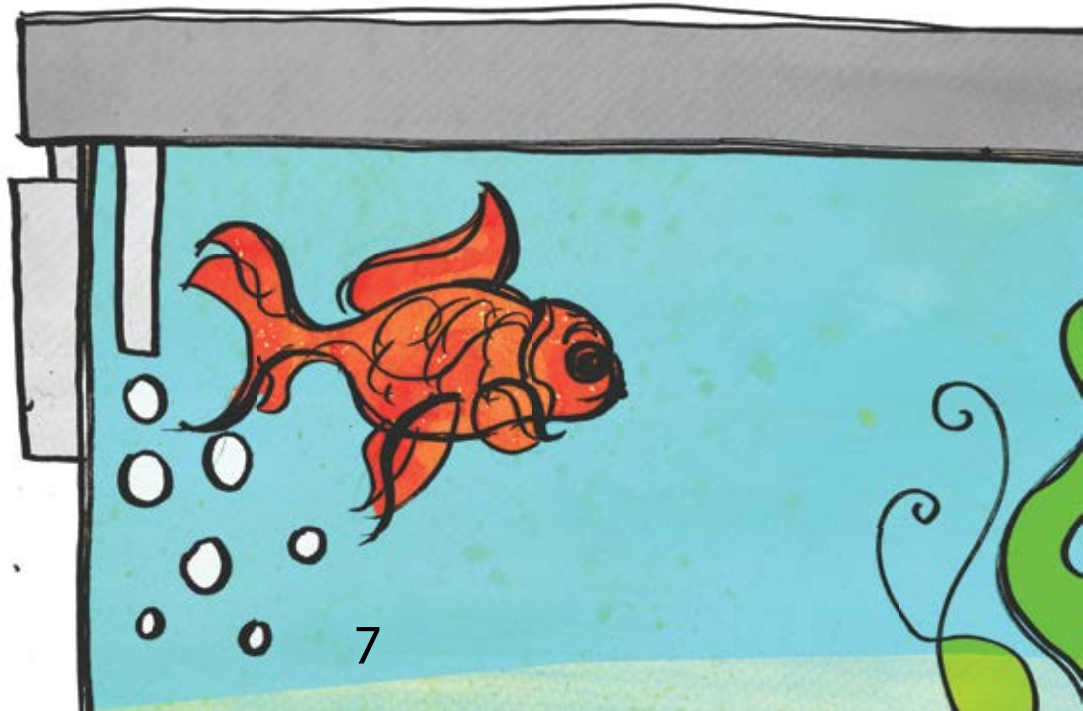
To keep your red-eared terrapins happy, remember to clean the tank regularly and to replace the tank with a bigger one as the animals grow. They can reach 30 cm in length, so you need to prepare! Give them a proper diet with good quality pellets and remember not to overfeed them.

The GOLDFISH

Goldfish need to have a spacious environment in which to swim freely. It is very important to provide them with a large aquarium, and not a small fish bowl, so that they have sufficient water to provide the oxygen they need. If they don't get enough oxygen from the water they take in, they will suffocate and die from ammonia poisoning.

For this reason, the aquarium should be fitted with an air pump to provide plenty of oxygen. This is highly recommended as it helps to reduce stress. Goldfish release large amounts of waste and chemical metabolites into the water, which can be harmful and need to be removed.

Owners should install a filter in the tank and make sure the water is changed frequently.



Goldfish are usually classified as coldwater fish and can live in temperatures ranging from 10°C to 25°C, but a water temperature of between 18°C and 22°C is considered best. Please note that goldfish cannot tolerate rapid changes in temperature; any significant variation will easily kill the fish.

The tank should be kept away from direct sunlight because sun will heat the tank and encourage algae growth. You can put freshwater plants in the tank but make sure there is enough room and lighting for these.

Remember goldfish are very different from mammals. Do not remove the fish from the tank to stroke them as any handling can be very stressful to them.

As a good pet owner, you should provide the goldfish with a suitable environment so that they can live happily.

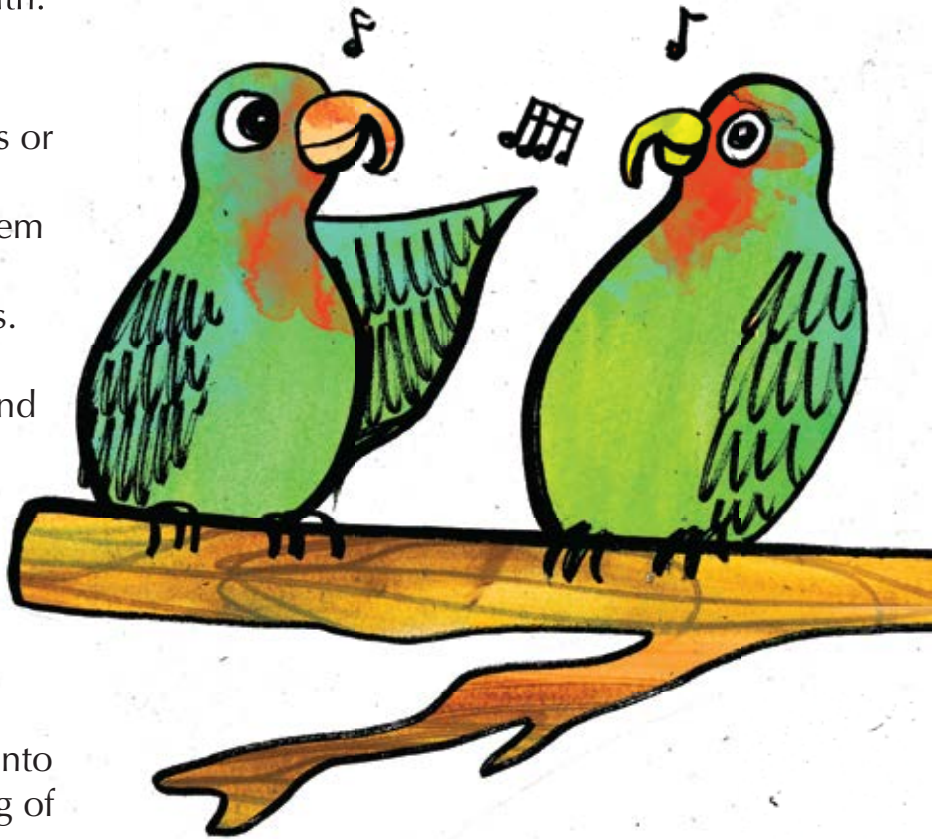


The LOVEBIRD

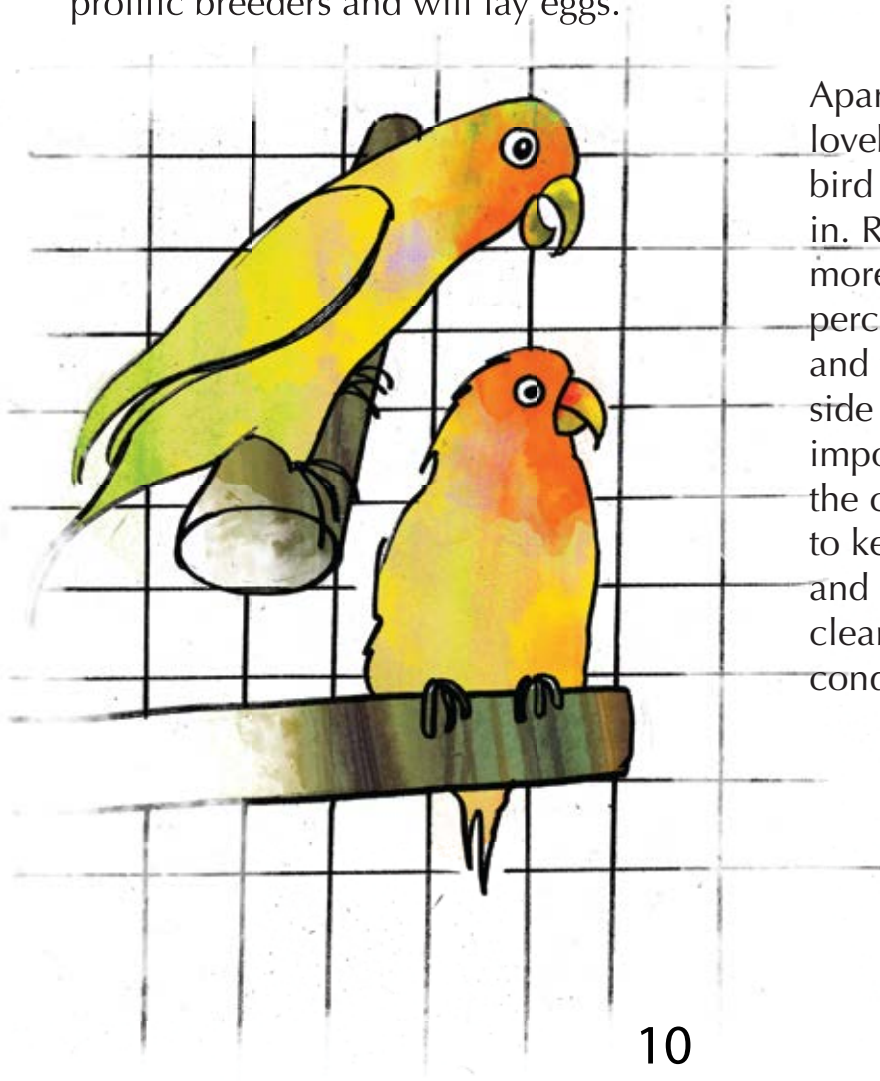
The lovebird is a very active and affectionate small parrot and needs a lot of attention. It is better to keep these pets in pairs to help them stay happy and in good health.

Bored birds will feather pluck, either themselves or each other. It is also important to provide them with a balanced diet of special bird food pellets.

Lovebirds love to talk and they can produce many sounds, from a cheerful, pleasant chirp to a highly irritating screech. Therefore, as a pet owner, you should be prepared and take this into consideration if thinking of having lovebirds as pets.



Remember, a single lovebird will need frequent attention and if you don't have the time to spend with it, it is advisable that you either get the bird a companion or dismiss altogether the idea of having a lovebird as a pet. If you get a companion bird, you need to be aware that lovebirds can be prolific breeders and will lay eggs.



Apart from companionship, lovebirds need a spacious bird cage or aviary to live in. Remember to provide more than one perch or perches of different widths, and to hang dishes from the side for feed and water. It is important to place toys in the cage for enrichment and to keep the cage, or aviary, and accessories always clean and in good condition.

The DOG



Dogs are known as man's best friend and they can be good, loyal companions and fun to have around as pets. But at the same time, it is important to take into account the fact that dogs require a lot of time and patience, not to mention money, if we are to take good care of them.

The average lifespan of a dog ranges from 12 to 16 years, depending on its size. Smaller dogs tend to live longer. Therefore, it is essential for you as a pet owner to think hard about the commitment and to plan your daily routine with a dog in the home before taking one on as a pet.

No matter how big or small the dog, you need to take it out for a good walk at least once a day. This is important since dogs need to be exposed to the outside world for stimulation.





Dogs are social animals, they also need to play and have their lives enriched; they should not be left alone for too long or they become lonely and/or destructive. Young dogs tend to be more active than mature

ones. However, different breeds of dog have different characters and may originate from very different habitats, resulting in a range of specific needs. It is very important for you as a pet owner to acquire as much information as possible so you can choose the type of dog that best fits your circumstances before taking one home. This way you can be sure of meeting its needs.



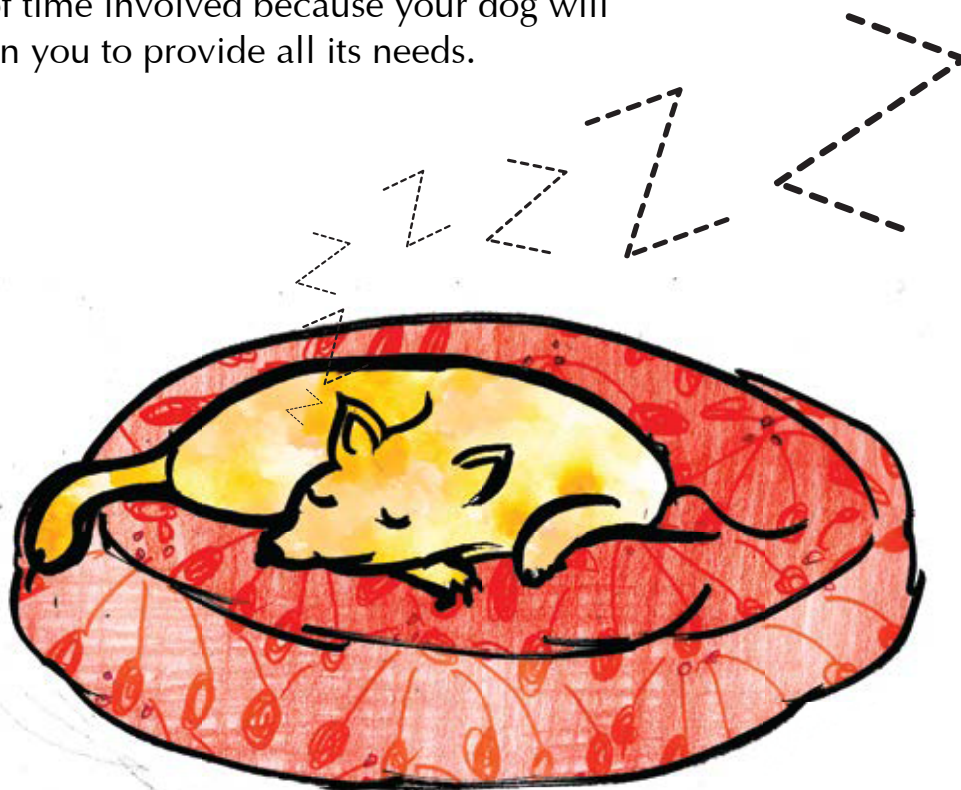
Apart from the specific needs that a particular breed might have, dogs are required by law to be vaccinated against rabies, micro-chipped and licensed. This procedure needs to be repeated every three years.

In order to keep dogs clean, they need to be regularly groomed and given medication to de-worm them and keep them free of fleas and ticks. Additionally, dogs may need to be bathed not more than once a month.



Dogs need a comfortable and safe place in which to live and sleep. They need a good diet and should always have access to fresh water and daily exercise.

Please do not be influenced by other people, a movie or even a television drama in getting a dog. If you want to take a dog as a pet, make sure you understand the extent of your commitment to the animal and the problems that may arise. Estimate the amount of time involved because your dog will depend on you to provide all its needs.



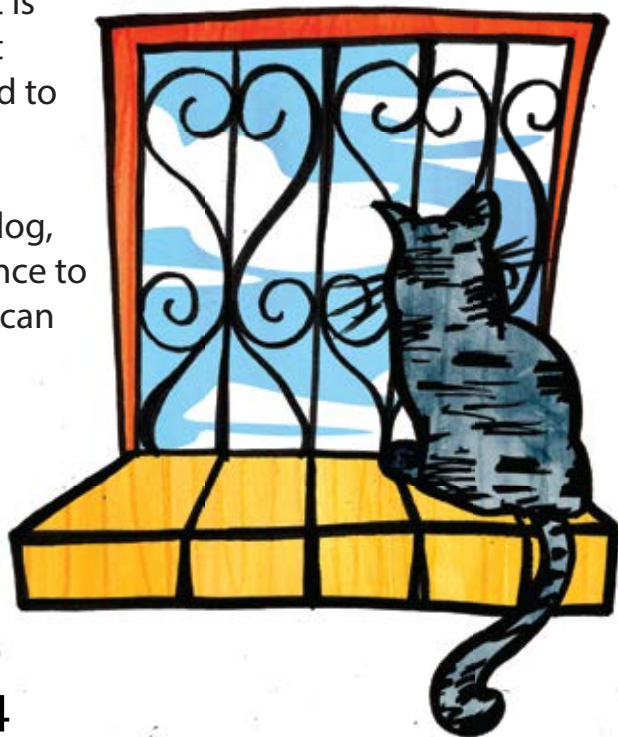
The CAT

In addition to their basic needs, cats need enrichment toys to play with and a scratching post or pad to enable them to sharpen and clean their claws. If you don't provide this, they are likely to scratch your furniture instead.

Cats are quite different from dogs. Cats do not need to go out for regular walks, but they need to exercise and to be able to jump freely. They are inquisitive animals and it is important for pet owners who live in high-rises to install grilles on windows to avoid their cats from jumping out. Also, although cats are nimble-footed creatures, owners should take care to keep breakable items out of their way.

If cats have no access to the outdoors, it is important to place a litter box in a quiet corner for the cat to use for its toilet, and to keep the litter clean.

Although more independent than the dog, cats still need your love, time and patience to care for them for their entire lives. They can sometimes live for more than 20 years.



The HAMSTER

There are three main breeds of hamster: Chinese, Syrian (Golden) and Russian Dwarf. They are nocturnal animals, meaning they are active at night and sleep during the day. They are very shy creatures. Chinese and Syrian hamsters prefer to be kept solitary, while the Russian Dwarf can be kept in pairs – but of the same sex to avoid unwanted babies. They are also quite fragile; you need to handle them gently and not too often.

They need a drip-feed bottle with a metal spout in their cage to provide a constant supply of fresh drinking water. To avoid overgrown teeth, hamsters need a gnawing block to chew on.



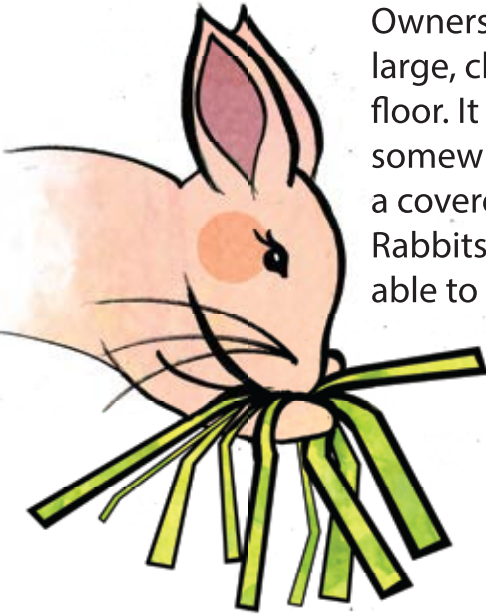
The best feed for hamsters is a good quality commercial diet in a sealed bag.

Hamsters need plenty of exercise and it is important to give them a spacious cage containing a running wheel and a tunnel with stairs so that they can exercise freely. They also need to have a nest box with bedding made up of shredded white paper or straw for them to hide in.



The RABBIT

Rabbits are very timid animals and need to live in a quiet environment.



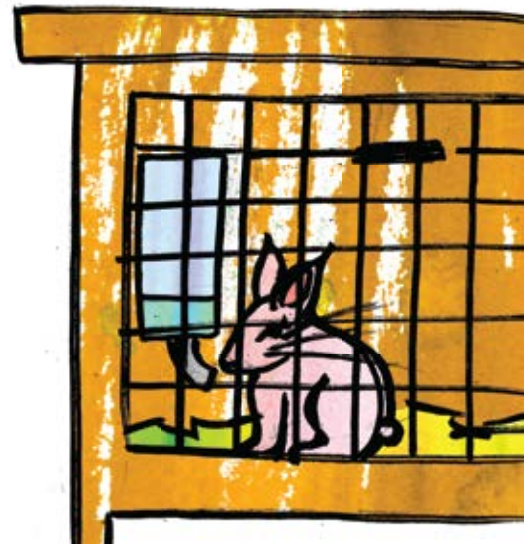
Owners should provide rabbits with a large, clean and dry hutch with a solid floor. It should be positioned somewhere not too hot or cold and have a covered area where they can hide. Rabbits need a hutch big enough to be able to hop around enabling them to

make at least three hops. Additionally, they need to be taken out of the hutch – “rabbit proof” the house – for daily exercise and grooming.



supplemented daily with a limited amount of fresh or commercial good quality pellets for an extra source of vitamins.

Rabbits have a sensitive stomach and it is important to introduce new foods – vegetables, hay or pellets – gradually over a week. Rabbits also need hard wood to gnaw on to avoid the overgrowth of teeth and a mineral-lick chew treat is important to keep them healthy.



The GUINEA PIG

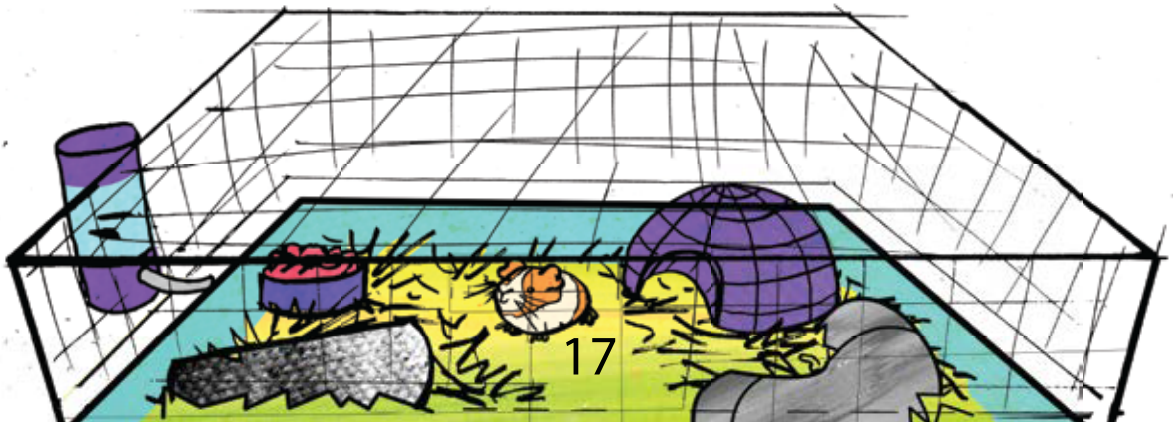
Guinea pigs are also timid animals and need companionship. Living alone

is very stressful for them. However, it is important to keep animals of the same sex to avoid unwanted babies - if not, you must desex them!

Provide a constant supply of fresh drinking water from a water bowl or a drip-feed bottle with a metal spout and a mixture of commercial complete pellets supplied in a sealed bag. Giving vitamin C is essential; it is available in pet shops in powder form. You can mix it with water or food, but make sure clean water and fresh food are provided twice a day.

Guinea pigs need a spacious and clean environment which is best provided by a waterproof hutch, off the ground and out of direct sunlight. A separate sleeping area of fresh, soft bedding hay and wood shavings will help to keep them happy. They should be put outside to get exercise and be provided with plastic tubes to hide in.

Guinea pigs also need a gnawing block, to wear their long teeth down, and regular grooming.



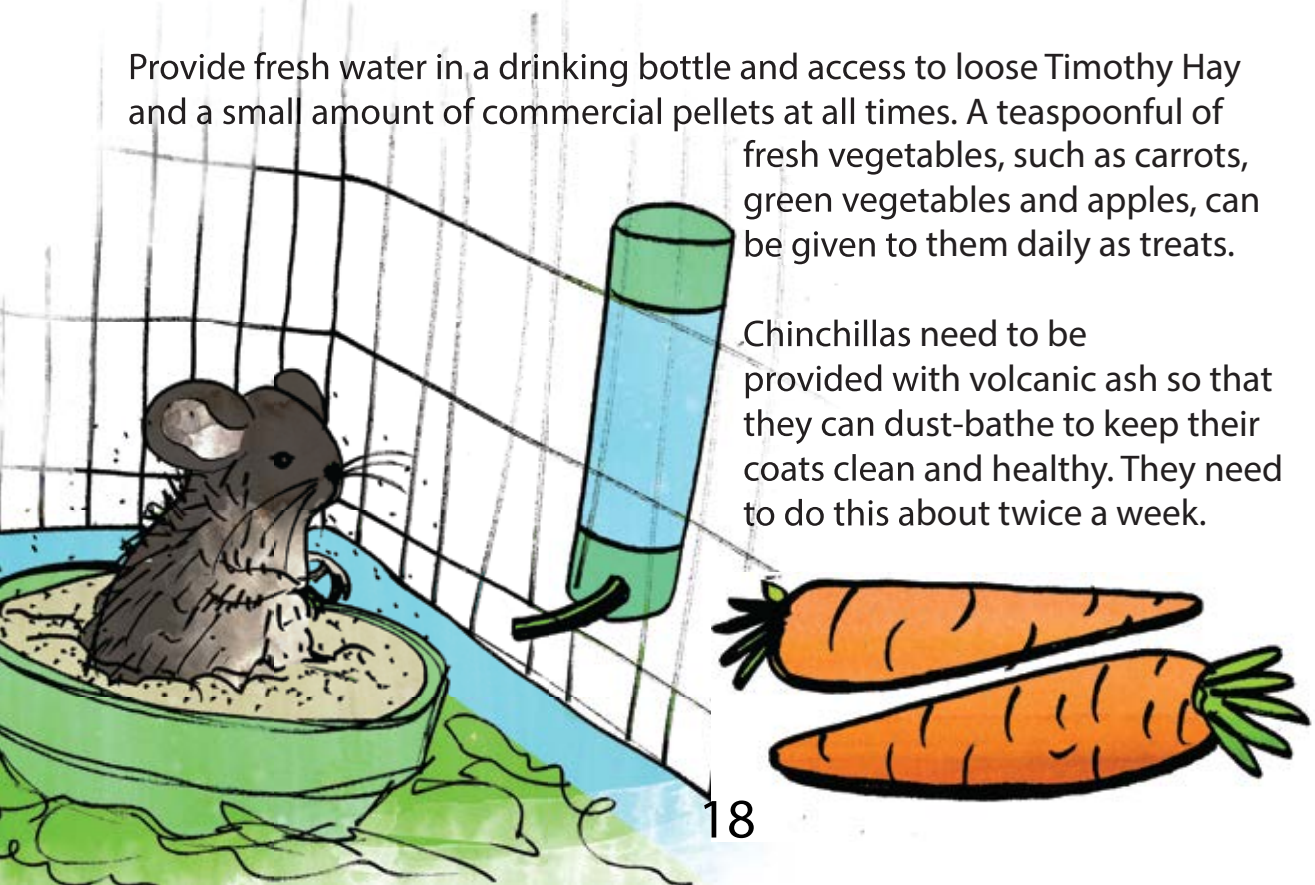
The CHINCHILLA

Chinchillas are nervous animals and easily suffer from stress. They originate from the upper heights of the Andes mountain range and it is important to provide them with a spacious, cool, dry, quiet and shady living environment. Avoid direct sunshine and allow them at least 10 hours of darkness every night. They are social animals and can be housed in pairs or a group but you need to desex them in a mixed population.

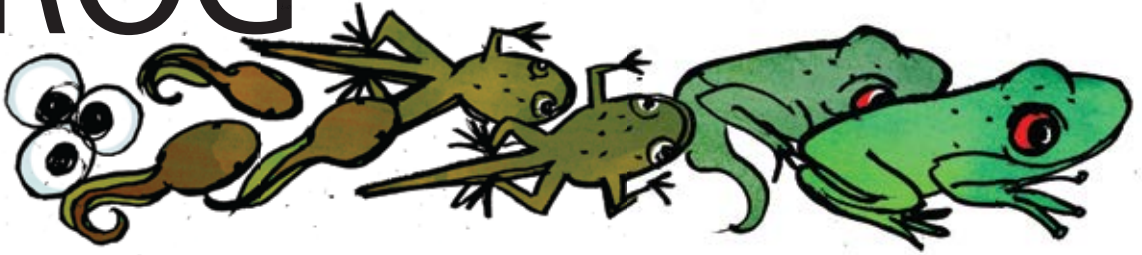
Provide fresh water in a drinking bottle and access to loose Timothy Hay and a small amount of commercial pellets at all times. A teaspoonful of

fresh vegetables, such as carrots, green vegetables and apples, can be given to them daily as treats.

Chinchillas need to be provided with volcanic ash so that they can dust-bathe to keep their coats clean and healthy. They need to do this about twice a week.

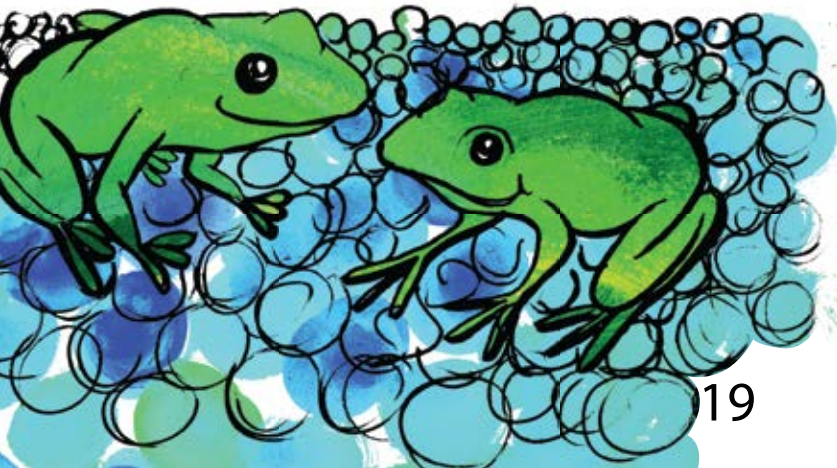


The FROG



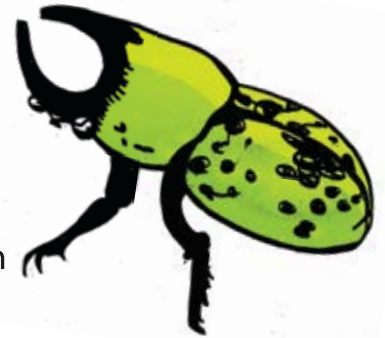
Frogs need a clean, well-lit, enclosed living environment. There are many different species of frogs and depending on the type they may have specific temperature and humidity requirements. These needs can vary greatly. They are very sensitive to waste and it is important for owners of frogs to keep their enclosures clean. This means there is a lot of work in enabling frogs to live happily.

Most frogs eat insects, so you need to spend time in giving them appropriate commercial food. Frogs can live a long time – around 4 to 15 years – so you must be prepared for a long-term commitment and plan ahead for before making any decision to keep frogs.



Remember also that frogs can start out quite small but may eventually grow into giants. It is important for you to research properly about the frog as keeping them is not as easy it may seem.

The BEETLE



Before taking on a beetle as a pet, you need first to learn about the natural habitat of the animal.

Beetles need to move around freely and it is best to provide them with a tall glass or plastic tank with plenty of space. First cover the tank bottom with about two inches or more of humid soil and place a few pieces of wood or bark on the soil for the beetles to climb up and walk on.

To allow ventilation while preventing the beetles from escaping, it is important to cover the tank top with a mesh lid.

Pet-owners should be aware of the temperature and humidity requirements of different species of beetle and make sure they meet the needs of their individual beetle. Install an ordinary incandescent light bulb to provide warmth and spray the tank with water to help increase the humidity.



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