

## VETERINARY ADVICE AND EXOTIC PETS

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Please use these tables as a guide on how to think about the vet's role in the care of exotic pets. The tables are not all inclusive. You will be able to think of many more examples of veterinary advice to give in each category.

		<b>Reptiles</b>		<b>Small Mammals</b>	
	<b>Terrestrial</b>	<b>Aquatic</b>	<b>Herbivores</b>	<b>Carnivores</b>	<b>Omnivores</b>
<b>Example taxa</b>	Most squamate reptiles (lizards and snakes)  Tortoises.	Crocodilians Turtles Terrapins Water snakes.	Rabbits Guinea pigs	Ferrets	Rodents
<b>Breeding</b>		Changing light cycle, temperature mosaic, humidity, feeding frequency. Providing egg laying site, and removing or reintroducing mate	Changing light cycle, temperature, providing nesting site.  Access to outdoor enclosure for local species.	Sex ratio. Nesting material and hides. Diet changes during gestation and lactation.  Preventing breeding by identifying and separating the sexes or using surgical or chemical means.  Female ferrets stay on heat unless mated, desexed or treated chemically.	
<b>Management</b>		Compatible sex ratio, age range and mix of species. Indoor versus outdoor enclosure set up, monitoring equipment and records. Temperature mosaic (on land), max and min temperature (water), humidity, ventilation. Light cycle and source, UVA and B specifications. Substrate. Furnishings. Cleaning.		Appropriate sex ratio and mix of species. Indoor versus outdoor enclosure set up. Size appropriate to allow exercise and play opportunities appropriate to species. Feeding stations to allow equal access. Light cycle. Temperature range. Grooming. Dental care.	

<b>Nutrition</b>	<p>Insectivore, carnivore, herbivore.</p> <p>Snakes eat whole prey including rodents, small mammals, birds, lizards and frogs. Provide prey appropriate to predator species.</p> <p>For herbivores, provide a wide range of leafy greens and vegetables, supplement Vitamin A, calcium and Vitamin D</p>	<p>Herbivore (sea turtles), fish and crustacean eaters, hunters of small and medium vertebrates</p> <p>For insectivores provide a wide range of invertebrate prey items dusted or gut loaded with calcium, vitamin D3 and multivitamins.</p>	<p>High fibre for both-hay. Rabbits primarily hay and grazing plus some leafy greens. Guinea pigs require vitamin C source and can tolerate greater quantity and range of vegetables but still need to graze. Commercial pellets are useful as a small supplement.</p>	<p>Balanced diet is either whole prey or commercial diet with high fat and protein content like the diets for domestic kittens.</p>	<p>Rodents eat a wide range of vegetables, grains, insects and some meat. Balanced commercial pellets are available.</p>
<b>Welfare</b>	<p>Provide species specific enrichment opportunities, shelters and handling. Limit time out of POTZ.</p>	<p>Water quality monitoring, filtration and management of biological filter is essential. Provide appropriate dry basking areas.</p>	<p>Prone to heat stroke above 24C. Require companions. Provide gnawing and grazing opportunities.</p>	<p>Provide companions and plenty of play options.</p> <p>Avoid unbalanced muscle-meat diets.</p>	<p>Provide gnawing opportunities.</p> <p>Require companions.</p>

<b>Disease control</b>	Neurorespiratory viruses:	Quarantine of new animals before introducing to the tank or pond.	Calicivirus: Vaccination.	Vaccinate against distemper and parvovirus.	No vaccinations available.
	Mite control.  Quarantine of new animals in separate room with appropriate biosecurity.  Viral testing of new animals to be introduced to a breeding colony.	Turtles in outdoor enclosures and allowed to roam are prone to predation and gardening trauma.	Myxomatosis: No vacc in Aus. Mosquito and flea protection  Ectoparasite prevention.  Guinea pigs ovarian cysts: desex.  Rabbits dental disease: diet, breeding	Ectoparasite prevention against fleas and mange mites.  Endocrine diseases. Hormonal implants.  Desex or implant females to prevent lethal anaemia due to persistent oestrus.	Prone to respiratory inflammation and infection. Provide excellent ventilation and avoid introduction of diseased companions.  Desexing rats reduces development of mammary tumours.
Species appropriate husbandry					

Animal Welfare considerations in all species. Think about how each aspect of this table applies to each of the species we are discussing this week.

Environmental requirements and breeding information for selected reptiles are shown in the tables below from Bob Doneley's chapter on Taxonomy and Introduction to Common Species in Reptile Medicine and Surgery in Clinical Practice. I do not need you to learn the numbers but be familiar with the range of conditions and how different the requirements are from one taxon to another with ectotherms.

#### Reference:

Reptile medicine and surgery in clinical practice / edited by Bob Doneley, Deborah Monks, Robert Johnson, Brendan Carmel (2018). John Wiley & Sons Ltd. Available at: <https://discovery.ebsco.com/linkprocessor/plink?id=ee0c2664-1078-3ffb-b8e3-b8cc2de248dc> (Accessed: 3 May 2022).