

Pallid Gerbils



Introduction

The Pallid gerbil (*Gerbillus perpallidus*) lives in the arid areas of North Africa and is sometimes confused with the Egyptian Gerbil (*Gerbillus gerbillus*) which is a smaller, although very similar species. In appearance this gerbil is quite different to the Mongolian Gerbil usually seen in pet shops. Firstly it is smaller. Males are about three-quarters the size of an adult Mongolian Gerbil whilst the female is significantly smaller still. The colouring is both lighter and brighter than that of the agouti coloured Mongolian Gerbil.

The overall effect is much more orange than brown, and the belly is brilliant white. The body and limbs are much more finely boned than the Mongolian Gerbil and the tail is much longer, only sparsely haired and with no tuft. Eyes are much larger in proportion to the head that is much more pointed in shape. The ears are larger and stand more erect.

Pallid Gerbils as Pets

Pallids make good pets. Their habits and temperament are like those of the Mongolian Gerbil. They are social animals who seem to get bored and depressed when kept alone. They will live quite happily in single sex groups but large groups containing both sexes are sometimes unstable with occasional outbreaks of violence. In most respects they can be kept in the same manner as Mongolian Gerbils. If you intend to breed them then simple male female pairs is best.

Housing

Pallids are keen on burrowing and should therefore be kept in a tank instead of a cage. They like climbing so items suspended from the lid of the tank is a good idea. Be careful there are no small gaps or holes they can get caught or injured on.

Diet

They eat the same mix of seeds etc as Mongolian Gerbils. They are more likely than Mongolian Gerbils to eat insects such as mealworms if offered and are less likely to eat fruit and vegetables.

Breeding

Pallid gerbils pair up in the same way as Mongolian Gerbils. All the advice on breeding and sexing Mongolian Gerbils is valid for Pallids. The only differences are that Pallids seem to gestate for a slightly shorter period and that they take slightly longer to become sexually mature.

Gerbil Information Leaflet Number 6

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