

# Fat tailed

Fat tailed gerbils, Duprasi Gerbil, Beer Mat

***Pachyuromys duprasi***

Adult Size	4 inches, plus 2 inch tail	Life Span	5 to 7 years in captivity
Male/Female Differences	Sexing fat tailed jirds is done by eyeing the distance between the urethra and the anus; the distance is further apart than females. Both are equally handleable. Females can get defensive when raising young.		
Compatibility	Fat tailed jirds are social animals. Females can live in groups while males need to be housed singly. They can also live alone, given enough interaction with you. Housing breeding pairs is difficult because of the defensiveness of females guarding the nest.		
Origin	Originally from Northern Sahara (Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, and Algeria.)		
Climate	Home temperature is preferred.		
Day Cycle	Diurnal (awake during the day), although they sleep a lot.		
Temperature	60 – 75 degrees, avoid extremes.		
Lighting	Low to normal lights are preferred, as bright lights can hurt sensitive eyes.		
Humidity	Drier is better, but adapt to indoor humidity. Avoid extreme humidity, as it can lead to health problems.		
Habitat/Territory	Rocky deserts and sand plains with little vegetation are the homes to fat tailed jirds.		
Substrate/Bedding	Provide a safe and soft bedding, the less dusty the better. Cedar bedding can be toxic and pine too dusty. Good litters are shredded or pelleted aspen or recycled paper products.		

	Supply nesting materials and dry hays.
Hiding Place/Den	Wooden house and coconut huts offer hiding places and the chance to chew. Plastic hamster tubes can be used, but will eventually be destroyed.
Cage Type	Aquariums, plastic cages with tube accessories, or wire. All should be escape proof, ventilated, and easy to clean. Supply the largest cage that's possible.
Diet	A few critter cubes and 1-2 tbs of high quality hamster seed mix is given as a staple. Being desert animals, fruits and vegetables may be too rich for their diets and should be offered sparingly. Sunflower seeds are favorites and can be used as rewards (pick out of seed mixes and save for later.)
Supplements	Vitamins in water help supply nutrients missing from captive diets. Treat sticks made of seeds and honey are good treats. Yoghurt-covered fruit bits can help maintain intestinal flora.
Diet Precautions	Overfeeding and lack of exercise can lead to obesity. Vitamin supplements only need to be offered to unhealthy fat tailed jirds or to ones with restricted diets. Avoid sunflower seeds. These can be picked out of seed mixes and fed sparingly as treats.
Feeding	Placing food in a bowl will help prevent over feeding. Fat tailed jirds will move most of their food into their nest and bury it for later.
Water Source	Water dishes can easily become soiled, so water bottles are preferred. To avoid the fat tailed jird chewing on the plastic, use rounded bottles or metal sleeves.
Grooming	These desert animals are relatively clean, and, when kept in groups, groom each other as part of their social interaction. Offer chinchilla dust for bathing; they use this to remove excess oils from their fur.
Oral and Foot Care	The fat tailed jird's teeth continue to grow. Malocclusion can occur when opportunities to gnaw are not offered. Fruit twigs make great treats, as they both trim the fat tailed jird's teeth and offer a source of additional vitamins. Care with exercise wheels needs to be taken, as wire wheels can trap and seriously injure tails and feet; plastic or safety wheels should be used.
Proper Handling	Fat tailed jirds are very handleable and rarely bite. Handle gently to avoid startling the animal.

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Habitat Maintenance	Weekly cleaning of the cage is needed, with daily spot cleaning of toilet areas. Being desert animals, they produce little waste and usually eliminate in the same area.
Health Concerns	Diarrhea can be a problem. This can be caused by improper diet or dirty cages. Respiratory problems can be due to improper ventilation and dirty bedding. Obesity can be a problem when fed unhealthy, unbalanced diets. Sick jirds usually have thin tails, as this is where they store fat and water.

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