

## Happy Landings For Sugar Gliders

**Create the ideal sugar glider habitat by following these simple guidelines.**

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When it comes to exotic pets, the stunning sugar glider (*Petaurus breviceps*, pronounced pet-or-us brev-eee-seps) is among the most exotic. These pretty creatures are marked with bold, black stripes on a silver-gray coat. Like flying squirrels, they sport a gliding membrane that extends from the forelimbs to the hindlimbs. At rest this looks like a skin fold, but during gliding it extends as a thin, taut membrane.

Sugar gliders are marsupial mammals, which means their young are born live at a very early stage of development, and then continue to develop in the mother's pouch until ready to emerge.

Sugar gliders are native to islands in the South Pacific, particularly in the northeast areas of mainland Australia and Tasmania, and Indonesia. In the wild, these tree-dwelling critters prefer to live in forests and bushlands, feeding on insects, pollen, nectar and the sap of eucalyptus, acacia and gum trees.

Although sugar gliders are native to Australia, it is illegal to adopt a sugar glider in that country without a permit. In the United States, laws regarding ownership of sugar gliders vary from state to state. It is important to check both state and local laws to determine whether it is legal to keep pet sugar gliders in your area.

Compared with dogs, cats, rabbits and rodents, sugar gliders have been kept as pets only relatively recently. They are not truly domesticated creatures and, therefore, are easily stressed. Sugar gliders that become stressed in captivity may fail to thrive and can eventually die. Ensuring your sugar glider is comfortable, healthy and stress-free is a big responsibility — these are not pets for beginning pet owners. One key factor to a happy sugar glider is a suitable, safe habitat.

For the full article, pick up the 2010 issue of *Critters USA* or [click here](#) to buy the issue.