

Ferret Life Before And After A Flood

A devastating flood didn't stop ferret owner Delores Redhage from saving her seven ferrets and making plans for an improved ferret room.

By Delores Redhage

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Carol the ferret is one of seven ferrets in Delores Redhage's busy business of ferrets.

Photos Courtesy Delores Redhage

The flood waters came quickly, and Delores Redhage barely had time to get her ferrets out of the house.

I have been a ferret owner for 17 years. In the beginning I was a little naive, but I bought the biggest cage I could find, took my new fuzzy home and decided that she needed a playmate and someone to cuddle with, so the ferret math started right away. In fact, the very next day I brought home my second fuzzy, and the never-ending journey to learn more and get educated began.

I subscribed to ferret magazines, bought books, checked out libraries and, in more recent years, relied on my PC. My ferrets have taught me a lot over the years. I currently have seven. My dining room became my ferret room, containing three very large cages and safety gates to block any nonferret-friendly rooms — the kitchen due to appliances and the living room due to recliners.

Over the years I have learned the countless dangers to ferrets — from intestinal blockage caused by ingestion of various items; to poisons from medications, plants and chemicals; to the strong insistent curiosity that can really cause numerous "accidents."

Our home was hit by a flood in September 2008, and I had to get out all seven fuzzies, their cages, bedding, food, water bottles and toys in a boat. The water came very fast. There was no time to spare.

Their cages were all on stands, so the water didn't get the ferrets before I was able to get them into their carriers. I had a few smaller cages for use as hospital cages, and I used those for a couple of days until the water receded and I could retrieve their big cages. The big cages were full of mud and gunk, so they had to be washed and disinfected.

Our temporary living arrangements are not ferret-proof, so for Christmas the ferrets got an 11-panel playpen, with a mat and tote, a Ferret Thru-way, an Octoplay and a Hide-N-Sleep so they can still get out and play in groups of two and three.

Our house has to be raised about 8 or 9 feet. When we rebuild, the house is gutted, I want to get a divided door, so the top can remain open and the bottom closed. Also, I want to put down linoleum flooring instead of hardwood or carpet. I plan to add a large wardrobe for ferret blankets, hammocks and other bedding, a toy chest for the ferrets' playthings, litter boxes for the corners and, last of all, the three large cages.

With this setup, I will be able to leave the doors open to the cages and provide access ramps. The ferrets can play, sleep, eat or do the doo when they like, and I can check on them just by walking up to the door. When I really want the fun to start, I can go in and join them for some really wild weasel ways. My ferrets will have their own room, but if company comes for overnight, I suppose the next sofa I purchase better have a sleeper.

We lost almost everything in the flood, but I am thankful we had a boat to get the babies to dry land and a truck to take them and their cages to a new temporary home.

Delores Redhage lives in Missouri and counts seven ferrets as part of her family.

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