



Odd Pets



SQUIRRELS AS PETS

The American flying squirrel is a native of most parts of North America. It has large black eyes, circular naked ears, and a hairy membrane extending nearly round the body. The tail tapers to a point and has its hair disposed flat ways on its side. The upper parts of this squirrel are of a cinereous brown; the belly is white, tinged with yellow. The hairy membrane passes the fore and hind legs to the tail; on the forelegs it adheres as far down as the toes, and includes a peculiar bone which is attached to the wrist, and helps to stretch out this skin in flying, and on the hind leg it extends to the "ankles."

By means of the lateral membranes with which the bodies of these squirrels are furnished, they are able to make astonishing leaps of great length, and upwards from tree to tree. In these efforts, they extend their hind legs, and stretch out the intervening skin, by which they present a greater surface to the air, and become more buoyant. They are, however, required to take particular advantage of the lower branches of the trees to which they leap as their weight prevents them from keeping

in a straight line. Sensible of this, they always take care to mount so high as to insure them from falling to the ground. This extended skin acts upon the air somewhat in the manner of a paper kite, and not by repeated strokes, like the wings of a bird. The animal, being heavier than the air, must of course descend. The distance, therefore, to which it can jump, depends on the height of the tree on which it stands. When it is at rest, the skin is wrinkled up against its sides.

These animals are generally seen in flocks of 10 or 12 together; and to persons unaccustomed to them, they appear at a distance, in their leaps, like leaves blown from the trees by the wind.

"When I first saw them," (says Catesby, in his account of Carolina) "I took them for dead leaves blown one way by the wind; I was not deceived, when I perceived many of them follow one another in the same direction."

They inhabit hollow trees where they sleep during the daytime, and from where they generally make their appearance at night, at which time they are very lively and active. They associate in flocks; several of them living in the same tree, which they never willingly quit to run upon the ground, but almost constantly reside among the branches.

The females produce three or four young at a litter. This particular species use the same food, and form their food hoards in the same manner as others of the squirrel family. They are easily tamed, and soon become familiar; they love warmth, and are fond of creeping into the leaves or pocket of their owner; and if thrown upon the ground, they instantly show their dislike to it by running up and sheltering themselves in their owner's clothes. As pets they are delightful and interesting, presenting a more unusual aspect to the keeping of pets of this kind.

Common Squirrels

The most common squirrels kept in captivity as pets are the Gray and Red Squirrels and Chipmunks. The former when taken as adults are more easily tamed than Red Squirrels or Chipmunks. Squirrels become bet-

ter pets if they are acquired when young, as they are easily raised and are better able to withstand confinement and constant handling and human association. Baby squirrels are easily fed with milk from an ordinary baby's nursing bottle.

Squirrels are more or less vegetarian in diet, eating green foods, fruits and nuts, with an occasional treat of a stolen bird's egg now and then. An occasional bone on which some cooked meat remains is a choice tidbit.

The Gray Squirrel is gray on its upper parts and white or light tan on the under parts. Sometimes black specimens are found, but they are just another variety of the Gray Squirrel; likewise, pure white ones are found, but such a color is more of a rarity.

The Red Squirrel is divided into more than one group or special species and is found in various parts of the continent. It is the most common of our squirrels that we contact around our homes. It is small, perhaps the smallest of the family. Its upper parts are various shades of red and its lower parts are a tan-white. Red Squirrels, especially when captured as young, make fine pets and can be reared without difficulty, hence if you are considering trapping any squirrels, it is advisable to take only the young ones. In feeding this variety, the regular addition of cooked meat to the diet will be beneficial to the better health of the animal.

Before trapping or capturing any squirrels, familiarize yourself with the game laws of your state to avoid a conflict with your local game warden.

A Mouse Club Is Needed

By FLOYD M. SHUCK

In the April issue of ALL-PETS I read an article by D. E. Nelson of St. Louis, Mo., about a mouse club, and I would like to view my feelings toward this article.

I am very much in favor of a club such as Mr. Nelson writes about, and think we could all secure much help and valuable information through such an organization. I am sure by organizing a national mouse club we could more satisfactorily supply the laboratories with the millions of mice they need both now and after the war. After the war those who wish could expand into the colored or fancy mice and establish shows such as our national rabbit and dog clubs have.

I purchased a book, written by a British author. He lists therein about twenty different varieties of show mice and tells a little about showing the animals, and the trophies he acquired. According to this book the American mouse breeder is far behind his English brother in the

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Pets in the Mediterranean

Legion were the strange pets which Allied fighting men acquired in Mediterranean lands. An extremely wooly young donkey was adopted as the official mascot of a Canadian infantry regiment in Italy.

Other mascots acquired by the American and British units in Italy included goats, sheep, ducks and other denizens of the barnyard, not to mention the inevitable cats and dogs which turn up in profusion wherever fighting men are found.

During a terrific battle in Tunisia, "Boogie," a very small and very frightened African donkey clambered aboard an American soldier's neck. Boogie, in return for loving care and generous rations, saved the dough-boy's life three times. Once, she stopped him from drinking from a poisoned well; then she found wild figs when he was lost and starving in the desert, and finally she directed a first aid party to the spot where he had been buried alive by a bursting shell in Italy. When the wounded soldier was transferred back to the States, Boogie went along.

Famed also as a North African mascot was "Emma," of El Alamein, a barnyard biddy who reversed the usual order of nature by chasing "the Desert Fox" all the way from Egypt to Tunis. Emma pursued Rommel in style, riding in a comfortable nest behind the brake pedals of one of General Montgomery's tanks. Corporal Walsh, her owner and driver of the tank, augmented his rations with a fresh egg daily which he could fry by the simple process of breaking it on the sun-heated steel of his modern chariot.

A MOUSE CLUB NEEDED

(Continued)

raising and exhibiting of mice. I feel sure that if the wide awake American breeders will back a national mouse club we can soon come up to the English standard in production and quality of show mice.

I have been a 4H leader for several years and am positive that this organization would give the mouse industry a big boost. The 4H member who has only a small space and limited capital would become greatly interested in mice for a project. In the past few years several children from my community have purchased small numbers of white mice from me for a hobby and pets.

I am with Mr. Nelson 100% and am sure the rest of you mouse breeders are also, so let us all work together for a national club. I will be glad to correspond with any one interested in this club.

Floyd M. Shuck P. O. Box 67, Bucyrus, Ohio.

A Wolf-Dog For a Pet

A strange pet is that owned by Mr. and Mrs. Frank Pope of Richfield, Idaho, for it is half dog and half coyote. The animal answers to the name of Bruce, and he was raised from a pup by the Papes who gave him every care and attention.

Perhaps due to the wild strain in his nature, Bruce does not make up readily with strangers and often dashes away from them, but it is clear that he thinks very highly of his masters.

One of the things which Bruce dislikes is being photographed. He will not pose alone, but if Mr. and Mrs. Pope are around, he can be persuaded.

Bruce looks very much like a coyote as to color and build. His tail is not quite so bushy as that of his wild brother, but his body is a bit stockier. He is grayish in color with whitish-gray markings.

When wild coyotes appear at night in the neighborhood, Bruce becomes very excited and sets up a series of howls. However, if let out of the house at such times, he never joins his wild brothers. He does not bark, but does yip a little.

Bruce is not a trickster. His masters believe him to be too stubborn to learn any and attribute this fact to his wild ancestry. He is shy in the presence of other dogs and usually runs from them. He has never been known to bother domestic chickens or other creatures but he does catch a chicken for Mrs. Pope when she wants one. He does not hurt the fowl in the slightest, however.

Bruce is extremely particular about his food. Before partaking of anything he always examines it thoroughly, even when exceedingly hungry. No doubt that is the wild strain showing up, for coyotes are forced to use extreme caution in their selection of food. Sometimes meat is poisoned. When they catch a squirrel or rabbit, however, they know they may devour it without hesitation. All wild animals prefer fresh meat to carrion.

A peculiarity about Bruce is noted in his taste for ice cream and cake. This is odd, indeed, for carnivorous animals, like the dog and wolf, virtually limit themselves to meat. Their systems can handle enormous amounts of protein—amounts very likely to injure a human being.

All in all Bruce is an unusual pet and his masters think the world of him.

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