



Safe Haven

Screech



Safe Haven & Educational Adventures, Inc.

Volume 4, Issue 3

Special points of interest:

- Be sure to join us for our Halloween themed Adventure Day open house on Oct 27th 2012.
- Swine Em & Dine Em, the barbeque competition team is providing the food again for the open house.
- Check out our new haunted adventures.



Visit us on the web:
www.RescueExotics.org

We provide educational programs for schools, scout troops, birthday parties and many other events. If you are having an event or know a teacher, troop leader or anyone else that might be interested please contact us for more information.

Snakes, Generally Speaking by Glenda Lofink

This is the time of year that most people think of animals in terms of hibernation or hunting. A lot of folks do not think about snakes being active during the fall and winter months. For the most part, they do go underground or find someplace warm to wait out the cold temperatures however on a very warm winter day you might still find a snake or two deciding to come out to warm themselves on a rock or the road.



Above: Corn Snake at Safe Haven

Snakes are reptiles. Reptiles are characterized by scaly skin and the inability to regulate their own body temperature. They are without an internal "thermostat". Their body temperature is the same as the air temperature.

In extremely cold temperatures they are relatively inactive. Snakes cannot tolerate extremely high temperatures either so on very hot summer days they will find a cooler place to spend their time coming out after dark, especially after a rain. During the mild temperatures of spring and fall, they tend to be more active during the day. You may find them out in the yard or on the trail looking for food or just warming up.

Generally speaking, snakes are nocturnal as their favorite food (rodents) are nocturnal as well. Not all snakes eat mice and rats. Some snakes eat worms and slugs, some eat fish, birds, eggs and even other reptiles. Some snakes, like the Eastern hognose are dietary specialists that prefer to dine on toads and frogs. Snakes have a forked tongue that is used to "taste" the air. The tongue traps microscopic particles and brings them into the roof of the mouth to the Jacobson's organ. The Jacobson's organ is highly sensitive to chemicals and they use this organ to help them find food. If a snake is nearby and flicking his tongue at you, he is just trying to figure out what you are: friend, foe or food.

Breeding typically occurs in the spring or fall. Some species will lay eggs in early summer which will hatch in late summer or early fall. Snakes that give live birth will also tend to have their young in late summer.

Snakes do not chase people nor do they attack out of revenge as some old wives tales would have you believe. The most common defense of snakes is to flee. If a snake feels threatened or trapped, they will strike or bite, but only as a last resort. This is especially true of venomous snakes. Biologically, it is very expensive to produce venom. Venomous snakes really do not want to waste their venom on something they cannot possibly eat, like people. They would much rather just get away from you and the best thing to do when encountering a venomous snake is to give it room to get away. Harassing a venomous snake may send you to the emergency room for a very painful experience. Best just to let them go on their way.

South Carolina and Georgia have the highest biodiversity of snakes in the United States. South Carolina has 38 species of snakes of which only 6 are venomous: the Timber/Canebrake rattlesnake, the Eastern Diamondback rattlesnake, the Pygmy rattlesnake, the Copperhead, the Cottonmouth/Water Moccasin and the Eastern Coral snake. The Canebrake is geographically distributed in the lower half of the state whereas the timber rattler's distribution is mostly in the upstate. Contrary to popular belief, the cottonmouth does NOT live north of Columbia. If you think you have seen one of these in the upstate, it was actually the northern water snake which mimics the cottonmouth. The diamondback rattler and the Eastern coral also are found only in the lower part of the state.

Snakes are an important part of any ecosystem. They are beautiful, remarkable animals and should be given our respect. Should you happen upon one, just let them go. If you have a problem with one, for instance, in your home, give Safe Haven a call and one of us will gladly come remove it for you. There is so much more to learn about snakes but we are running out of space. If you are interested in learning more about snakes, email us and request an article about a specific question. We'll be happy to oblige.



Left: Baby Timber Rattlesnake at Safe Haven.

Animal Highlights: Ferrets are Fun! By Mary Fancher

To start off, I have to make a disclaimer: I love ferrets. I have owned three of them, and have found them to be affectionate, intelligent, and greatly amusing. They can also be annoying (especially at night when you are trying to sleep-unless you keep them in a cage) and are nature's consummate escape artists; ferrets can get through unbelievably small spaces. More on that later

Ferrets are actually a domesticated species, used for hundreds of years to flush out rabbits from their dens underground. In the United States, they are used (unfortunately) in laboratory experiments and, more happily, as pets.

Safe Haven currently has two ferrets. Oscar, who was confiscated along with a number of other animals from a neglect situation, has been here for a year. There is no record of his age. Ares-female-is about three years old and came to Safe Haven from a family whose son moved out of the house and could no longer care for her. They have a wonderfully large cage with hammocks and toys, and are enjoying themselves in their new digs

A few words on acquiring a ferret as a pet:

Ferrets make wonderful pets for the right person, in the right circumstance. They are not for families with small children for two reasons. The first reason is that ferrets sometimes like to bite. Although the bites are usually the result of playfulness or fear, the bites can hurt all the same. The second reason is that ferrets are small creatures that can be easily injured by children who don't know any better.



Above: Mya, Safe Haven's first ferret that passed away due to Adrenal Disease.

Your new ferret should be taken to your vet, vaccinated and neutered as soon as appropriate. A large clean cage with plenty of toys, water, blanket, and an area for kitty litter is also desirable. Ferrets are as intelligent as cats and need a stimulating environment, so they should be given some cage-free time, as well.

Before you let the new acquisition out of its cage, however, you will need to ferret-proof your surroundings, blocking up any holes or spaces through which the ferret could climb and get into trouble. They are also easily litter box trained, but this should be introduced gradually, on a room by room basis, until they get the idea. Ferrets also like being taken outside on a harness and leash. Simply look for the smallest leash you can find and adjust it accordingly. I had one ferret who loved going on vacation with us.

One note of caution: ferrets can be aggressive toward other animals and people they don't know so early socialization is important. First introductions should be handled carefully and with tact. Once your ferret gets used to strange animals and people, he will take it in stride.

In conclusion, ferrets are fascinating creatures that give us a glimpse of wild nature in a domesticated package that is to be respected and appreciated.

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Safe Haven uses:



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Trivia Questions

What species of pheasant is native to North America?

Answer will be given in the next newsletter.

Answers from previous question:

The largest is the Galapagos Tortoise found in the Galapagos can reach 800lbs. The second largest is the Aldabra Tortoise which is native to the Seychelles and can grow to 500lbs. We have 5 of the third largest which is the Sulcata Tortoise, sometimes referred to as the African Spurred Tortoise, can reach 200lbs.

Thank you!

We would like to thank our families, friends and volunteers for all of your hard work and support. Without you, Safe Haven would not be possible.

Honorable mentions:

Sydney and Catherina Clapper
Pierce Curren of Scaley Adventures
Summit Image
Boundless Limits



Adventure Day!



Saturday, October 27th
Join us anytime between 11:00 and 4:00

Food
Games
Live Animal Encounters

Admission is Free

Raffle
Bake Sale
Haunted Maze



&
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