



# Reptiles and Small Mammals

## Introduction

Reptiles and small mammals are frequently sold in pet stores with little care or concern for who buys them and where they came from. They are often cheap and are advertised as good "starter pets" when the reality is that they have just as many health and care concerns as cats or dogs, and sometimes are harder to care for than a cat or dog.

## What is a Reptile?



Turtles, snakes and lizards are all reptiles. Frogs are commonly considered a reptile but are, in fact, amphibians. Reptiles are cold-blooded, meaning they require heat from an outside source. With a few exceptions, all reptiles are covered with scales. Most are egg-laying.

## What is a Small Mammal?

The term "small mammal" in reference to pets refers to a group of animals that are often kept as a domesticated pet that are smaller than the commonly kept pets like cats and dogs. Included in this list are: rabbits, gerbils, hamsters, rats, hedgehogs, degus, chinchillas, and mice.



## Pet Stores

Small mammals especially can reproduce at an astonishing rate. Often they are sold in pairs at pet stores (because they are inexpensive) and mistakes are regularly made about the sex of the animals as it is difficult to tell males apart from females. In the case of rabbits, for example, new owners are often not told about spaying and neutering options and quickly end up with litter after litter of offspring. When they are brought to the attention of the pet store, the pet store has long since replaced the sold stock and have no interest in helping the owner place the offspring. Literally hundreds of animals get dumped because the inexperienced and unprepared owners have no idea what to do.

## Where to Get a Reptile or Small Mammal

Just like with dogs and cats, reptiles and small mammals can be obtained through reputable/responsible breeders, local humane societies and animal shelters, and also private rescue groups. Do your research about requirements and breeds before you commit to a pet. Ask around. Attend fancier meetings and seek out clubs.

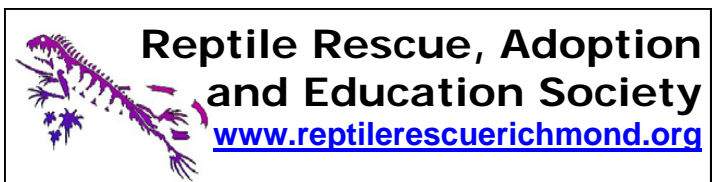


You might want to try rescue. Most shelters or rescues list their adoptable pets on [www.petfinder.com](http://www.petfinder.com). There is lots of information online and many groups and clubs have online forums you can join to learn more.

In BC, there are two rescue groups in particular we know and trust and would recommend:



Small Animal Rescue Society of BC is based in the Greater Vancouver area but has volunteers across the province. Check them out online at [www.smallanimalrescue.org](http://www.smallanimalrescue.org)



Reptile Rescue, Adoption, and Education Society is available for educational talks as well as adoptions. Please contact them for more info.



For more information please visit [www.nopuppymillscanada.ca](http://www.nopuppymillscanada.ca)



Don't Litter, Spay & Neuter!

