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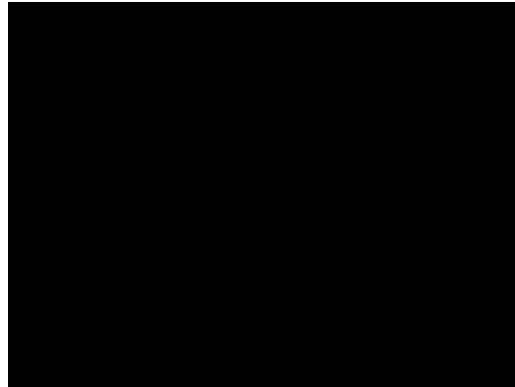
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Richardsons Ground Squirrels / Gopher (Spermophilus richardsonii)



Country of Origin: North America

Diet: Their diet consists of mainly grain seeds and grass' although they will eat meat in the wild if easily available. In captivity they should be feed a commercially available specialist squirrel diet, Cottage cheese, nuts and yoghurt can also be given as treats. Gnawing sticks are also recommended as with all rodents.

Social Groupings: They have a social nature and should be kept in pairs or trios.

Accommodation: In the wild they live in underground burrows and are diurnal (active at dawn and dusk). In captivity they should ideally be kept in a large cage preferably three storeys high with lots of climbing equipment and a large nest box. It is possible to train them to a litter tray if it is placed in housing. They hibernate in the wild for several months although in captivity this behaviour may completely disappear.

Handling: As juveniles they are social, playful and curious, calming down when they mature at approx. 1 years old. They also love their heads being massaged but must be handled as much as possible from as young as possible to keep them tame.

Gestation Period	23 - 31
Litter Size	2 - 15
Weaning Age	8 weeks
Adult Size	8" (nose to end of tail)
Oestrus (or season)	Early spring (after hibernation)
Life Expectancy	Approx 4 - 7 years