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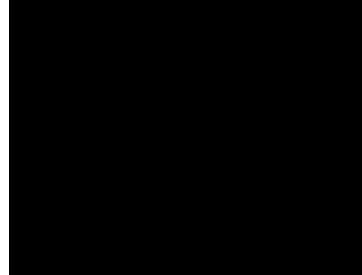
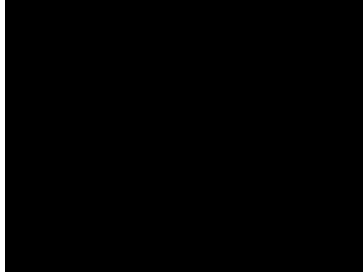
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## Gambian Giant Pouched Rat (Cricetomys gambianus)



**Country of Origin:** Africa, from Senegal to Sudan and south to South Africa

**Diet:** In the wild their diet consists of vegetables, fruits, insects and snails, as well as some mammals smaller than themselves. In captivity standard fancy rat mix and a small amount of fruit daily. Cooked chicken is a favourite. Gambian pouched rats will eat just about anything but bear in mind when feeding fresh food that they will tend store it so it may spoil.

**Social Groupings:** Generally preferring to live alone in the wild, but in captivity may be kept in male/female or female/female pairings. Two males kept together will fight.

**Accommodation:** Would usually make their home in the forest using natural crevices for shelter. They are excellent diggers and will make their own burrows consisting of many tunnels and chambers. In captivity a multilevel solid floored metal cage is ideal. Straw/hay or clean white tissue for shredding and nesting is great (e.g. a whole plain kitchen roll). They love to chew so wooden toys are a must. Try not to disturb the cage too often as they prefer familiarity of their surroundings.

**Handling:** When handled regularly and gently these inquisitive rodents make an affectionate pet. Babies can give a gentle nip at first but soon become extremely tame, and will lick your hands when being handled. Always pick up by the base of the tail (nearest to the body), do not ever lift by the tip as you will strip the tail of skin, which is very painful and will require immediate veterinary treatment. Always wash hands before and after handling.

<b>Gestation period</b>	Around 30 days
<b>Litter size</b>	1 - 5
<b>Weaning age</b>	5 weeks
<b>Puberty</b>	5 - 7 month
<b>Adult size</b>	Head & body: 240-450mm. Tail: 365-460mm
<b>Adult Weight</b>	Male: 1 - 2.8kg Female: 0.96 - 1.39kg
<b>Life expectancy</b>	Approx. 7 years