



Australian Rat Fanciers Society Inc.

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RAT CAGES

Rats are kept in cages, similar to a large bird cage. They need excellent air ventilation, so should not be kept in enclosures with completely solid walls, and absolutely NEVER in a glass aquarium.

There aren't many good rat cages available and although many cages are described as being suitable for rats, a lot of these are far too small or have bar space which is far too wide for rats. Also be aware that accessories that may come with a "rat" cage might not be useable, for instance the drip drink bottles that come with most cages, are usually not suitable for rats, as the ball size is too heavy for rats to use, and they won't be able to get any water out of them.

Most people start out with a smaller, less expensive cage and upgrade to a better one, or in a lot of cases upgrade several times! So in the long run its cheaper to invest in a better cage in the first place. A good quality cage will look better, last longer, be easier to clean and decorate and will make life with your new pets much easier and more enjoyable.

Cages differ a lot in their design and quality so it's a good idea to actually see all the options before purchasing - taking into account where the cage will be placed and how you will be keeping your rats. For example you may prefer a freestanding cage on wheels if you are going to be moving the cage from room to room. If you are not going to litter train your rats, you will need a cage with a deep base to spread with litter, but if your rats use a litter tray to toilet in then you don't have to have a cage with a deep base. If you are new to rats, it's a really good idea to speak to different people about how they keep their rats, and if possible go and see their cage set ups as different things work for different people. For more ideas for things to put in your cage see the AusRFS book *The Pet Rat Care Guide* or do an internet image search on words like "rat cage set up" "rat cage decoration" etc.

Size: Bigger is definitely better. The absolute smallest cage for 2 rats would be 61cm high, 61cm wide and 36cm deep with 1 full level and a couple of ½ levels. Rats living in this size cage would need a LOT of time out of the cage. We highly recommend something larger.

Bar spacing: This is also very important. Rats can squeeze through very small spaces, so bar spacing should be a minimum of 1cm – 1.25cm.

Flooring/Levels Multiple levels and ramps to climb up on will add to the usable space of the cage. Additional levels can be easily added to most cages by attaching the levels onto the cage bars with cable ties.

Rat cages should not have wire flooring, these can cause ulcers and injuries to rat's feet. If your cage has wire levels they should either be replaced with solid levels or covered with some sort of a solid sheeting. Very thick plastic is best but something like vinyl flooring will also do. Any company that cuts/moulds plastic should be able to make levels and trays to measure, but the AusRFS can provide details of companies that our members have used. In addition some people also like to cover their cage levels with fleece fabric, others prefer to lay down newspaper.

Galvanized metal cages aren't recommended but if you really must use them, be sure to wash the cage thoroughly with a vinegar solution to avoid the risk of zinc poisoning.

Cages can be professionally powdercoated to give them a new look or new colour. The AusRFS can advise of a company that some of our members have used.

The following pages contain details of the most popular cages available at the moment.

FERRET KINGDOM

This cage is highly recommended, it is probably the best rat cage currently available. They are very sturdy, excellent quality and provide plenty of room for up to about 10 rats. The 4 large doors open up the whole front of the cage, making cleaning and decorating a breeze and also allows trays and levels to be easily inserted. The cage is on wheels and is easy to move around. Bar spacing is 1.25cm which is ideal for rats – even babies. The cage can be divided into 2 completely separate living quarters by blocking off the ramp access between the levels. Some owners keep their rats in the top section and use the bottom section for storage.

Overall Size of cage (including stand) **Length 93.5 x Depth 63.5 x Height 159.5cm**

Overall Living Space (excluding stand) **Length 93.5 x Depth 63.5 x Height 121cm**



Cage Features & Inclusions:

- 4 stainless steel food / water dishes
- Two double doors (4 doors in total) with secure locking mechanism
- Two large platforms
- Two hammocks and 3 ladders
- Hole size between upper and lower level measures 22cm x 15cm
- 2 slide out trays (*See note below*)
- A removable stand with large storage shelf
- 4 caster wheels (lockable)
- Premium, long lasting, black vein coating - rust resistant.

Where to buy / Price

PuppyPower are the sole sellers of Ferret Kingdom cages, they sell via their website ferretkingdoms.com their eBay store puppypower.com.au and sometimes via Gumtree.

Above: Ferret Kingdom as it comes from Puppy Power.

Below: 2 examples of Ferret Kingdom set up for rats.

Please note: At the moment the Ferret Kingdom Junior cage is only available via their eBay and Gumtree Stores, it will be added to their website soon.

At time of writing the price is \$545.00 when cages are in stock with a 10% reduction for pre-purchase when cages are on back order.



IMPORTANT - Please Note!

Because Ferret Kingdom cages are the benchmark cage, they are copied – a lot ! Copycat cages can look very similar in a photo but the quality can be very different, bar spacing is one common difference, some have fake doors or gaps where rats can escape. Also there is a cage called “Pet Kingdom” which is not the same cage. New Ferret Kingdom cages are only available via Puppy Power. If purchasing secondhand please be wary and make sure you know what you are buying !

By special arrangement AusRFS Members receive a discount on Ferret Kingdom cages, 15% discount on the normal price, and 5% on the prepurchase price. **The discount is only applicable via the following procedure:** AusRFS members send an email to the club advising their name, email address, phone number, and which cage they want. The AusRFS forwards the message to PuppyPower confirming that the person is an AusRFS member. PuppyPower then contact the member to deal directly regarding the purchase. The AusRFS is not involved in the sale and does not make any money from the referral.

Some of the cages featured on the PuppyPower website etc belong to our members and provide some good ideas for how these cages can be set up into luxury abodes for ratties.

Trays - One negative feature of this cage is that the slide out trays that come with the cage are shallow and don't fit the cage perfectly, and rats tend to chew the thin plastic. Because so many of our members have these cages, the AusRFS has designed trays to fit this cage that are more suitable. These fit the cages much better and are made of hard plastic which rats don't chew, they have high side that stop litter from being kicked out of the cage, but are clear so once in the cage they are hardly noticeable. Please see the AusRFS website for details and how to order.



FERRET KINGDOM JUNIOR

Ferret Kingdom Junior provides half the cage space of the Ferret Kingdom – it's basically the bottom section of the Ferret Kingdom, so it takes up the same floor space – it's just not as high.

If you prefer the cage to be up higher, you don't have to use the stand. The cage can be placed on a table or cabinet.

Overall Size of cage (including stand) **Length 93.5 x Depth 63.5 x Height 98cm**
Overall Living Space (excluding stand) **Length 93.5 x Depth 63.5 x Height 60.5cm**

Where to buy / Price

At the moment the Ferret Kingdom Junior cage is only available via Puppy Power's eBay and Gumtree Stores, it will be added to their website soon. See information for Ferret Kingdom cages.

At time of printing the normal price is \$325.95.

AusRFS members can purchase this cage at a discount – please see note under Ferret Kingdom for details of this arrangement



Above: Ferret Kingdom Junior – As it comes from Puppy Power

Below: Example of a Ferret Kingdom Junior set up for rats.



BLUE BASE CAGES

These are a fairly light cage for their size, they have a good deep base making them very suitable for “messy” rats or those that are not trained to use a separate litter tray, as the whole base of the cage can be covered with a layer of litter if necessary. Because they are wide rather than high, they are good for older rats who are not able to climb very well.

The cage features 2 doors, which are a reasonable size. The wire top unclips from the base for cleaning and to get houses and other larger objects in and out of the cage.

They come with a litter tray, drink bottle, food dish, tubing with holes for ventilation and a corner shelf. An optional wheeled stand is available.

Additional levels can be added (by attaching to the bars with cable ties).

Where to buy

The AusRFS sells these cages. We have an account with the importer, so can offer them at a very good price.

Small: Price \$150 (plus \$30 for optional stand)

Measurements (cage) **Length** 78cm x **depth** 44cm x **Height** 51cm



Blue base cage – as it comes



Blue base cage – set up for rats

AVI ONE FLIGHT CAGES

These are bird cages but can be modified to make them suitable for rats, by putting in levels and ramps or ladders. They are a sturdy, well made cage, and the wheels make them easy to move. However the drawback (compared to a Ferret Kingdom) is that they only have one door, which makes cleaning and decorating harder, and not practical to divide into sections.

There are about 5 different Avi One flight cages which are the same design, but different sizes. Model number 603 and 604 are reasonable sizes for a small number of rats and seem to be the better ones for the price. The bigger models are quite expensive, so for the money a Ferret Kingdom or Ferret Kingdom Junior would be better value.

Model Number 603

Measurements: (cage only) **Length** 65 x **depth** 43.5 x **height** 70cm.

The stand is about 70cm high bringing the total height to about 140cm

Price: around \$210 - \$260

Where to buy

On line or pet supply stores – shop around - the prices vary a lot.



© Copyright 2009 Avi One

Avi One Cage - as comes
(set up for birds)



Avi One Cage with levels and ladders added
to make it suitable for rats.

PET ONE - Model Number 505

This cage is widely available and commonly bought in pet shops by first time rat owners. It is small and we don't recommend it as a permanent cage. It's certainly not big enough for more than 2 rats, the small space makes it difficult to fit hide houses, hammocks, litter trays, toys etc, and the 2 small shelves don't give rats a large enough surface to run and play. But it is an inexpensive option for those who don't mind the quality and have their rats out of the cage most of the time – basically using the cage as a base station and sleeping quarters.

Pet One make quite a few cages for different animals, most of them are small (even if they are described as being suitable for rats).

This cage comes in 2 sizes (that look the same), the smaller size is FAR TOO SMALL FOR RATS.

This is a very basic, economy cage and the quality is reflected in the price. The pull out tray is very shallow and isn't suitable to put litter directly into. Often the trays do not fit the cages very well, leaving a gap big enough for small rats to escape or get stuck in, so sometimes some modification is required.

The cage comes with a wire grill which is made to go on the base of the cage (over the plastic tray), which will need to be covered, so that the rats aren't walking on the wire. Alternatively the grill can be repositioned and used in the middle of the cage to make an additional level. To do this, cut an access hole into one of the corners of the grill using wire cutters, and attach the grill just under the top door using cable ties. The rats will then have access onto the plastic pull out tray, so the tray may need to be secured to the wire section, to ensure that they can't push in between the wire and the tray.

Dimensions Length 61cm x Width 36cm x Height 60cm

Features

2 Doors opening size: 26cm wide x 16.5cm high

2 ladders

2 wire shelves

Colours: available in black or white.

Price around \$100

Where to buy

On-line stores, ebay, pet shops etc.

Please Note: There are generic cages available which look exactly the same as Pet One cages. The quality is usually comparable but the measurements are slightly different.



Pet One Cage - as comes



Pet One Cage set up for rats