

Ferret

Prohibited invasive animal

Look. Report. Protect. 13 25 23



Ferret (*Mustela putorius furo*)

- It is illegal to import, keep, breed or sell ferrets in Queensland.
- Colour ranges from albino, tan, brown and black. Some have masking over their eyes.
- Prey on birds, small mammals and reptiles.
- Aggressive predator that could threaten biodiversity in Australia.
- Early detection and reporting helps protect Queensland's natural environment.

Description

The ferret has a long, narrow body of 20–46 cm in length, with short legs and a tail of 7–14 cm. The typical colour is dark brown to black with pale yellow underfur and longer, black-tipped guard hairs. The tail is black and bushy. The face is greyish-white with dark areas, giving a masked appearance, but these marks can be absent in some domesticated animals. The brown colour forms are referred to as 'sable' and are the most common; other less common colours include silver, chocolate and white (with dark or red eyes). Immature ferrets look similar to adults.

Biosecurity risk

The ferret is a prohibited invasive animal under the *Biosecurity Act 2014*. Prohibited species must be reported immediately to Biosecurity Queensland on 13 25 23. You cannot keep an ferret as a pet in Queensland. Penalties may apply.

The ferret is an aggressive predator that could threaten biodiversity in Australia, with a wide range of Australian native birds, mammals and marsupials, reptiles and frogs potentially at risk. Ground-nesting birds could be under particular threat from direct predation on their eggs and chicks, while small marsupials could be ideal prey. The ferret could also affect commercial and backyard poultry production by taking chickens and eggs.

What should I do?

If you think you have seen a ferret, report it immediately to Biosecurity Queensland on 13 25 23 or scan the QR code to access our reporting web page. Until an authorised officer contacts you, please take reasonable and practical steps to prevent the ferret from escaping, such as shutting doors or windows to contain the animal or placing it in a box or cage.

More information

Contact Biosecurity Queensland on 13 25 23 or visit biosecurity.qld.gov.au.

