



# BLUE RIDGE FERRET RESCUE

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## Waardenburg Syndrome in Ferrets

### **What is a Waardy Ferret?**

Waardenburg Syndrome, same as in humans, causes a different facial structure and appearance compared to other ferrets that affects their neural crest pathways. This may sound frightening, but it is nothing to worry! We always say, Waardy ferrets are just as cute but with a little special gift.

These structural differences include, wider set eyes, broad skull, causing a broader nose bridge and head. Waardy ferrets are also commonly seen with social, trust and mental instability, deafness and inner ear imbalance that neurologically can affect their walk or run. Waardenburg is most commonly seen in Blaze, Badger or all white ferrets. However, does not mean each one will be a Waardy.

### **What if my ferret is deaf?**

Let's say your ferret is partial or fully deaf. No need to worry! Although they cannot hear, they will act just as normal, but may show signs of being startled. Remember that if you startle your ferret, they might bite of their first reaction. With this, you will want to avoid sneaking up on your deaf ferret, and try to approach them from the front, or alert them to your presence from a safe distance before you come into range or try to pick them up. This is the same for blind ferrets. If you are unsure if your ferret is deaf or want to test, here are some ways on how to do that:

- Ferret becoming startled easily when you come from behind
- Clap or make a loud noise. If your ferret does not jump or look at you, they may be deaf.
- Watch how they react with other ferrets, do they fail to respond to their cues?
- Watch if they vocalize. Deaf ferrets will vocalize very little or not at all.
- Is their head tilted? Or constantly being held at a tilt?

In the long run, there is nothing to worry about having a deaf or Waardy ferret! They will still love you just as much and are just a little extra special.