

How to Identify a Small Pet by Its Tail

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Some people may have difficulty in distinguishing between the various small animals that are kept as pets. Some are easy to identify; others are often confusing. Taking a good look at the animal's tail is helpful in identification, since tails differ markedly.

Animal	Tail Length	Tail Hair Cover	General Appearance
Gerbil	Longer than body	Haired, with tufted end	
Hamster	Short	Haired	
Hedgehog	Very short (about ½ inch)	Short, sparse fur	
Sugar Glider	Longer than body; slightly prehensile	Haired	
Rabbit	Short	Haired	
Guinea Pig	None	—	
Rat	Longer than body	Few fine hairs	
Mouse	Longer than body	Few fine hairs	
Chinchilla	Almost equal to body length; often shaped like a '?'	Bushy; coarser hair than on body	