Hamsters (Animal Planet Pet Care Library) by Sue Fox

These popular pocket pets require specific care to ensure their health and happiness. This book details proper handling techniques and all necessary care information required for any owner who wants to make these tiny creatures part of their family.

Features:
* SMALL ANIMALS
* TFH/NYLABONE
* SMALL ANIMAL BOOKS-SPECIES
* AP019

My Personal Review:
I only wish I'd had an invaluable concise guide like this 20 years ago when I had a short-lived pet hamster (whom I found out years later had actually been two hamsters; my parents secretly bought me a second after the first died, but the second died even quicker). Probably the first mistake most otherwise well-intentioned people make with a pet is not doing their homework before getting the animal. Buying any pet, particularly a small one with such unique needs and traits as a hamster, should not be something done on impulse. This brief but information-packed book covers all of the bases, hopefully improving the odds that any potential hamster-owner will know what they're doing and won't contribute to the animal's early death.

Topics covered include scientific information about the hamster in general and specific domesticated breeds in particular, diet (it was news to me that hamsters are omnivores and not herbivores!), children and hamsters, finding a lost hamster, breeding, housing, toys, training, when to see a vet, grooming, common types of illness and injury, and handling. There are also adorable pictures of the little guys on nearly every page; like many people, my only experience with the animal had been the Syrian hamster, and hadn't known they come in nearly so many different colors and
markings. The back of the book provides a list of resources, such as various hamster societies, rescue groups, and emergency services. Though a serious downside to the pet is that they only live between a year and a half to three years, otherwise they're really described as an ideal low-maintenance pet. The biggest chore associated with their care is regularly cleaning the cage and bedding; they ordinarily don't even need to see a vet, get vaccinated, have their coats brushed or trimmed, have their nails clipped, or even get bathed. Their short lifespan could even be seen as a positive, since they're not as long-lived as other pets such as rabbits, dogs, cats, ferrets, or salamanders, whom children often get bored of and dump on their parents, or who end up being cared for by the parents when their owner goes away to college. Overall, this book paints a picture of a fascinating little rodent, whom I wasn't old or mature enough to fully understand or appreciate when I originally had one in my care.

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