



## Chapter 053, Egyptian Fat-Tailed Jird (American College of Laboratory Animal Medicine)

*Mark Suckow*

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NOTE: This is a single chapter excerpted from the book *The Laboratory Rabbit, Guinea Pig, Hamster, and Other Rodents*, made available for individual purchase. Additional chapters, as well as the entire book, may be purchased separately.

The chapter discusses Egyptian fat-tailed jirds, which have been housed in zoological collections. These rodents have a rounded body with long fluffy agouti-colored fur on the dorsum and white on the ventrum. They have a highly distinctive, blunt, sparsely haired, club-shaped tail, which has been established as an effective site for the development of cutaneous leishmaniasis. Properly maintained laboratory jirds lead lives largely free of infectious diseases. Dental disease and neoplasia are the most common health issues encountered by jirds but are confined to aged animals. Both can result in significant morbidity and mortality. The chapter studies their uses in research and sampling techniques. The general characteristics of jirds that lend well to their being research subjects are their unique anatomy, small size, docility, fecundity, and ease at which they appear to adapt to captivity. Specifically with regard to cutaneous leishmania research, inoculations and subsequent lesion development in the tail may result in less pain or discomfort than for other established models. Oral, intramuscular, subcutaneous, and intraperitoneal compound administrations can readily be performed in the jird using techniques identical to those used for the mouse and rat. Noninvasive intravenous administration is technically challenging in this species.

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