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Opening extract from

Tracking and Taming Dragons

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Feeding and First Aid

Most experienced dragonologists know that a 40- to 50-acre farm with a head of 300 cows should be just about enough for one chick. However, it is useful to vary the dragon's diet from time to time, to make sure that it gets all the essential minerals and nutrients that it needs to grow.



Recipes for Success

These recipes show how a dragon's favourite snacks can easily be incorporated into its meals. Please avoid including animals such as polar bears and elephants, which require conservation themselves.

Frost Dragon Recipe

"POLAR BEAR" PIE

Ingredients:
150 oily fish such as mackerel
10 gallons white sauce
Parsley to garnish
[Never use real *polar bears.]*

Place all the fish in a receptacle such as a 25-gallon cauldron, add white sauce and parsley, and freeze solid.

Marsupial Recipe

KANGAROO COBBLER

Ingredients:
15 plump kangaroos
24 pairs old leather shoes
2 sacks whole-grain flour
6 pounds butter

Saute the shoes until tender. Rub the butter into the flour. Add the minced kangaroos to the shoes, top with flour, and bake.

The Importance of Physical Exercise

Some first-timers are shocked to find that dragon chicks are quite energetic and need plenty of physical exercise. Unless it is able to let off steam (and smoke, and sometimes bursts of flame, too), the chick's natural exuberance may turn destructive. Should this happen, saying "No!" in a firm voice is unlikely to make much of a difference.



Make sure the chick knows what *it is supposed to fetch.*

Basic First Aid

As soon as you note the tell-tale sad looks and general "droopiness" of an unwell dragon, make sure that you wrap it up and provide it with lots of loving care and attention. A dragonological veterinarian may be called if things worsen rapidly.



Training

Dragons are not particularly easy to train, nor is it recommended to train them excessively, given that they must be released back into the wild as soon as they are old enough. However, there are a few things that can be done to make living with your new chick a great deal easier—particularly as regards house-training.



Luckily, dragons become house-trained after two or three years.

Dr. Drake's Dragon-Training Tips

Dragon Mess

Adult dragons do not make a mess in their own lairs, but chicks need to develop control. Until they do, cover the whole floor with a good 2 feet of paper to soak up the mess.

Fire-Breathing

If you go out and leave your chick at home, it will not burn down your house to punish you but rather because it is anxious. Make sure it has lots of toys to incinerate instead.

Rewards

While there is little point to punishments—they will just make the dragon sulky and, in more extreme cases, vengeful—there is plenty of reason to provide a good dragon who is exhibiting desired behaviours with tasty rewards.



Other Behaviours

As your dragon matures, it will take a different sort of interest in the world around it. For example, at first, a chick may find books interesting, but only from the perspective of how brightly they burn. Do not take it to a library at this stage. After the chick has learned to read, it will no doubt adore books, but by then you are unlikely to be able to find a librarian who will let it in.



Leaping Up

While no one minds a baby dragon leaping up at him or her, a fully grown adult is another matter. Make sure you push the chick away from you firmly and say "No."

Roaring

When your dragon roars, praise it for raising the alarm and offer it a treat. Gradually make sure that it stops roaring for at least a minute before it gets the treat.



If you have a female chick, you may find that she steals ordinary hens' eggs from your kitchen so that she can pretend they are her own. She will not damage them, but when you retrieve them, you will find that they are all quite perfectly cooked.