

Fun stuff for our furry, feathered and fishy friends

BY CHANDRA ORR
Copley News Service

Animal lovers — you are not alone. An increasing number of pet-people are surprising their animal companions with gifts during the holiday season, according to Bob Vetere, managing director of the nonprofit American Pet Products Manufacturers Association. Pet-lovers needn't stress out about their gift-giving, though. With animal companions, it's more often the thought that counts. "With most pets it's, 'Just pet me, play with me and I'm happy,'" Vetere said. "As long as you're paying attention to them, your pet will be happy with the gift." Delivered with a lot of love, these holiday surprises are sure to excite pets and humans alike.

CATS AND DOGS
■ Get kitty a gift she can really sink her claws into: the world's first remote control cat toy. Cat Attack from Takara looks a little like a cat, but moves like a mouse. Controlled by a wireless remote, Cat Attack whizzes around the floor, twirling a cat-dancer wand in random, unpredictable patterns to mimic the movement of a mouse. The tipping, dipping and swaying action of the colorful pom-pom at the end will have cats jumping for joy. (www.takara-usa.com for store locations, \$25.)

■ For a little canine karma, check out the Lotus Bud and Lucky Carp from Bodhi, stylish chew toys worthy of an art gallery. They may look hand-carved, but the durable vinyl withstands even the hardest hounds. (www.bodhitoy.com for store locations, \$8 and up.)

■ For the ultimate, take-anywhere sleeping quarters, look no further than the Sleep Over Bag from Bamboo, a miniature sleeping bag made just for animal travel. The soft, padded sleeping bag converts into a travel blanket or rolls up for storage — just like a real sleeping bag. The Cat Sleep Over Bag keeps kitties entertained after a long siesta with two jingling mice toys and a hidden zipper compartment for catnip. The Dog Sleep Over Bag features two durable bone chew toys. Choose from army green or burgundy. (www.bamboopets.com for store locations, \$19.99.)

■ The Dog Biscuit Kit and Cat Treat Kit from Sassafras make the perfect stocking stuffers. Available in a range

of flavors — peanut butter, chicken or garlic for pups, and tuna or cheese for cats — the kits include everything needed to whip up a batch of goodies for man's best friends. Each kit contains the treat mix, a cutter and a storage tin. Just add water and margarine, bake in the oven and the fresh treats are ready to serve. Give the kit as a gift, or whip up a batch ahead of time for a Christmas-morning snack. (Sassafras, \$10.)

FEATHERED FUN
■ Keep birds company with Breezy Singers from Takara. These lifelike replicas of common song birds move and sing just like real birds when activated by their motion and sound sensors. From the robin to the yellow warbler, the Breezy Singers provide intrigue and challenge a bird's natural curiosity. (www.takara-usa.com for store locations, \$19.99.)

■ For birds that prefer

more tactile diversions, the Polly Wanna Pinata from Fetch-It Pets features colorful, nontoxic paper that parakeets and parrots alike can tear, shred and rip to pieces to find the treats hidden inside. From the hollow parrot wearing a sombrero to the treat-filled unicorn, the pinatas come in a range of shapes, including holiday favorites like Santa Claus. (PetSmart, \$9.99.)

ECTOTHERMIC EXCITEMENT
■ Don't be fooled. Even cold-blooded companions crave great gifts. Small lizards, like skinks and geckos, will certainly appreciate a new hiding cave like the magnetic Reptile Den from Exo Terra. The two halves of the burrow — one on the outside of the terrarium, one on the inside — connect by magnets. Lizard-lovers can remove the outer half of the burrow for a sneak-peek at life after dark. The Reptile Den comes in three sizes to

accommodate a range of reptiles. (PetSmart, \$12.99 and up.)

HUMAN INTEREST
■ It may be practical, but pet-lovers will be thankful for the Seat Saver, a stylish alternative to tired car seat covers. Made from sherpa fleece, the Seat Saver resists stains and water to guard against dirt, mud, muck, hair and slobber. Simply throw it in the washing machine after a trip and it's as good as new. Available in five sizes to fit any vehicle, the one-piece, plush protector requires no elastic, no devices and no dismantling of the seat — yet maintains a snug fit regardless of seating contours. Choose from dog bone white or greyhound gray. (www.puppyproof.com for store locations, \$65 and up.)

■ Give the gift of memories with the Ofoto Photo Book from Kodak. This hard-bound tome features 20 pages, each accommodating up to four photos, printed in glossy full-color. It doesn't take a Web whiz to create these one-of-a-kind books

either. Simply log on to Ofoto.com, upload digital photos and follow the instructions. Choose from several cover options — like black leather, cream linen and sleek blue — and select the page designs, from one

giant photo on a botanical background to a graphic trio of images over pastel stripes. Enter captions to create a story or simply share memorable moments. (www.ofoto.com, \$29.99 and up.)

SANTA FACTS

Keeping kids safe

Not every toy is safe for every child. Toy buyers can help protect children from injury by being careful, vigilant shoppers. Here are some common hazards:

Children under 3	Children ages 3 and up
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children under 3 tend to put everything in their mouths. Avoid buying toys intended for older children which may have small parts that pose a choking danger. Teach older children to keep their toys away from their younger siblings. Children at this age pull, prod and twist toys. Look for toys that are well-made with tightly secured eyes, noses and other parts. Avoid toys made with thin, brittle plastic that might easily break into small pieces or leave jagged edges. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For all children, adults should check toys periodically for breakage and potential hazards. Damaged or dangerous toys should be repaired or thrown away. If you buy a bicycle for any age child, buy a helmet too, and make sure the child wears it. Teach all children to put toys away when they're finished playing so they don't trip over them or fall on them.

SOURCE: U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission



Pet owners love to pick something special for their furry companions at Christmas. Bamboo offers this charming and convenient Sleep Over Bag for dogs and cats, and Bodhi Toys features beautiful, Asian-inspired chew toys like the Lucky Carp and Lotus Bud that are part of this gift basket.

Baa Baa Black Sheep

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