

# Owner hopes for sweet smell of success in search for pet polecat



MISSING: Falmart with devastated owner, Martin.

AN ANIMAL-LOVER says he is "devastated" by the disappearance of the pet polecat he rescued from death.

Martin Turner, of Cranford Road, Lacey Green, has leafleted over 60 homes, put up missing posters and offered a reward in a bid to find the pet which escaped from his home on Friday (January 7).

He had plucked 'Falmart' - which means foul smelling in Old English - from the River Bollin in September 2003 when the animal fell in while being taught to hunt by his mother.

After nursing the baby animal back to health Martin, 44, kept him as a family pet because he had become too domesticated to return to the wild.

Martin said: "It was playing in the back garden with my pet ferrets when he climbed over the fence and ran off. I didn't hear him go because of the noise from the high winds at the time.

"I'm devastated and would do anything to get him back, he won't survive in the wild. He'd either starve, be eaten by a predator or run over.

"I knew he had become too tame to release when I forgot my glove one time I was feeding him. I expected him to bite me but he just licked my hand."

It is thought Falmart - who

by Alex Scapens

is a European polecat - could have headed for the cover of Wilmslow Park.

He is further handicapped as Martin had him neutered, which means some of his aggressive survival instinct has been lost.

But Falmart is still a difficult animal to approach, only being tame towards his owner.

Martin warns other people could get bitten.

Other species Martin keeps in his collection of unusual pets include ferrets, hedgehogs and birds.

And Falmart is not the only one in danger.

Martin explained: "My hedgehogs are starving. Because it has been mild recently they have woken from hibernation but there is no food for them.

"One is at death's door in an incubator and being fed antibiotics.

"It would be like losing a member of the family. I'm with my animals all the time and Falmart is particularly special because of the circumstances in which I found him."

Falmart is a similar size and shape to a ferret with black fur and white facial markings like a raccoon.

Anyone who sees him can contact Martin on (01625) 536171 or 07950 867353.

A reward for his return is offered.