
Domestic Rabbit

Oryctolagus cuniculus domestic

Class: *Mammalia*

Order: *Lagomorpha*

Family: *Leporidae*

Characteristics: Wt. 2-20lbs (9 kg). Males heavier and taller than females. Vary tremendously in length, fur type, coloration and general appearance. Long ears; prominent eyes on sides of head; strong hind legs for locomotion and warning thumping. Sweat glands on front paws. Can adjust angle of hair to control amount of air through fur for warming or cooling. Front teeth grow duration of life.

Behavior: Live in colonies in complex burrow systems (warrens). Spend days underground foraging from evening until morning. Constantly alert, prepared to run from predators. Sociable and generally silent except for loud shriek or scream when terror stricken. A colony consists of 6-10 adult of both sexes; the strongest dominant male and dominant female preside over colony.

Reproduction: Breed 3-5 times yearly from January to June. Prepares underground nest of straw, vegetation and fur. After 28-31 days gestation 2-12 "kits" are born blind at birth with little hair. Largest litter on record is 23 bunnies. Kits develop rapidly, eyes opening after 12-14 days. Eat solid food and drink water in 3 weeks. Stop nursing about 6. Can reproduce at 6 months.

Diet: Wild: Fungi, plants, roots, tree bark, fruit, snails, worms.
Zoo: Rabbit pellets.

Conservation: Currently no domestic breeds of rabbits are endangered because of popularity as pets and food. However, the IUCN lists at least 13 species of rabbits and hares as endangered, threatened or vulnerable.

FYI:

- All domestic rabbits descended from the wild European Rabbit.
- There are at least 45 distinct breeds of domestic rabbits.
- The largest warren known (2,080 entrances) contained 407 rabbits.
- Rabbits are more closely related to cattle and deer than they are to rats or squirrels.
- Rabbits provide benefits to some species with their burrowing helping new plants take root, providing shelter for other animals and providing good fertilizer with their feces.



Range & Habitat: Every continent except Asia and Antarctica in dry areas near sea level with soft, sandy soil for burrowing, in grassy fields, or in forests.



Lifespan: up to 12 years in captivity, 6-8 years in the wild.

Special Adaptations: Small, flexible, fast moving, reproduce at rapid rate in large numbers, eat a variety of food.

IUCN Conservation Status:
Not Evaluated

