

Rabbit (Domestic) *(Oryctolagus cuniculus)*

Habitat and Distribution: Originated from the wild rabbits in Africa and Europe.

Size: 2-11 pounds

Wild Diet: Domestic rabbits eat hay, rabbit pellets, fruits and vegetables.

Predators: The domestic rabbits' ancestors, the European rabbit, were hunted by raptors and lynx.

Life Span: 5-15 years

Reproduction: Rabbits typically breed in the spring. The male flags his tail to attract a female. For females the prime age for breeding is 6 months until 3-5 years of age. Males mature about a month earlier than the females. The gestation period is 28 to 32 days. Litter sizes can range from 1 to 22 young. The kits are born hairless, blind and deaf. When the kits are about 10 days old they begin to open their eyes. They will nurse for 4-6 weeks and will usually stay with the mom for another week or two before they are on their own.

Behavior: Rabbits are terrestrial, and are most active in the evening and early morning. In the wild, rabbits live in groups called warrens which can be made up of up to 150 rabbits. The rabbits live in an underground system of burrows. All of the rabbits will look after each other by watching out for predators and warning the group. They also search for food together and help each other care for the young. Feeding takes place primarily in the early morning and night. Rabbits will make a variety of sounds including growling, squealing, screaming, and purring. When a rabbit is being aggressive it can bite and kick hard.

Conservation Connection: Secure

Interesting Facts: People have been domesticating rabbits since the Middle Ages and in the United States since the 1700's. Rabbits today have a very diverse range and can be found almost anywhere on earth. Rabbits come in variety of colors, patterns and sizes. There are 45 different breeds of rabbits. Rabbits have extremely good vision, and their eyes are much more light sensitive than human eyes. Some scientists believe that rabbits can see the colors blue and green.

