

Pygmy Rabbit
(Brachylagus idahoensis)

ORDER: Lagomorpha
FAMILY: Leporidae

Conservation Status: Near Threatened.

Pygmy Rabbits dig extensive burrow systems, which are also used by other animals. Loss of habitat is a direct threat to this species, which depends on big sagebrush, particularly mature stands of it. Both birds and mammals prey on pygmy Rabbits, which are an important food for many of the other animals in its range. The rabbit's habitat has become increasingly fragmented by development, agriculture, rangeland "improvements"—for example, projects that replace big sagebrush with bunchgrasses—and by fire. There is reason to be concerned about the future of this smallest North American member of the rabbit family.

Sexual Dimorphism:

Females are larger than males.

Length:

Average: 275 mm males; 283 mm females
Range: 252–285 mm males; 230–302 mm females

Weight:

Average: 411 g males; 432 g females
Range: 373–435 g males; 415–458 g females



Credit: painting by Ron Klinger from Kays and Wilson's Mammals of North America, © Princeton University Press (2002)



FIELD NOTES

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Antelope Jackrabbit

(Lepus alleni)

ORDER: Lagomorpha

FAMILY: Leporidae

Antelope Jackrabbits are nocturnal and crepuscular, and almost never vocalize. They are probably the fastest runners of their genus, with a top speed of 72 km per hour. They flash their white rumps somewhat as pronghorns do when they are running. Their ears are white on the outside, and longer than average. Typical of hares, and in contrast to rabbits, Antelope Jackrabbits give birth to well-developed young who are fully furred, with their eyes open, and able to hop.



Also known as:

Allen's Hare, Allen's Jackrabbit, Wandering Jackrabbit, Blanket Jack, Saddle Jack, Mexican Jackrabbit, Burro Jack, Jackass Rabbit

Credit: painting by Ron Klinger from Kays and Wilson's Mammals of North America, © Princeton University Press (2002)

Sexual Dimorphism:

None

Length:

Average: 622 mm

Range: 553–670 mm

Weight:

Average: 3,800 g

Range: 2,700–5,900 g



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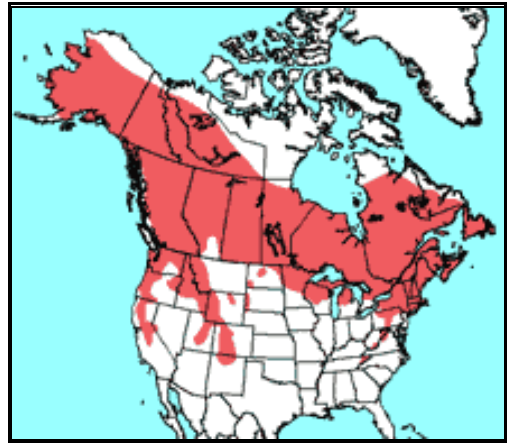
Snowshoe Hare
(Lepus americanus)

ORDER: Lagomorpha
 FAMILY: Leporidae

The Snowshoe Hare is broadly distributed in the north from coast to coast and occurs in a variety of habitat types, including swamps, hardwood forests, and mixed and evergreen forests. Nocturnal like most members of the family, this hare consistently travels along the same runways and tends to remain hidden in vegetation until sundown. It is active year round and can have two to five litters per year, each producing one to eight offspring. Their populations fluctuate radically over 10-year cycles, which is probably because of changes in food supply: the hare population grows, they over-graze, and starvation follows. True to its name, the Snowshoe Hare has large feet padded by dense spiraling hairs, each acting like a spring. Most Snowshoe Hares change color, from a summer brown coat to winter white, offering camouflage in each season.



Credit: painting by Ron Klinger from Kays and Wilson's Mammals of North America, © Princeton University Press (2002)



Also known as:

Snowshoe Rabbit, Varying Hare

Sexual Dimorphism:

Females are larger than males.

Length:

Average: 450 mm
 Range: 363–520 mm

Weight:

Average: 1,300 g males; 1,500 g females
 Range: 900–1,700 g males; 900–2,200 g females

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Black-tailed Jackrabbit

(Lepus californicus)

ORDER: Lagomorpha

FAMILY: Leporidae

Black-tailed Jackrabbits are tremendous leapers, able to jump more than 6 m horizontally. They live in some of the hottest and driest regions of the continent, can survive on poor-quality foods, and get most or all of the water they need from their food. Where they can, they eat green vegetation, but they can survive in parts of the Southwest where creosote-bush forms a large part of their diet. They cope with extreme heat by lowering their metabolism and resting in the shade during the day, which conserves water. They get rid of extra salt through their urine, and blood flows close to the skin in their enormous ears, a cooling mechanism. Although mostly nocturnal and solitary, large groups sometimes form near a good food supply. With their typically high reproductive output, Black-tails can be agricultural pests, and there were periods in the 1800s and 1900s when aggressive rabbit drives herded and destroyed 5,000–6,000 animal in a single day. In spite of this, they are quite common and widespread.



Credit: painting by Ron Klinger from Kays and Wilson's Mammals of North America, © Princeton University Press (2002)

Member of order Lagomorpha.

Also known as:

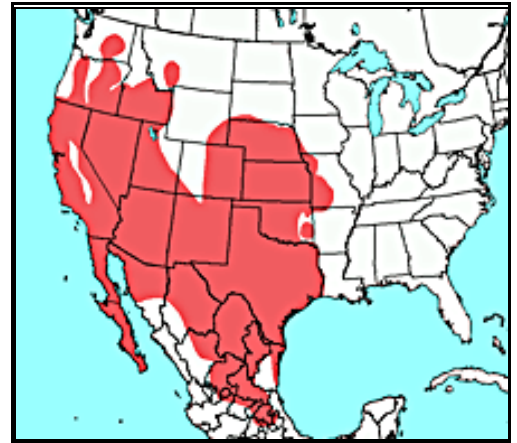
California Jackrabbit

Length:

Range: 465–630 mm

Weight:

Range: 1,300–3,300 g



FIELD NOTES

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FIELD GUIDE TO NORTH AMERICAN MAMMALS

White-sided Jackrabbit

(Lepus callotis)

ORDER: Lagomorpha

FAMILY: Leporidae

Conservation Status: Near Threatened.

The White-sided Jackrabbit strongly prefers level ground to hills, and does not require shrubs for cover, but uses clumps or dense stands of grass instead. Grass also makes up more than 99 percent of its diet. Livestock grazing of native grasses most likely has contributed to the decline of this species. White-sided Jackrabbits tend to form male-female pairs, and the male will defend the pair from other males. The breeding season of the White-sided Jackrabbit runs from mid-April to mid-August. There are one to four offspring (usually two) in a litter. Predators include eagles, hawks, owls, foxes, and coyotes.

Also known as:

Gaillard Jackrabbit, Beautiful-eared Jackrabbit, Snow Sides

Sexual Dimorphism:

Females are larger than males.

Length:

Average: 529 mm males; 558 mm females

Range: 525-532 mm males; 541-575 mm females

Weight:

Average: 1,800 g males; 2,900 g females

Range: 1,500-2,200 g males; 2,500-3,200 g females



Credit: painting by Ron Klinger from Kays and Wilson's Mammals of North America, © Princeton University Press (2002)



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White-tailed Jackrabbit

(Lepus townsendii)

ORDER: Lagomorpha

FAMILY: Leporidae

White-tailed Jackrabbits live at a remarkably broad range of elevations, from 40 m to 4,300 m, and where they are in competition with Black-tailed Jackrabbits, they tend to move toward higher elevations. They are slightly larger than black-tails, but seem to be more selective in their dietary choices, putting them at a disadvantage where the two species overlap. White-tailed Jackrabbits prefer grassland habitat, feeding on grasses and green forbs first, and resorting to shrubs during the winter months. They are among the most solitary of hares and usually interact only briefly during the breeding season, when small groups may be seen. A female may produce 1-4 litters, usually of 4 or 5 young, each year.



Credit: painting by Ron Klinger from Kays and Wilson's Mammals of North America. © Princeton University Press (2002)

Also known as:

Prairie Hare

Sexual Dimorphism:

Females are larger than males.

Length:

Average: 589 mm males; 612 mm females

Range: 565-618 mm males; 575-655 mm females

Weight:

Average: 3,400 g males; 3,600 g females

Range: 2,600-4,300 g males; 2,500-4,300 g females



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FIELD GUIDE TO NORTH AMERICAN MAMMALS

Desert Cottontail
(Sylvilagus audubonii)

ORDER: Lagomorpha
FAMILY: Leporidae

Living well below sea level in Death Valley and also in woodland and grassland up to 2,000 m elevation, Desert Cottontails are able to tolerate diverse habitats. They are most active at dawn and dusk, and spend hot days resting in a burrow or in a "hide," which is a shallow depression in the ground or in vegetation. Like all rabbits, they are vegetarians, feeding on grasses, shrubs, and forbs. They also eat acorns. When they can, they forage under shrubs, and when they venture out from under shelter, they move cautiously, and freeze when alarmed. They breed year-round, and mature quickly: breeding is seen in individuals as young as three months of age.



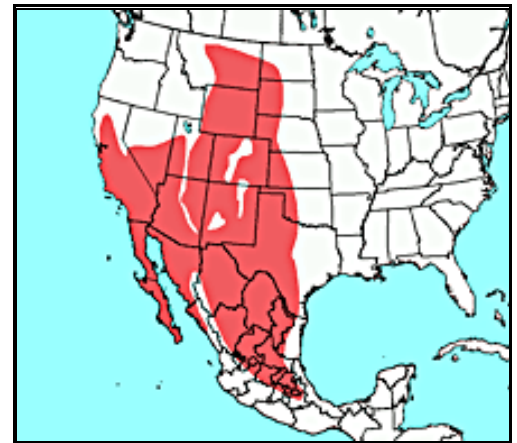
Credit: painting by Ron Klinger from Kays and Wilson's Mammals of North America, © Princeton University Press (2002)

Also known as:
Audubon's Cottontail

Sexual Dimorphism:
Females are larger than males.

Length:
Average: 385 mm
Range: 372–397 mm

Weight:
Range: 755–1,250 g



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Eastern Cottontail
(Sylvilagus floridanus)

ORDER: Lagomorpha
FAMILY: Leporidae

Eastern Cottontails share habitats with seven other cottontails and six species of hares. They have been transplanted to areas outside their historically widespread range, which included swamps, prairies, woodlands, and forests. They have two ways of escaping danger: a zig-zag dash or a slink, in which they creep along, low to the ground, with their ears back. Eastern Cottontails are among the most prolific lagomorphs. Females can have seven litters a year, producing as many as 35 young. Litters, usually of 3!, are born in a fur-lined nest of dried grasses and leaves.



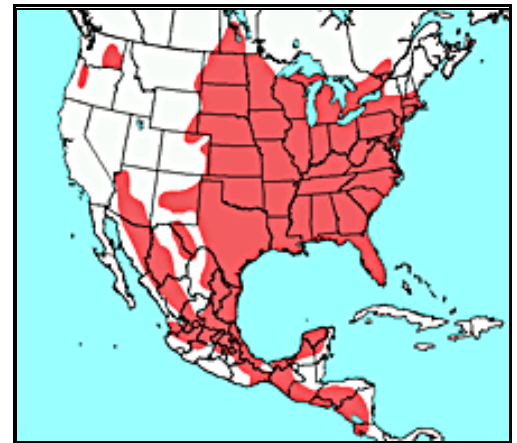
Credit: painting by Ron Klinger from Kays and Wilson's Mammals of North America, © Princeton University Press (2002)

Also known as:
Florida Cottontail

Sexual Dimorphism:
Females are larger than males.

Length:
Average: 430 mm
Range: 395–477 mm

Weight:
Range: 801–1,533 g



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FIELD GUIDE TO NORTH AMERICAN MAMMALS

Mountain Cottontail

(*Sylvilagus nuttallii*)

ORDER: Lagomorpha

FAMILY: Leporidae

At dawn and dusk in the mountainous regions of the western United States, the Mountain Cottontail forages for sagebrush, western juniper, and grasses, almost always close to cover. As befits a rabbit that lives where it gets very cold, its feet are covered with long, dense hair, and its rather short ears are furry inside. Young rabbits are born blind and hairless, in nests lined with grass and the mother's fur, in litters of four to eight. (In contrast, hares are born fully furred and ready to hop.) A female Mountain Cottontail may produce five litters each year.



Sylvilagus nuttallii – mountain habitat

Credit: painting by Ron Klinger from Kays and Wilson's *Mammals of North America*, © Princeton University Press (2002)

Also known as:

Nuttall's Cottontail

Sexual Dimorphism:

Females are larger than males.

Length:

Average: 362 mm

Range: 338–390 mm

Weight:

Range: 628–871 g



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