

RABBITS

ORYCTOLAGUS CUNICULUS.

DISTINGUISHING MARKS:

Rabbits are smaller and slimmer than hares. Body length is about 40 cm with 4-8 cm long tail. Weights under 3kg. Bushy fur is basically toned grey, on the stomach side colour fades often to white. Hind legs are shorter than hares.

PREVALENCE:

Wild rabbit is originally from South-Europe, but has spread almost to all continents.

HABITAT AND LIFE STYLES:

Favourite places of the rabbits are dry moors, gentle hills, sandy and bushy lands. In such terrain it is able to hide during the daytime and take off cautiously in the nightfall. Rabbits are hard-working and skilled diggers. Usually there is a hollow in the middle of the cave about which goes cramped corridors. Each corridor is populated by a rabbit couple. If rabbit notices something alerting on its trips, it warns others by drumming ground on its hind legs.

NOURISHMENT:

Rabbits eat grass, grain, cabbage and other vegetables. They cause large destruction in the sapling stand by gnawing the bark.

BREEDING:

Rabbit increases enormously, "procreates as rabbit" says the phrase. In warm countries wild rabbit can breed even six new litters per year. Pregnancy lasts 4--5weeks and 8-12 cubs are born. After four years, one rabbit couple could have 1300000 offsprings, unless enemies and diseases would limit the increasing population.

RABBIT SPECIES:

Rabbit nurture dates from the middle ages. Deliberate breeding has created giants, whose length rises over one metre and rabbits, whose ears dangles almost to the ground, not to mention different colour and hair modifications. Different rabbit species are for example cotton tail rabbits, angora rabbits, French dwarf rabbits with dangled ears and white country rabbit, which is farmed also in Finland.

