

Mountain cottontail (*Sylvilagus nuttallii*)



Taxonomy:

Family Leporidae. Also called Nuttall's cottontail. Three subspecies are recognized; the regional form is *Sylvilagus nuttallii grangeri*.

Description:

Distinguished from hares (*Lepus*) by its smaller size and shorter ears.

Total length: 320-385 mm; Tail: 20-60 mm; Hind foot: 87-98 mm; Ear: 54-63 mm; Weight: 641-885 g.



Distribution:

From southern Alberta and Saskatchewan south through the western Great Plains and Rocky Mountains to northern New Mexico and Arizona, and west through the intermountain region to the Cascade and Sierra Nevada Mountains. Common along the Wasatch Front

Ecology and diet:

The mountain cottontail occurs in a wide range of habitats from desert shrub to montane forest, often in rocky situations. It is generally nocturnal, although often seen during daylight, particularly near dawn or dusk. Diet includes grass, sagebrush, juniper, and other green vegetation.

Life History:

Reproduction occurs from late winter to summer. Gestation lasts approximately 1 month, and litter size ranges from 4 to 8. A female may produce as many as 5 litters per year. Sexual maturity may be achieved as early as 3 months of age.

References: Chapman 1975, 1999b.