

Rabbit

Oryctolagus cuniculus

Mammal · Here all year · does not hibernate



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A familiar grey-brown mammal with long ears, large eyes set high on the head and a white flash under the tail that flicks up as it bolts. Rabbits are smaller than hares, with shorter ears lacking black tips, and they run rather than sprint. They live colonially in burrow systems in banks, dunes and field edges around Dumfries, and are most often seen feeding on short grass at dusk.

BEHAVIOUR

Rabbits live in social groups in a warren, and thump a warning with a hind foot before diving underground. They graze grass and herbs, and — like hares — pass food through twice, eating soft droppings straight from the body to extract the rest of the nutrition. Their grazing maintains the short turf that many rare plants and insects depend on, so a landscape without rabbits changes markedly.

WHEN TO SEE IT

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QUICK FACTS

FAMILY	Rabbits and hares (Leporidae)
SIZE	Body 34-45 cm · ears without black tips
UK STATUS	Long-established introduction; declining from disease but still widespread

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