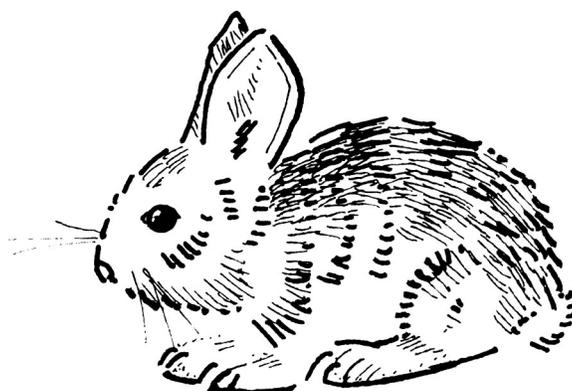


WETLANDS EXPLORERS CLUB



Desert Cottontails

- ◆ The Desert Cottontail gets its name from its fluffy tail that looks like a cotton ball
- ◆ A male cottontail's home may be up to fifteen acres in size while a female's home is typically less than one acre.
- ◆ The desert cottontail can be found in a variety of different habitats. At Wetlands Park they are often found living along streams or beneath the quailbush in the Riparian habitat.



LESSON

Rabbits were once considered rodents, like mice or beavers. But they are actually different enough to be their own order of animals, called **Lagomorphs**, which includes rabbits, hares, and pikas. They are all descended from a distant common ancestor.

One difference between lagomorphs and rodents is that lagomorphs have four sharp teeth, two on the top and two on the bottom, which continue growing throughout their lives. Rodents only have the two on the top.



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A great place at Wetlands Park to do today's activity: [Nature Preserve](#)

Today's Activity: See if you can spot a cottontail. If you can't, you may be able to find some evidence.

- ◆ Spring time is the best time to see a cottontail! During spring, desert cottontails are out making families, and you may even see babies hopping around.
- ◆ Desert cottontails remain fairly inactive during the day, finding food in the early mornings and exercising in the evenings.

ACTIVITY

Scat in little round balls about the size of peas or cocoa puffs



"Y Shaped" tracks



Takeaway... What other evidence do you think a cottontail could leave behind?

[Click here to answer.](#)



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Just for Fun

You can learn a lot from rabbit footprints. For instance, a rabbit hopping fast in the mud is going to leave different tracks than a rabbit taking its time exploring a dusty dry path.

The Y shape tells you which direction the cottontail was going. If the cottontail was hopping fast, its prints will be more spaced out.

What do you think of these tracks? What might have made them different from each other?



Now draw some of your own tracks. How fast is your rabbit going, and in which direction? What kind of ground is it on?



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