

Lepus europaeus

System: Terrestrial

Kingdom	Phylum	Class	Order	Family
Animalia	Chordata	Mammalia	Lagomorpha	Leporidae

Common name brown hare (English), European brown hare (English), European hare (English), liebre Europea (Spanish), lièvre d'Europe (French)

Synonym

Similar species

Summary

Lepus europaeus is a herbivorous mammal belonging to the family Leporidae, and is commonly known as the European hare or brown hare. It has been introduced from its native range of Europe to many other countries and islands. *L. europaeus* is highly adaptable and is able to survive in a varied range of habitats, though it primarily invades agricultural areas, grasslands, scrub and shrublands and disturbed areas. It has been known to hybridise with native hare species in some areas, threatening genetic integrity and native species survival.



[view this species on IUCN Red List](#)

Notes

There are 15 subspecies: *Lepus europaeus caspicus*, *L. e. connori*, *L. e. creticus*, *L. e. cyprius*, *L. e. cyrensis*, *L. e. europaeus*, *L. e. hybridus*, *L. e. judeae*, *L. e. karpathorum*, *L. e. medius*, *L. e. occidentalis*, *L. e. parnassius*, *L. e. ponticus*, *L. e. rhodius*, *L. e. syriacus*, and *L. e. transylvanicus* (Hoffmann and Smith 2005).

Climate change and the European hare: In the Australian Alps, foxes (*Vulpes vulpes*), hares (*Lepus europaeus*), house mice (*Mus musculus*), feral horses (*Equus caballus*) and weeds have all increased their presence at higher altitudes most likely due to changes in climate (Green and Pickering 2002).

Climate change models predict that summers in Ireland will become drier and warmer, giving rise to conditions favouring *L. europaeus* (increased arable activity, creating a more heterogenous landscape).

Lifecycle Stages

Lepus europaeus averages three litters/yr, but can vary from one to four litters/yr (Macdonald and Barrett 1993). Litter size can vary with respect to the season, smaller litters produced earlier in the season and larger litters later (Macdonald and Barrett 1993). The birth weight of *L. europaeus* is approximately 100 g (Macdonald and Barrett 1993). Gestation is 41-42 days and reproduction occurs year round (Macdonald and Barrett 1993). Average life expectancy for this hare is 1.04 years, with a maximum age span in the wild of 12.5 years recorded in Poland (Macdonald and Barrett 1993). Females reach maturity around seven to eight months and male at six months (Macdonald and Barrett 1993). The total length of *L. europaeus* is 48.0-70.0 cm (Macdonald and Barrett 1993) (from Smith & Johnston 2008)

Management Info

Methods by which to monitor *L. europaeus* population and impacts in New Zealand have been studied with the view of setting target densities for control operations ([Parkes 2001](#)). Methods for density estimation investigated included faecal pellet counts, spotlight count, and line transect estimates. Impact estimation methods included plant biomass estimation of biomass, and species composition and biomass.

Pathway

Lepus europaeus has been introduced as a game species extensively to countries across the globe (Smith & Johnston 2008).

Principal source: [Smith, A.T. & Johnston, C.H. 2008. *Lepus europaeus*.](#) In: IUCN 2010. IUCN Red List of Threatened Species.

Compiler: IUCN SSC Invasive Species Specialist Group (ISSG) with support from the Overseas Territories Environmental Programme (OTEP) project XOT603, a joint project with the Cayman Islands Government - Department of Environment

Review:

Publication date: 2010-06-08

ALIEN RANGE

[1] ARGENTINA	[2] AUSTRALIA
[1] BARBADOS	[1] BRAZIL
[1] CANADA	[1] CHILE
[1] FALKLAND ISLANDS (MALVINAS)	[1] IRELAND
[1] NEW ZEALAND	[1] NORWAY
[1] PARAGUAY	[1] PERU
[1] REUNION	[1] RUSSIAN FEDERATION
[1] SWEDEN	[2] UNITED KINGDOM
[1] UNITED STATES	[1] URUGUAY

Red List assessed species 2: VU = 1; LC = 1;

[Lepus timidus](#) LC

[Nestor notabilis](#) VU

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Management information

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Summary: This compilation of information sources can be sorted on keywords for example: Baits & Lures, Non Target Species, Eradication, Monitoring, Risk Assessment, Weeds, Herbicides etc. This compilation is at present in Excel format, this will be web-enabled as a searchable database shortly. This version of the database has been developed by the IUCN SSC ISSG as part of an Overseas Territories Environmental Programme funded project XOT603 in partnership with the Cayman Islands Government - Department of Environment. The compilation is a work under progress, the ISSG will manage, maintain and enhance the database with current and newly published information, reports, journal articles etc.

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