

Wonder of the Day #203

What Is the Difference Between a Rabbit and a Hare?

43 Comments



SCIENCE – Life Science

Have You Ever Wondered...

- What is the difference between a rabbit and a hare?
- What is a leveret?
- Do all rabbits and hares live underground?

Is that furry thing an Easter bunny or an Easter hare? Are they the same thing? Or are they totally different? Are we just splitting hares? Help!

Believe it or not, rabbits and hares are completely different species, even though they look quite alike and are actually members of the same order of mammals (Lagomorpha). There are significant differences in physical appearance, behavior, and even lifestyles.

Rabbits and hares are different from the moment they are born. Baby rabbits – called kittens or bunnies – are born hairless and blind, totally dependent on their mothers. Baby hares – called leverets – are born with fur and sight, and they can move on their own within an hour of their birth.

Hares tend to be larger than rabbits, with longer hind legs and longer ears with black markings. While rabbits' fur stays the same color year-round, hares change color from brown or gray in the summer to white in the winter.

Rabbits and hares even tend to eat different foods. While rabbits prefer softer grasses and vegetables (like carrots!), hares like to eat harder bark and twigs.

Rabbits make their homes in burrows underground, while hares make nests above ground. Only the cottontail rabbit is known to make above-ground nests similar to those of hares.

Their different living habits make rabbits and hares respond to danger differently. Rabbits prefer to head underground to hide. Hares, on the other hand, use their longer, stronger hind legs to run away from danger.

Rabbits can be domesticated and kept as pets; hares stay wild. This reflects their behavior in the wild.

Rabbits tend to be social animals that live in groups. Hares spend most of their time by themselves, only pairing up occasionally to mate.

So now you know the difference between rabbits and hares! Share your knowledge and try out these old jokes on someone you know:

Q: What's the best way to catch a unique rabbit?

A: Unique up on it!

Q: How can you catch a rabbit in the woods?

A: Hide behind a tree and make a sound like a carrot!

Wonder Words (18)

HARE, RABBIT, BLIND, HIND, BARK, TWIG, MAMMAL, PHYSICAL, LIFESTYLE, BURROW, SOCIAL, BEHAVIOR, DOMESTICATED, LEVERET, TORTOISE, SPECIES, APPEARANCE, VEGETABLE

Wonder What's Next?

There's no scale that'll hold tomorrow's Wonder of the Day!

Try It Out

We hope today's Wonder of the Day had you hopping for joy! Be sure to explore the following activities with a friend or family member:

Bunny Rabbit Ears (<http://www.dltk-kids.com/animals/m-ears.htm>)

Egg Carton Easter Bunny Container (http://www.dltk-kids.com/animals/megg_carton.htm)

Paper Bag Bunny Puppet (<http://www.dltk-kids.com/animals/mbagbunny.htm>)

Rabbit Windsock (<http://www.dltk-kids.com/animals/mbunnywindsock.html>)

Want to learn how to distinguish between rabbits and hares more easily? Jump online to read through Hare vs. Rabbit (http://www.diffen.com/difference/Hare_vs_Rabbit) to learn more interesting differences between the two species, as well as to see several pictures of the two creatures. Do you think you could correctly identify a rabbit or a hare in the wild now? Why or why not?

What would happen if a wild hare met a lost pet rabbit in the woods? Would it take it under its wing and help it find its way back home? Or would it bring it back to its nest and try to teach it how to live in the wild? You decide! Write a short story based upon this scenario, and then share it with your friends and family members. Be as wildly imaginative as you want to be! You can even illustrate your story if you'd like to draw some pictures to go along with the text. Have fun!

Spring has sprung and Easter is the perfect time to try your hand at some great bunny-themed crafts. Check out the links below to explore some fun craft ideas that you can do with a friend or family member:

<http://wonderopolis.org/wonder/what-is-the-difference-between-a-rabbit-and-a-hare>

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