

## CAPYBARA

Kingdom: *Animalia* Phylum: *Chordata* Class: *Mammalia* Order: *Rodentia* Family: *Hydrochaeridae*  
*Hydrochaeris Hydrochaeris*

**Description:** The capybara looks like a guinea pig and is the largest rodent in the world. The name Capybara is from the native South American Tupi word "capibara," for the animal. "Carpincho" is also used and is possibly the Spanish or Portuguese word for the animal..

**Length:** 3.5-4.5 feet

**Height:** 2 feet

**Weight:** 75-140 pounds

**Lifespan:** 10 years

**Habitat:** Dense vegetation surrounding lakes, rivers, swamps, marshes, and ponds.

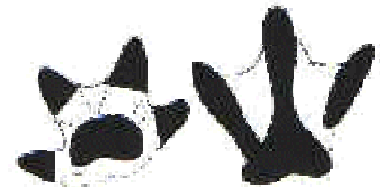
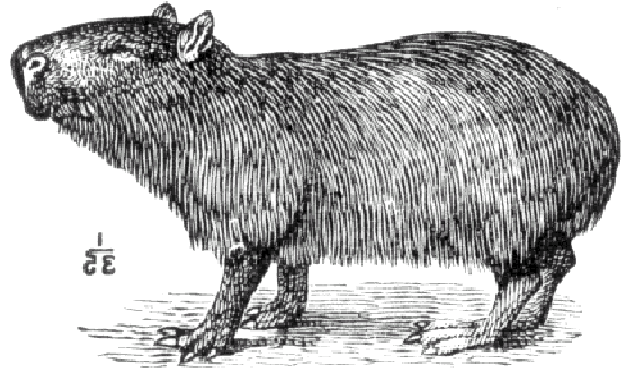
**Range:** From Panama south through South America

**Status:** Stable

**Diet in the Wild:** Aquatic plants, grasses, vegetable and fruit.

### Special Features:

- Males have a large pronounced scent gland on top of the nose called a morillo that secretes a white substance used to mark territory.
- Females are larger than males
- They have 4 hoof-like toes on the front legs and 3 toes on the back legs. These toes are webbed for swimming.
- They are excellent swimmers but move awkwardly on land.
- They hide in the water from their predators with only their eyes, ears and nostrils above the water.
- Can stay submerged up to 5 minutes.
- Peaceful and sociable.
- Live in groups of up to 20 animals consisting of 1 dominant male and females in order of dominance.
- They are farmed for their meat and their hides.



### Breeding/Care of Young:

- Gestation is 130-150 days.
- Litter size is usually 4 but can be up to 8
- Sexual maturity is 18 months
- Can mate throughout the year, but usually just before the rainy season.
- Mate in the water.
- The entire group of females cares for the young.
  - The young make purring noises.



- When born their eyes are open, they are fully furred and have complete dentition, and they can follow their mother and eat grass shortly after birth.

### **Did you know?**

Because of its size, tasty meat, valuable leather, and rapid reproduction, the capybara is a candidate for both ranching and intensive husbandry throughout the hot and humid lowland tropical regions of Latin America. It seems easy to handle. It is commonly raised in zoos or occasionally as a pet, and has, in at least one instance, been proven successful in large commercial herds.

In floodplain ecosystems, capybaras complement cattle because they prefer to graze swamp grasses rather than the dry land grasses on which cattle feed.

Capybara meat is white and has qualities and properties (such as high emulsification) that might allow it to compete with pork and other meats in the food industry. Spanish-style sausages, Italian-style mortadellas, frankfurters, and German-style smoked chops have been produced experimentally. However, at present, the meat is mainly consumed only in the dried and salted form. It is particularly popular in Venezuela, where more than 400 tons are sold every year, especially during Easter festivities."

Top grade leather items made of capy, which is a soft leather, include belts, wallets, jackets. The natural leather is blond-cream color. Usually dyed a medium rich brown. The leather has character' due to frequent scarring of the animals in the wild. Because of the texture they say the wallets are pickpocket proof.

