

Capybara

Scientific Name: *Hydrochoerus hydrochaeris*

Class: Mammalia

Order: Rodentia

Family: Caviidae



The length of the capybara is approximately 4 feet and its height is about 21 inches. The capybara's weight is 110 to 150 pounds. The capybara has a massive body set on short legs, and an oblong head extending from a short neck. This is the world's largest rodent. Despite the great contrast in size, the capybara's closest relative is the guinea pig. Male and female look alike, in coats of long, coarse reddish-brown, gray, or yellowish-brown hair. They have no tail. Water-loving, water-dwelling creatures, their scientific name means "water pigs". They walk in digitigrade fashion (on their toes), and have 4 toes on the front feet and three on the hind feet, connected by short webbed membranes. The capybara's response to danger is to run to water, where they

display good swimming and diving abilities. Their predators on land are jaguars and cougars. In the water caimans are a threat. They are social animals, living in herds of 50 to 100.

Range

Northern South America east of the Andes

Habitat

Dense vegetated marshes and swamps or wooded areas around lakes and rivers

Gestation

Approximately 150 days

Litter

4-5

Behavior

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Reproduction

Mating in capybaras takes place in water. The young are precocial, and any lactating female will nurse any hungry young one. They become sexually mature at 18 months.

Wild Diet

Aquatic plants, grass, fruit, melons