

Carpenter St. Croix Valley Nature Center's

Domestic Rabbit, *Oryctolagus cuniculus*
Carpenter Nature Center's Domestic Rabbit, Sapa, was obtained from Fluegel's Farm, Garden and Pet store in Rosemount Minnesota. He was born in July of 2018 as a mix between the domestic breeds Holland Lop and Mini Rex. At 2 months old he came to CNC to be an ambassador for his species. A naming contest was held to in October. Many great suggestions came in before settling on Sapa. He gets his name from the Lakota word for "black".



Domestic rabbits enjoy eating timothy hay, food pellets, leafy greens, and the occasional twig. Rabbits, need to chew constantly to keep their teeth at a manageable length. This breed of rabbit was originally bred in the Netherlands. Typically they between 2-4 lbs and can live up to 7 years. Because this is a domestic rabbit they are not listed with a conservation status.

Wild rabbits like the Eastern Cottontail, *Sylvilagus floridanus*, you may find in your backyard are very common. They inhabit conifer forests year round. Like Sapa, these rabbits eat clover, flowers, and twigs. Eastern Cottontail's average weight is 3 lbs. and grows up to 16 inches long. When rabbits are born they are hairless and blind depending greatly on their mother for guidance until week three when they venture out on their own.



Eastern Cottontail (left): A female rabbit may have up to 35 young in one breeding season.

Rabbits display many behaviors. A common behavior amongst a colony of rabbits is thumping. When a rabbit senses danger they will thump their hind legs to warn the other rabbits to be cautious or take cover. On the other spectrum when a rabbit is excited they display a behavior called binking. This action includes the rabbit jumping high up in the air almost as if they have been pinched in the tail.

Anything larger than an Eastern Cottontail is a predator. Mostly fox, coyote, and birds of prey will attack these rabbits. They have a high population number and not listed as a concern for conservation.