

Rabbits or hares?

- Wild rabbits and hares were both introduced into Australia in the mid-1800's.
- Both introduced species are established in south-east Queensland.
- Rabbits are restricted invasive animals because of their impact or potential impact upon primary production and the natural environment.
- Affected landholders must take all reasonable and practical steps to remove rabbits from their property.
- Hares are not restricted invasive animals. There is no requirement to control hares.
- Rabbits are smaller than hares but often dominate them and force hares out.
- Rabbits and hares are different species and do not interbreed.



European rabbit (*Oryctolagus cuniculus*)
with tail up



European hare (*Lepus europaeus*)
with tail down



Feature	Rabbits	Hares
Origins	Not native to Australia Originate from southern Europe	Not native to Australia Originate from Europe and parts of Asia
Pest status in Queensland	Restricted Invasive Animal	Not a Restricted Invasive Animal
Responsibility for control	Landholders responsible	No control required
Average body length (adult)	40 cm	55 cm
Typical colour	Grey	Golden brown
Ears	Relatively shorter	Relatively longer with distinct black tips
Legs	Relatively short hind legs	Relatively long hind legs
Tail position when disturbed	Lift tail up – white tail flashed as alarm signal	Hold tail down – dark tail seen
Shelter	Underground burrows or under harbour	Above-ground nests in long grass
Average litter size	4 - 7	2 - 3
Social organisation	Live in groups	Lead solitary lives except when breeding

Reference sources

* Hunter, Johnson & Osmond (2008) 'Rabbit control in Queensland. A guide for land managers'. DPI&F, Qld.

* Williams, Parer, Coman, Burley & Braysher (1995) 'Managing Vertebrate Pest: Rabbits'. BRS / CSIRO Wildlife & Ecology, Canberra.



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