

The logo for DEVIR, featuring a stylized flame icon above the word "DEVIR" in white capital letters on a dark blue square background.

# Savernake Forest

An icon showing three stylized human figures, with the number "2-4" below it, indicating the number of players.An icon showing two stylized human figures, with the number "10+" below it, indicating the minimum age for players.An icon showing a clock face, with "30min" below it, indicating the estimated duration of the game.

## The Animals

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## Hamster

The cricetin subfamily is made up of nineteen different species, most of which originate in Eastern Europe, the Middle East, and Asia. In developed countries, these small rodents have become very popular pets and laboratory animals, but in many parts of the world where they live in the wild they are considered a crop pest. A characteristic behavior of hamsters is the accumulation of food in their cheeks, to take it to their underground stores. When the cheeks are full, the size of a hamster's head can double or even triple.

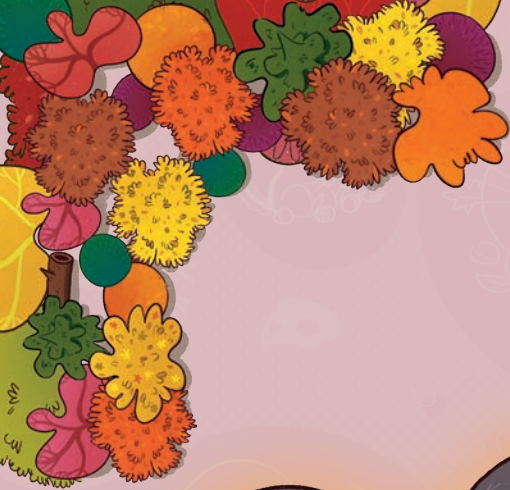




## Common or European hedgehog

The common or European hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus*) lives in all types of forests, evergreen and deciduous, on the periphery and in humanized places, such as farmlands, gardens and parks and, in general, places that are not very cold or humid. It often roams near towns and, in winter, often takes advantage of human constructions to protect itself from the cold. It is omnivorous, it hunts and eats insects and larvae, millipedes, snails, slugs, earthworms and even dares to take frogs, mice, lizards, snakes and vipers. This diet is supplemented by eggs and the chicks of ground-nesting birds, acorns, berries, and other fruits.





## The Common badger

The common or European badger (*Meles meles*) is a sociable animal and usually lives in groups of between two and twelve individuals. Badger clans are territorial and, especially the males, aggressively defend their territories against the presence of foreign badgers. They are omnivorous animals that feed on insects, particularly bees and honey (hence their scientific name, *meles*, 'honey' in Latin), as well as other invertebrates, small mammals and reptiles, corn, fruits and plants, not to mention carrion. In the British Isles and Northern Europe, earthworms are the staple of their diet, while in Southern Europe they feed mainly on insects, earthworms, fruit, and grains. In autumn, they accumulate large fat reserves that later allow them to spend a long time fasting.





## The European beaver

The European or Eurasian beaver (*Castor fiber*) is a large semi-aquatic rodent. It is a shy animal, perfectly adapted to amphibious and nocturnal life, spending a lot of time hidden in its burrows or in the riparian undergrowth. With its robust teeth it fells trees to eat the bark and leaves, in addition to obtaining the necessary materials for the construction of dams. It also eats other riverside vegetables, such as the rhizomes of water lilies.

Their burrows are dome-shaped and made of sticks and mud. They are usually strategically located in the middle of ponds and can only be accessed through submerged entrances. Large families live in these burrows.

In the water, beavers use their large, webbed hind feet to propel themselves at speeds of up to 8 km/h, and their oar-shaped tail serves as a rudder. They can stay under water for about fifteen minutes without coming to the surface. Their transparent eyelids act as diving goggles.



## The Common fox

The predominant color of the fur of the common fox (*Vulpes vulpes*) is a brownish red, but there are also varieties with grayish colors, known as silver foxes. Its distribution has been growing alongside the expansion of human populations and, currently, it is the most extensively distributed species of the entire group of carnivores: the entire Northern Hemisphere, from the Arctic Circle to North Africa, North America, Eurasia and Japan. It was also introduced to Australia. It lives in almost all types of habitat, but where its population reaches higher densities is always near inhabited areas, since human activities provide it with almost unlimited food. In general, they are solitary, territorial hunters with crepuscular or nocturnal habits. Much of their diet consists of invertebrates (insects, molluscs, earthworms, and crayfish) and vertebrates (mice, moles, rabbits, birds, eggs, amphibians, small reptiles, and fish), as well as some vegetables (bramble fruits, apples, plums and other fruits). Sometimes they can attack fawns and roe deer. If they get more food than they can eat at one sitting, they will bury it so it can be accessed later.





## The Blue Jay

The Blue Jay (*Cyanocitta cristata*) is a North American corvid. It has a pronounced crest and its plumage is predominantly blue on the upper half of its body, from head to tail. It is white on its underside, with a black collar around the neck and sides of the head, and the face is white. As in other bluish birds, the blue coloration is not derived from pigments, but is the result of light refraction due to the internal structure of the feathers. It lives mainly in mixed beech and oak forests, but it is also visible in parks and gardens in some cities. It forages both on the ground and in the trees, consuming virtually all kinds of plant and animal foods, such as acorns, beechnuts, herbaceous seeds, grains, fruits, berries, peanuts, bread, meat, eggs, and the chicks of other species of birds, many types of invertebrates, park litter, and bird food. Its behavior is aggressive and it has a bad reputation as a destroyer of nests and the eggs of other birds. They usually form monogamous pairs for life.





## Magpie

The common magpie (*Pica pica*) lives throughout Europe (except Iceland, Corsica, Sardinia and the Balearic Islands) and also in Asia (from the temperate zones to Eastern Siberia). It is present in any habitat, except for dense forests and places located more than 1,500 m above sea level, and prefers the proximity of rugged fields and places degraded by man (cities, dumps and roads). It is a species that has managed to adapt, multiply and take advantage of the changes in the environment caused by human beings.

It is a very sociable bird and in winter it is gregarious. In summer and spring, it travels in pairs, while in autumn and winter it gathers in larger flocks. It is omnivorous, feeding on insects, snails, slugs, lizards, eggs and the chicks of other birds, carrion, cherries, nuts, grapes, fruit in general, potatoes and carrots.



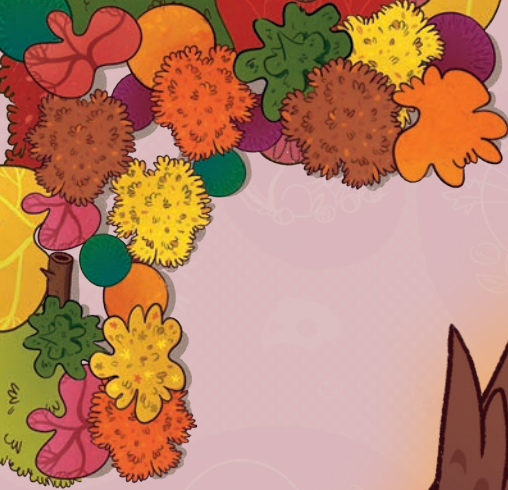


## Mole

The mole (*Talpa europaea*) is a small mammal very well adapted to the excavation of galleries and to life underground. Its body is cylindrical and fusiform, with short and robust legs, shaped like a shovel and equipped with large and strong claws that it uses to dig the earth. Its elbows are dorsally displaced and rotated, so that the palms of the forelimbs face backwards, to enhance the digging action. Its fine, soft skin and short, special coat make it easy for it to move back and forth, inside its tunnels. They do not have external ears and their eyes are tiny and sometimes covered with skin. Moles rely primarily on their sense of touch and have whiskers on their faces, limbs, and tails. Their tapered and flexible snout is especially sensitive.

Although they eat flies and beetle larvae, earthworms are the mainstay of their diet. European moles have been observed to eat an amount of food approximately equal to half their body weight each day.





## Raven

The great raven (*Corvus corax*) is a bird present throughout the northern hemisphere. In general, ravens have been known to live for up to forty years. Once mated, ravens stay together for life, defending their territory.

Large ravens have been coexisting with humans for thousands of years. Much of the success of this species is due to its omnivorous regimen, since it is an extremely opportunistic bird that feeds on carrion, insects, food waste, cereals, fruits, berries and small animals such as amphibians, reptiles and other birds.

This species has one of the largest brains of all birds and is known to have problem-solving abilities as well as imitation and intuition, suggesting that it is an intelligent animal. It has been observed that they can direct other animals, such as wolves and coyotes, to “work” for them, opening and tearing carrion apart, making it more accessible to them. Young individuals are some of the most playful birds: they have been seen sliding through the snow, apparently for simple pleasure, and even play with animals of other species, such as wolves and dogs. They are able to recognize different human voices, as well as calls from other species of birds.

Over the centuries, the great raven has featured in the myths, folklore, and artistic depictions of many ancient cultures, even being revered as a god or spiritual symbol.





## Barn Owl

The barn owl (*Tyto alba*) is present in all the continents except Antarctica. It is a sedentary bird that usually builds nests in church towers and abandoned buildings, although it also takes advantage of hollow trees.

It feeds mainly on mice (an adult specimen eats three a day) and, when there are plenty of them, it stores them in its nest. During periods when mice are at a shortage, it eats small birds and, occasionally, moths and bats. In the nest, if a young Barn Owl dies, it serves as food for its siblings.

It is a nocturnal hunter, but when food is lacking, this owl also hunts during the day. Its hunting method consists of using its wide facial disc as a receiving parabola for the sounds emitted by its prey. Once located, it catches them with its long, clawed fingers, swooping down on them in almost absolute silence.



## Mouse

There are 39 species of rodents of the genus *Mus* and, of these, the house or common mouse (*Mus musculus*) is the most frequent. It is estimated that it is the second most numerous species of mammal, after *Homo sapiens*. It always lives close to human beings, with whom it maintains a close, common relationship. It is also the most widely used mammal in laboratory experiments and there are many transgenic varieties intended for the study of human genetic diseases.

They have long whiskers (vibrissae) that are sensitive to touch and provide information about the environment. They have a poorly developed sense of sight, unlike smell, which is the sense they use to find food and other mice. Their hearing is also very developed, much more than that of people. Although they usually move on all fours, they can sometimes stand on their hind legs, helping themselves with their tails, to eat, orient themselves or fight. They are good jumpers, climbers and swimmers.

They are territorial animals that are active mainly during twilight or at night, as they avoid bright lights. They generally live in groups led by a single dominant male, with several females and young individuals. When a male reaches sexual maturity, he often engages the dominant male of his group in a fight to the death. Mice are afraid of rats, because they can kill and eat them. Therefore, rats and mice do not usually live together.

Their diet consists mostly of vegetables, but they can also eat meat and dairy products. They drink water, but they need very little, since they can take advantage of what is contained in their food. They can eat their own feces to take advantage of the nutrients within.



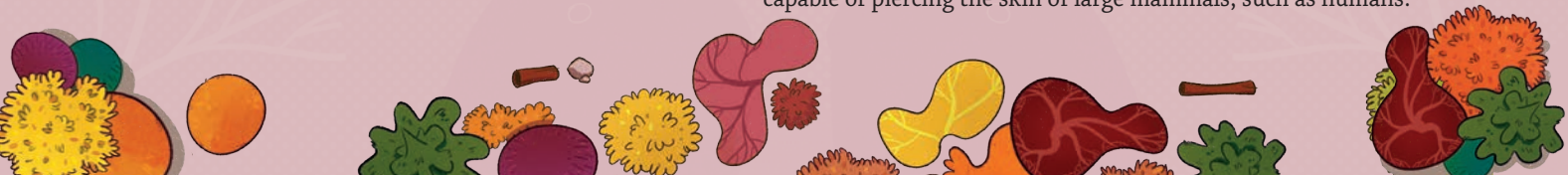
## Shrew

Shrews or shrews are very small mammals (with a length of only a few centimeters, including the tail), with small eyes and a long snout with very sensitive whiskers. They resemble mice, but they are not rodents, they are closely related to moles.

They are the most active mammals that exist. They eat food both day and night, every two or three hours (in fact, they can die if they go more than four hours without eating). Many of the species, especially those of the Old World, eat an amount of insects equivalent to their body weight each day. Their diet is based on invertebrates and they can sometimes eat carrion, or even hunt and eat small vertebrates such as field mice, lizards, snails and, in rare cases, rats.

Different species of shrews are present almost everywhere in the world. The shrew or dwarf shrew (*Suncus etruscus*) is, in terms of weight, the smallest mammal in the world. The body length is 35-50 mm, with a 2-3 cm tail and a weight of 1.8-3.0 g. It lives in southern Europe, North Africa and South Asia, up to and including Malaysia.

The white-legged shrew (*Neomys fodiens*) is one of the largest shrews in the Iberian Peninsula, where it is found in Galicia, Asturias and the Pyrenees. It lives mainly in central and northern Europe, Asia Minor and Siberia. It lives on the banks of streams and gently flowing mountain rivers, those with fresh and oxygenated waters. You can also find it quite far from the water, but always in very humid places. In its mouth it has glands that secrete neurotoxic saliva, with which it uses to poison the small animals it feeds upon, such as frogs, newts, spiders, crayfish, small fish and rodents. However, their teeth are not capable of piercing the skin of large mammals, such as humans.



# Squirrel

The common squirrel or red squirrel (*Sciurus vulgaris*) is a rodent with arboreal habits that lives in Europe and North Asia. This little squirrel measures 38-45 cm in length, including the tail, and is the only native species in Europe.

It normally lives in the shady areas of coniferous forests, although it can be found in deciduous forests. It adapts to habitats from sea level to 2000 meters above sea level, although it is more frequently found in low mountain areas than in higher areas, preferring new and closed forests.

In the United Kingdom and Ireland, the population of these squirrels has been drastically reduced in recent years, in part due to the introduction of the gray squirrel (*Sciurus carolinensis*) from North America.

Red Squirrel nests are spherical and usually have two access holes to facilitate escape, and can also be covered from the inside. They usually build them between the branches of trees and their interior is upholstered with moss, leaves, branches, straw or lichens.

The red squirrel feeds mainly on coniferous pine nuts (carefully peeling and breaking the cones), hazelnuts, beechnuts, chestnuts, mushrooms, berries and young shoots. More rarely, they may also eat bird eggs or chicks, and are therefore considered opportunistic omnivores, similar to other rodents.





## Woodpecker

Picids are a family of birds comprising 223 species, most of which are commonly known as woodpeckers.

They are present throughout the world, with the exception of Australia, Madagascar and the polar regions. These birds can be sedentary or migratory; many species remain in the same area for years, while others travel great distances from their breeding grounds to their wintering grounds. The largest species are found in southern Europe.

They feed on insects, worms and larvae that they can find throughout the year, capturing them under the bark or boring into trees or fallen trunks. Invertebrates such as termites, ant larvae, and beetle larvae make up the majority of their diet.

For players of a certain age: do you know what species the mythical cartoon character Woody Woodpecker (the Woody Woodpecker) was inspired by? It was a red-headed woodpecker (*Melanerpes erythrocephalus*), a species that inhabits the forests of Canada and the central United States.



## Chipmunk

The Eastern American chipmunk (*Tamias striatus*) belongs to the same family as the common chipmunk, which also includes groundhogs, flying squirrels, and prairie dogs. This species lives in North America and is the only living representative of the squirrels of the *Tamias* genus. In English they are called *chipmunk*, a name that comes from the word *ajidamoonh* in the Ojibwa language or from *ajidamoo* in the dialectal variant of the Ottawas, and which literally translates as 'he who comes down from the trees headfirst'.

The Eastern American chipmunk can climb trees well, but builds underground burrows with extensive tunnel systems, often with multiple entrances. To hide the location of their burrows, chipmunks line them with leaves, rocks, sticks, and other materials. The vocal repertoire of this small mammal consists of five characteristic sounds that can be described as *chip*, *chuck*, *trill*, *hiss* (or *screech*) and *chatter*.

The chipmunk is active mostly during the day and spends most of its time searching for food. It prefers bulbs, seeds, fruits, nuts, green plants, fungi, insects, worms, and bird eggs. It is used to transporting food in the pouches in its cheeks.







## Great Tit

The great tit (*Parus major*) is the largest of the titmouse family. Very adaptable to all types of environments, it usually lives in forests, especially deciduous, but also in pine forests and non-forest wooded environments, such as olive or almond groves, urban gardens, etc. It nests primarily in tree holes, but can take advantage of any opening, from crevices in trees, walls, or rocks to abandoned nest boxes, pots, or cans. The nest is filled with a large amount of moss, hair, wool and some feathers. Adult individuals tend to be sedentary and defend a territory around the breeding area.

It is an insectivorous bird with a very wide range. Among its prey can be found, processionary caterpillars, the eggs and larvae of the Asian wasp, other Hymenoptera and some Coleoptera. In autumn, it incorporates wild fruits into its diet, such as the fruits of brambles and elderberries, and seeds rich in oils. It easily gets used to bird feeders, from which it selects the best seeds.



## Wildcat

The wildcat or Mountain cat (*Felis silvestris*) is a wild species of carnivorous mammal of the Felidae family that lives in Eurasia and Africa. There are five subspecies of wild cat, including the European wild cat (subsp. *silvestris*), the Asian wild cat (subsp. *ornata*), and the African wild cat (subsp. *lybica*). From the latter, about ten thousand years ago, humans from northern Egypt and the Near East managed to select and domesticate some specimens, giving rise to domestic cats (*Felis silvestris* subspecies *catus*).

The European wild cat lives in the forests of the Iberian Peninsula and Italy, in the Caucasus, in the forests of Central Europe, in the Carpathians and, to a lesser extent, in Scotland, Ireland, Iceland and Turkey, Sicily and Corsica. The destruction of its habitat and the persecution to which it was subjected caused a decrease in the number of specimens and its spread. Today it is a very rare and protected species in almost all the places around Europe where it lives. The largest populations are found in the Iberian Peninsula, especially in the north of the Duero and Ebro rivers.

Preferably nocturnal and crepuscular, it is somewhat more active during the day than domestic cats. Females are sedentary and territorial, while males roam and cover the territory of several females. Except in the breeding season, European wild cats are solitary.

It feeds mainly on rodents, hares, rabbits, and birds, and rarely on amphibians and invertebrates. Unlike foxes, it does not eat the bones of its prey.





## Pygmy possum

Pygmy possums are marsupials of the Burrámida family, which has two genera: *Burramys* (a single living species, the mountain pygmy possum) and *Cercartetus* (with four living species). These species are endemic to Australia, Tasmania and New Guinea.

Their length is barely 5-12 cm and they weigh between 10 and 50 g. Most pygmy possums live primarily on the ground. They are nocturnal animals that stand out for their unusual ability to climb tree branches, thanks to their prehensile tail and legs. During the day they sleep in a nest.

They are omnivorous animals: they eat seeds, fruits, leaves and other plant foods, as well as worms, insects, larvae and nectar. Mountain pygmy possums are the only Australian marsupials that hibernate, and before hibernating they store fat in their caudal peduncle.

Some populations of these tiny creatures were thought to have disappeared during the recent bushfires in Australia, but fortunately some individuals have survived.





## Carolina Chickadee

The Carolina Chickadee (*Poecile carolinensis*) is a species native to North America, where it lives in mixed or deciduous forests. These birds hop along tree branches in search of insects, sometimes hanging upside down or hovering; they can make short flights to catch insects in the air. Insects form a large part of their diet, especially in summer; seeds and berries become important in winter. Sometimes they knock seeds into a tree or bush, to crack them open, and also store them for later use.

These birds usually sleep in cavities, although they can sleep on branches. Different members of a flock may occupy the same cavity on different nights. While the females usually sleep in the cavity that serves as the nest, the males often sleep on a nearby branch.

In winter, Carolina Chickadees can lower their body temperature and thus induce an intentional state of torpor, in an attempt to conserve energy during very cold days, when they look for cavities to hide in and spend up to fifteen hours at a time in this semi-awake state.



# Rooster

The rooster (*Gallus gallus domesticus*) is the male of a species of domestic bird, whose female is called a hen. Most likely, the bankiva rooster (*Gallus gallus*) is the wild species that gave rise to the current domestic rooster, in a process of domestication that began more than 10,000 years ago in Vietnam. From here to Persia, then to the kingdom of Lydia, in Asia Minor, and finally domestic roosters reached Greece, around the fifth century BC.

Roosters are omnivores; in the wild, they constantly scratch the ground in search of seeds, insects, or larger animals, such as some reptiles or young mice.

The hen is distinguished from the male because of its smaller size, shorter crest and lack of heel spurs. They are naturally gregarious birds, which have lost the ability to fly due to artificial selection by humans.

The rooster emits a type of song that sounds like “Cock-a-doodle-doo”. Although it can cry throughout the day, the cries are mainly concentrated at dawn, at noon, mid-afternoon and between three and five in the morning. These cries serve as a territorial challenge against other roosters, as a means to attract nearby females and, also, as a general warning signal.

Just out of curiosity...if you're ever walking through Savernake Forest and see a rooster, who knows which of the many UK native breeds it belongs to? : Burford Brown, Derbyshire Redcap, Dorking, Indian Game, Ixworth, Marsh Daisy, Modern Game , Modern Langshan, Muffed Old English Game, Norfolk Grey, Old English Game, Old English Pheasant Fowl, Orpington, Rosecomb, Scots Dumpy, Scots Grey, Sebright or Sussex. Ask the Rooster, and see what he answers!



# Armadillo

Armadillos are small mammals known for their bony armor. Recent genetic studies have allowed them to be classified into two different families: the Dasipodidae (with a genus made up of seven living species) and a new family, the Chlamyphoridae, made up of ten genera grouped into three subfamilies). All of these species live in a variety of habitats throughout the tropics and subtropics of South and Central America, from jungles and forests to scrub and dry grassy areas.

The word *armadillo* refers to the “armor”. In the different areas where it lives, it is known by very different names, such as *mulita*, *carachupa*, *jueche*, *toche*, *quirquincho* (from the Quechua *kirkinchu*), *tatú* (from the Tupí-Guaraní languages, which means ‘hard shell’) or *āyōtōchtli* (which in Nahuatl it means ‘rabbit-turtle’).

The armor is made up of plates of skin and bone covered by small scales of keratin. Most species have a rigid shell over the shoulders and hips, with a variable number of bands, separated by supple skin, covering the back and sides. Additional shells cover the top of the head, the upper parts of the limbs, and the tail. The belly is never armored, it just has soft skin and leather. If the animal cannot flee from predators or hide in its burrow, it protects itself with the armor and some species can even curl their body completely into an armored ball. Their vision is not very good and they use their sense of smell to find food. They are nocturnal animals and excellent diggers. Many armadillos use their sharp claws to dig, which they use to build burrows and feed on larvae. These animals are omnivores, but their diet consists mostly of insects, larvae, small invertebrates, and the carcasses of other animals. Some species feed almost exclusively on ants and termites.

Armadillos have short legs, but they can move quite quickly and can jump more than a meter in height. They can also swim easily. Their body temperature and basal metabolism are usually low.



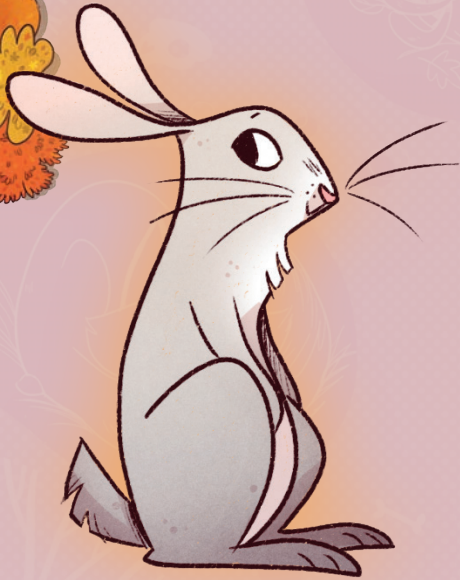


## Goat

The domestic goat (*Capra aegagrus hircus*) is a subspecies of goat that originated with the domestication of the wild goat, about ten thousand years ago, in Southwest Asia and Eastern Europe. This was one of the first species to be domesticated, to take advantage of its milk, meat, tallow, hair and skin. Today there are about 300 different breeds and almost a billion copies worldwide. Dairy goats are raised primarily in the Mediterranean region, South Asia, and parts of South America and Africa. The main producers of goat milk are India, Bangladesh and Sudan.

They are browsing animals (they do not graze like cows or sheep), that is, they eat the leaves, buds and tips of tree branches, in bunches or when they are still young and tender and of little height from the ground. They especially like the tender parts of climbing plants, brambles, bushes and weeds. With their highly curious nature, they will chew and taste almost anything remotely resembling plant matter to decide if it is good to eat. Goats adapt well to all terrain whose slope, elevation and variety of available plants make them completely uninhabitable for other species of quadrupeds.





## Rabbit

Rabbits are a group of mammals in the Leporidae family, made up of ten different genera. Although many individuals exist in the wild, humans have bred some varieties of rabbit as farm animals since the Middle Ages. The species present in Mediterranean Europe is the common or European rabbit (*Oryctolagus cuniculus*), from which the domestic rabbit was obtained.

The common or European rabbit is a gregarious and territorial animal, and prefers to live in long and complex burrows, inhabited by six to ten adult individuals of both sexes.

Of nocturnal and twilight habits, it feeds from dusk to dawn and spends most of the day in its burrow. Their diet is exclusively vegetable: grass, fruits, vegetables, leaves, forest fruits and, sometimes, mushrooms. It performs a double digestion, similar to that of ruminants.

They are usually very quiet but they emit loud screeches when they are scared or injured. They also communicate through scent and physical contact.







## **Note to *Savernake Forest* players**

If you have been paying attention, by now you will have discovered that some of the animals that appear in the game will never be found in this English forest. Forgive us the playful-zoological license, but we liked them so much that in the end we couldn't resist the temptation and they all ended up in the box. Enjoy the animals and if you see them in the woods, leave them in peace, in Savernake and around the world. They are at home.

