

## White-tailed Jackrabbit (*Lepus townsendii*)



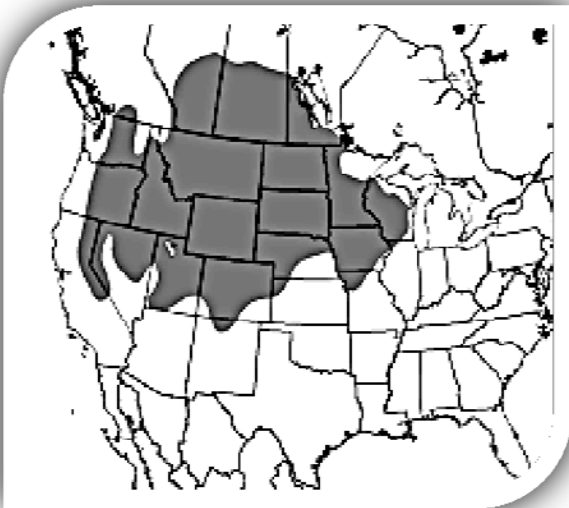
### **Taxonomy:**

Family Leporidae. Also known as the prairie hare. There are 2 subspecies recognized, one of which is the local subspecies *Lepus townsendii townsendii*.

### **Description:**

Fur is yellowish to grayish-brown on the upper parts and white or pale grey underneath and the throat is a bit darker. In the winter it molts to have a white pelage. Can be distinguished from *Lepus californicus* because it is larger and the tail is all white.

Females are usually larger than males. Total Length: 565-618 mm (males) 575-655 mm (females); Tail Length: 72-102 mm (m) 66-100 mm (f); Weight: 2,500-4,300



### **Distribution:**

Distributed in west-central North America from the prairies of southern Saskatchewan and Alberta to the Rocky Mountains of Northern New Mexico and from Lake Michigan west to the Cascade and Sierra Nevada Mountains. It is found at elevations from 40-4,300 meters. There are scattered historical records of this species from the Salt Lake Valley and the Wasatch Range.

### **Ecology and Diet:**

White-tailed Jackrabbits prefer grassland habitat, feeding on grasses and green forbs first, and resorting to shrubs during the winter months. They are among the most solitary of

hares and usually interact only briefly during the breeding season, when small groups may be seen.

### **Life History:**

Breeding usually begins around February and 1-4 litters are produced per year. Litter sizes range from 1-11 offspring, but 4 or 5 is common. Gestation lasts 30-43 days and postpartum estrus is common. The young are fully weaned by 1 month and are independent by 2 months.

**Reference:** : Lim, 1999.