



# Rabbits

April 2022

Calgarians have the privilege of enjoying a large variety of wildlife throughout the city. The most common wild lagomorphs in our city are our white tail prairie hares (jackrabbits). Hares and domestic rabbits are easy to tell apart. Hares are large and their fur changes from brown to white during the winter. Domestic rabbits come in a variety of colors and the color of their fur does not change seasonally. Domestic rabbits are not protected by any of Alberta's wildlife laws.



Left: a wild hare. Right: a domestic rabbit.

## Issues with rabbits

While they are cute, domestic rabbits can cause damage to personal property. They like to eat vegetation which can include shrubs, plants or gardens on private property. They can also cause damage to vegetation in park spaces and disrupt native plant communities.

Rabbits have an impact on the population of predators. An increase in the feral rabbit population may result in an increase in predator populations such as great horned owls, bobcats or coyotes.

## What can I do to avoid issues with rabbits?

Like all wildlife in the city, there are some things residents can do to avoid problems:

- Do not feed rabbits. Feeding feral rabbits creates a dependency on this food source; this disrupts the natural cycle of wildlife and their ability to co-exist in urban settings.
- Keep garbage in tightly closed and secured waste disposal bins. Overflowing or easily accessible compost and garbage can attract wildlife.
- Keep landscaping tidy. Overgrown grass can provide food and/or habitat.
- Restrict access to your yard, put up fencing to keep them out of your property.
- If you see a baby hare or rabbit on its own do not go near it, it is normal for the parents to leave their babies alone for hours at a time.

### Under the **Community Standards Bylaw:**

8. (1) No owner or occupier of a Premises shall allow on the Premises, the accumulation of:
  - (a) any material that creates unpleasant odors;
  - (b) any material likely to attract pests;

Leaving food out which would attract pests (this would include citizens feeding rabbits directly) contravenes this Bylaw. Fines for violations begin at \$200.00

### Under the **Parks and Pathways Bylaw:**

17. No Person shall:
  - (e) pester, feed or otherwise interfere with any animal in a Park.

Fines begin at \$200 for people found in violation of this Bylaw.