



Chinchilla

Chinchilla laniger



What is the history of my relationship to man?

I got my name from the Chincha Indians who used me for food and clothing. In the 1600's the Spaniards in South America sought after my fur with the same determination that they had for gold and jewels. When the British began to mine in the Andes they brought in foxes to hunt for sport. The foxes began to hunt the chinchillas for food. My family nearly became extinct. Only 60 years ago there were many of us in our mountain homes. The Incas valued our flesh and fur they called us "little sunshine" Furriers found they could get rich on our coats and hunted us almost to extinction. An American named Mathias Chapman Spent 4 years capturing 11 of us. He started breeding us in captivity and saved our family. Finally the government stepped in and outlawed the exportation of the fur in 1918.

Habitat / Climate

Mountain Forrest
Mild

Where am I from?

I originated in the Andes Region of South America. I now live in the most inaccessible heights of the mountains in Peru, Bolivia and Chile

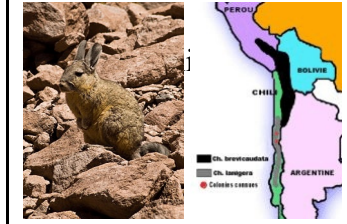


Who are my relatives?

I am a Rodent
I am listed in some books with Cavies
Cavies are also mammals such as Viscacha and guinea pigs

Other family members:

Capibara
Guinea Pig
Viscacha



Breeding Potential

Litter size
4 to 6 young
Number of litters per year?
Several

How am I born?

I am precocial
I am born with hair and teeth. My eyes are open. As a newborn I can eat plants but I keep nursing for 5 to 6 weeks.

Breeding Season

How long does it take me to grow up and how long do I live?

By 8 months I am full sized and able to breed . I will be 9 to 15 inches long with a tail that is 3 to 6 inches long. Our females are larger than the males. In captivity I can live 15 to 20 years. In the wild only 8 to 10.

A	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
N	E	A	P	A	U	U	E	E	C	O	V
	B	R	A	Y	N	L	G	P	T	V	C

birth from Nov. To May

What kind of family life do I have?

In the wild I live in what is called a Colony. There can be anywhere from 20 to 100 of us in one colony. In captivity I should always have at least one companion.

Terms for:
Adult male- Buck
Adult female- Doe
Young- Kit
Group:- Colony

What do I eat and when do I eat?

I am a herbivore and insectivore. I am nocturnal
Tree bark, Grasses, Fruits, Grains, Herbs, Sometimes Insects

Who are my predators?

Carnivores such as, Owls, Fox, Cougar and Mountain Lions



Comments:

We have 3 female and one male Chinchilla here at the Ranch.