



Common Friends

Bunnies and Squirrely

The eastern cottontail and the swamp rabbit are rabbits while the California jackrabbit is a hare. The first two are true rabbits, but the jackrabbit is not a rabbit at all; it's a hare. Since all three live within our borders, let's take a closer look at them.

A major difference is the type of nest they build, determined by the condition of their young at birth. Young jackrabbits are born with eyes open, body fully furred, some distance from each other, with the ability to hop around only moments after its birth--no need for a nest.



True rabbits deliver in sheltered nests—saucer-like depression lined with soft grass. The eastern cottontail's nest is a saucer like depression lined with soft, dead grass mixed with hair. Young cottontails are naked, blind, and completely dependent on their mother.

We find several species of squirrels in Texas; the most common is the fox squirrel which prefers parklike woods. It is more common in the east part of the state.

The rock squirrel lives in Central Texas Hill Country and West Texas. There are three subspecies of rock squirrels, distinguished mainly by color and location. The Hill Country rock squirrels are black color on the head and shoulders, salt-and-pepper on the hind quarters. The West Texas species is a lighter gray or beige, and the Big Bend species is dark over its entire body. Rock squirrels are found in rocky areas, cliffs, canyon walls, boulder piles, highway fills, and other rugged terrain. The rock squirrel can climb trees almost as well as a tree squirrel.

The Eastern gray squirrel is found in East and Central Texas and in urban area.

The Southern flying squirrel prefers tall trees.



Rabbits and hares! Sing to *Have You Ever Seen a Lassie*

Have you ever seen a rabbit, a rabbit, a rabbit,
Have you ever seen the babies, born naked and blind?
With soft nests on ground
And babies around,
Have you ever seen a rabbit with babies born blind?
Have you ever seen a true hare, a true hare, a true hare?
Have you ever seen a true hare
With fur, open eyes?
No need for a nest, fur and eyes are the best.
Have you ever seen hare baby
Eyes open and fur?



Bunny viewing— squirrel spotting

You have to get up early to catch a peek at a bunny, but you can probably glimpse a squirrel high up in a tree.

Can you make a cottontail nest in a bowl with grass and twigs?

Can you make a squirrel snack from an assortment of nuts?



We have 2
kinds of
squirrels
frequently
seen
nearby.

