

RABBITS

Rabbits are a common sight in Richmond. They're comfortable around people and favour residential neighbourhoods with well-established gardens as well as parks and landscaped business areas where they can find food and shelter from predators.

Origins

These rabbits are descendants of European rabbits (*Oryctolagus cuniculus*) – a domesticated species that was developed as a farm animal and as a pet. As people moved around the world they took rabbits along as a source of food and were deliberately, or accidentally, released. Overtime these rabbits have established wild populations on every continent except Antarctica. They have had a devastating impact on grassland environments in places like Australia and in farmlands around the world. They are common in most cities in North America where the urban landscape mimics the short grasslands they are adapted to. In some areas they are known to damage gardens and landscaping and may burrow under sidewalks and buildings.



Rabbit pets

Domestic rabbits can be very good pets. They are social animals and like human company. Rabbits can be playful and affectionate, are easy to care for and are quite comfortable living indoors. Do your homework before adopting a rabbit. Rabbits can live 8-10 years and will need a safe and comfortable place to live, appropriate food, daily care and attention and occasional veterinary care. The City of Richmond encourages all pet rabbits to be spayed or neutered to prevent the spread of domestic offspring rabbits being released into public parks.

Visit these web sites for information about adopting a rabbit:

- [BC SPCA](#)

If you have a pet rabbit that you no longer want, please don't release it. It is illegal to release domestic animals under the Public Parks and School Grounds Regulation (Bylaw No. 8771). Pet rabbits seldom survive in the wild – most only live for a few days. They may be run over by a car, be eaten by a predator, starve or die of hypothermia in severe winter conditions. Unwanted pets should be surrendered to a humane society where they may find a new home.

Management

The Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations is responsible for the management of native and non-native wildlife in B.C. As wild European rabbits are not a native species they are classified as an invasive species. The British Columbia Wildlife Act specifies how individuals, landowners, municipalities and cities can and cannot deal with problem rabbits. If you have questions about nuisance rabbits in your community you may find useful information at: [Wildlife in B.C.](#)

