

## Brown hare

*Lepus europaeus*

**Invasive: High impact**

### Species profile

- Habitat:** Terrestrial.
- distribution in Ireland:** Localised to Ulster and possibly also in Co. Donegal.
- Status:** Established.
- Family name:** Leporidae.
- Reproduction:** Females give birth to 3 litters (litter size 1-4 young, called leverets) between February and October. Gestation takes 41-42 days.

### Identifying features

- Colour:** Reddish-brown, flecked with black with buff flanks. Black dorsal surface to the tail.
- Size:** Noticably larger than a rabbit, length ranging from 490-610mm.
- Ears:** Longer than rabbit or Irish hare with more extensive black tip.
- Running style:** Unlike rabbits which scuttle, the brown hare has a leaping stride, usually with its tail down.



Long ears with more extensive black tips than similar species in Ireland - Shutterstock



Brown hare showing long ears and a reddish brown colour  
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Showing it's stride rather than a rabbit like scuttle  
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### Threats

Brown hares have replaced the native Irish hare within their core range in Mid-Ulster.

Hybridization between the brown hare and the Irish hare may pose a threat to the genetic integrity of the Irish hare population.

In Great Britain brown hares are considered a pest of crops and young tree and shrubs.

### Seasonal change

**Spring:** Moults from March to June.

**Autumn:** Moults again from July to August.

### Similar species

- Irish hare (*Lepus timidus subsp. hibernicus*) is smaller than the brown hare.
- European rabbit (*Oryctolagus cuniculus*) is common and much smaller than both the Irish hare and the brown hare.

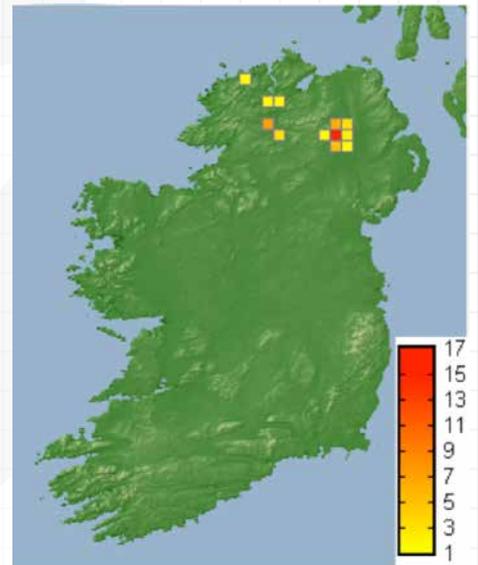


Irish hare (*Lepus timidus subsp. Hibernicus*) – E.W. Delaney

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European rabbit (*Oryctolagus cuniculus*)  
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Distribution and record density of the brown hare in Ireland (Biodiversity Maps)

