



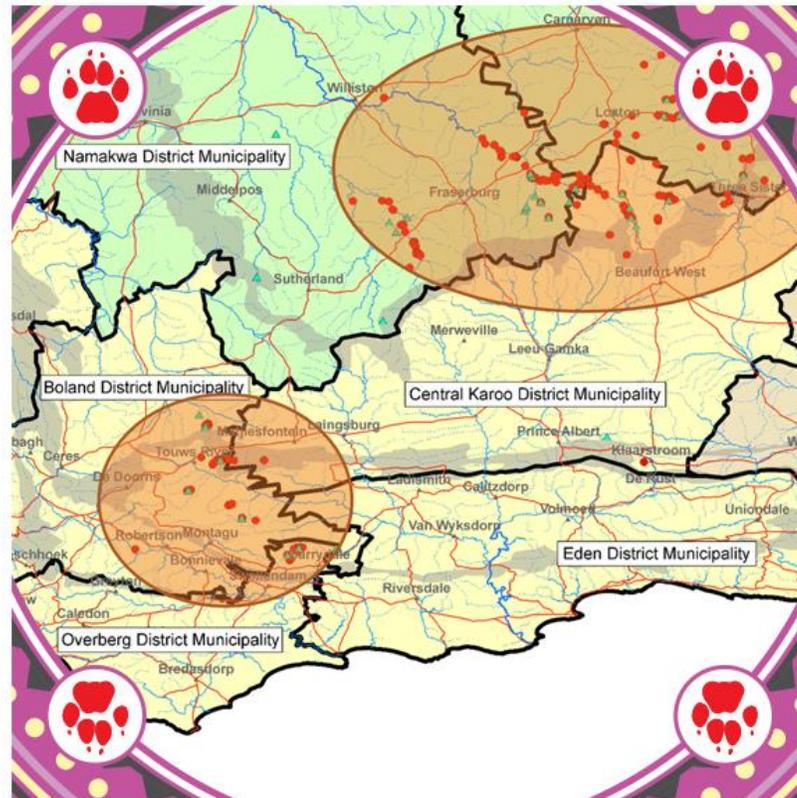
Card 1 : What do I look like?

Answer: My distinctive black cheek stripe, brown tail, thickly furred feet and disproportionately large ears distinguish the Riverine Rabbits from other rabbit and hare.



Card 2: What do I eat?

Answer: Riverine Rabbits' diet consist of Karoo bushes (90%) and grass (10%). Some of the bushes we consume include; Bierbos, Gannabos and Skaapbos.



Card 3: Where do I live?

Answer: Nama Karoo Biome (primarily Northern Cape) and Succulent Karoo, Fynbos and Renosterveld Biomes in the Western Cape.



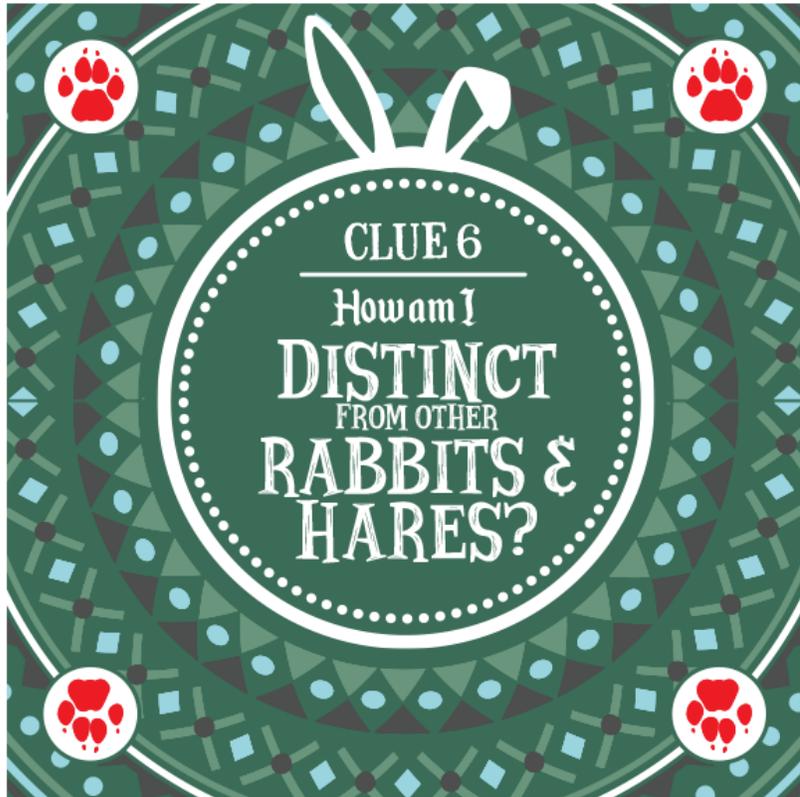
Card 4: Where can you find me?

Answers: Riparian habitat associated with the seasonal rivers of the Nama Karoo. However, in the Succulent Karoo we utilise the landscape more widely and may be found on hills and hang out on old lands.



Card 5: How big am I?

Answer: Adult male Riverine Rabbits weight an average of 1,45kg and the females can be slightly bigger with an average weight 1,7kg. We have long ears that can reach a length of up to 112mm.



Card 6: How to distinguish me from other rabbit and hares?

Answer: (1) I have a black cheek stripe along the side of the lower jaw. No other rabbits or hares have this distinctive black stripe on their cheek.

(2) I have dense fur on the feet giving them a thickened appearance, referred to by the colloquial name "doekvoetjie". Hares, on the other hand, have very slim legs.

(3) I have a brown tail (similar to Red Rock Rabbits), in contrast to the black and white tails characteristic of hares.



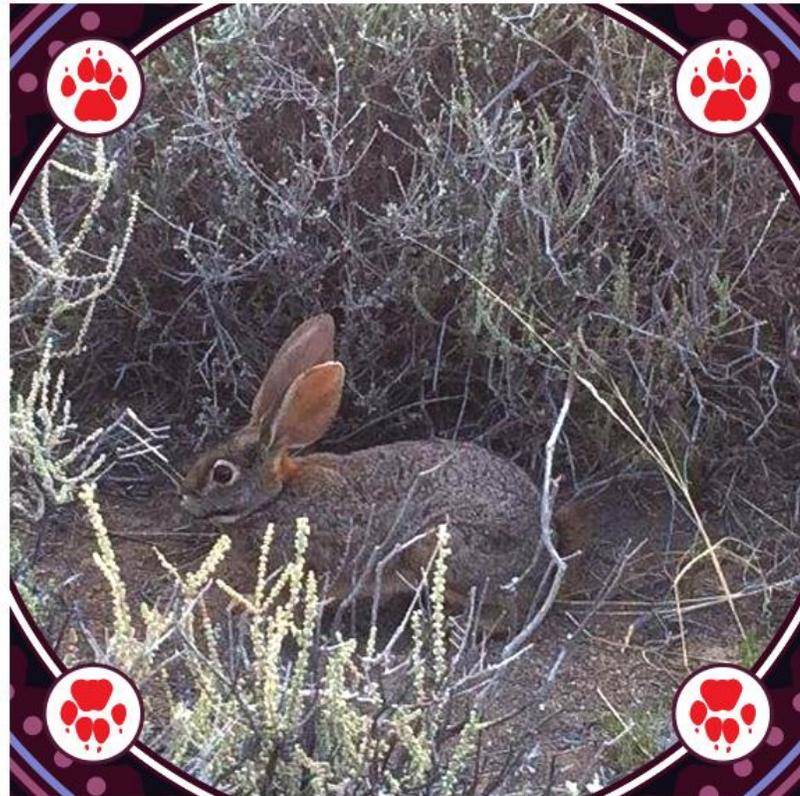
Card 7: When am I most active?

Answer: Most people believe that we are only active at night (nocturnal). This is true for the Succulent Karoo rabbits. However, in the Nama Karoo, we are also very active during the early morning and late afternoon hours (activity period of about 18 hours).



Card 8: When and where was I first discovered?

Answer: C.H.B. Grant, a British army trooper stationed at the Imperial Yeomanry Hospital at Deelfontein (near Richmond) in the Karoo, discovered the first Riverine Rabbit in 1902. But 27 years elapsed before we were rediscovered in 1929, and then again in 1947 by Captain Shortridge, who finally cleared up the confusion about where we occur. Everyone was searching for us in mountainous habitat because our species name *monticularis*. It took Captain Shortridge 20 years to finally find us along the Fish River near Calvinia on 18 October 1947. We really are the “hide and seek” champions since 1902!



Card 9: Where do I give birth?

Answer: We give birth in a burrow, which the female lines with her fur. Hares, in the region, typically give birth under a bush as they do not dig burrows like Riverine Rabbits.



Card 10: Why am I sometimes called a Pondhaas?

Answer: Captain G.C. Shortridge, Curator of the Kaffrarian Museum in King William's Town, is reputed to have offered a reward of one pound to anyone who could bring him a Riverine Rabbit, hence the name "Pondhaas". At the time Riverine Rabbits were thought to be a type of hare.



Card 11: What is my biggest threat?

Answer: Our biggest threat is loss of habitat, mainly due to agricultural activities such as cultivation of the riparian areas.



Card 12: What is my conservation status?

Answer: The Riverine Rabbit is listed as Critically Endangered, the IUCNs Red List and the 2016 Red List of Mammals of South Africa, Lesotho and Swaziland. We are also listed as an EDGE species, which means we are Evolutionarily Distinct and Globally Endangered.

http://www.edgeofexistence.org/mammals/species_info.php?id=3



Card 13: Why should I be conserved?

Answer: I am an indicator species for ecosystem health! I only occur where the riparian habitat is well managed. This relates directly to river catchment management and water resources, which are vital our survival.



Card 12: Who will help solve the Riddle of the Riverine Rabbit?

Answer: Jessie the Border collie, the EWT Drylands Conservation Programme's scent detection dog, is working very hard this month. She is part of a new chapter as the Drylands Conservation Programme is investigating the possibility of using Jessie to sniff out the Critically Endangered Riverine Rabbit. Jessie was trained with hair samples collected from the only available sources, accidental road kill specimens. She has completed five different types of experimental setups, with over 2000 scent targets, with great success. She achieved a 98% specificity rate towards the target scent. This means she is able to distinguish the scent of Riverine Rabbits, from scent of other rabbits and hares, with great ease.

Last year we completed her training in controlled environments and this year she is out and about, so that we can finish her field trails and verify that her training is paying off in the field. We are working towards updating the distribution map for the Riverine Rabbit. Since the area in which they occur is vast, we need a cheaper and more effective way of locating these difficult to find rabbits. In many ways, mostly due to habitat transformation, the distribution of the species is constantly changing and a comprehensive up to date map is required for conservation action to be effective. This is an exciting and ground breaking initiative. Watch this space!

For more information, please visit: <https://www.ewt.org.za/DCP/dcp.html>. Jessie is sponsored by Orijen Acana South Africa, Bravecto South Africa and K9 Dispatch. #OrijenDog #Bravecto #EWTDCP

