

# When rabbits and hares are introduced to new areas: Factors to consider

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Throughout history, humans have deliberately translocated rabbits and hares (leporids) around the world, so they now occupy every continent (except Antarctica). A new *Mammal Review* article examines studies on the 12 leporid species that have been introduced by humans to areas beyond their native ranges, highlighting the animals' effects on the ecosystem at different levels.

The authors note that leporids can provide food resources to predators, modify [nutrient availability](#) and [soil structure](#), compete with native herbivores, consume crops, and have other impacts. Therefore, [conservation](#) biologists should carefully consider the contrasting effects of leporids when planning management strategies including these species.

"Although conservation issues and economic costs produced by rabbits' introductions around the world are well known, there is a lack of systematic information about this regarding their closest relatives. Hares and rabbits share some biological traits which could make them successful invaders and profoundly change the invaded regions. Perhaps one of the most notorious effects (among the many that they produce), is that they constitute a new and abundant food resource to a wide variety of predators, ultimately changing biological communities," said co-author Dr. Facundo Barbar, of Universidad Nacional del Comahue, in Argentina. "Considering all introduced leporid species and their many effects on the ecosystems is crucial at the time of planning conservation strategies."

**More information:** Facundo Barbar et al, The roles of leporid species that have been translocated: a review of their ecosystem effects as native and exotic species, *Mammal Review* (2018). [DOI: 10.1111/mam.12126](https://doi.org/10.1111/mam.12126)

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