

Name _____

How Does a Capybara Move?

The capybara is the largest rodent in the world, and it has some fascinating ways of getting around. Native to South America, capybaras are semi-aquatic animals. This means they live both on land and in the water. To survive and thrive in these environments, they have developed unique ways of moving.



On land, capybaras walk or run using their short but sturdy legs. Their legs are specially designed to support their large, barrel-shaped bodies. While they aren't built for speed, capybaras can run surprisingly fast in short bursts when they sense danger. They can reach speeds of up to 22 miles per hour! However, they prefer to stay close to water, where they feel safer.

In the water, capybaras are excellent swimmers. They use their webbed feet to paddle efficiently, gliding through rivers and lakes with ease. Their swimming abilities help them escape predators like jaguars and caimans. A capybara can hold its breath underwater for up to five minutes, allowing it to hide from threats or search for underwater plants to eat. When they swim, their eyes, ears, and nostrils sit high on their heads, so they can see and breathe while the rest of their body stays submerged.

Capybaras also have special techniques to stay safe and comfortable. For example, they sometimes "freeze" in place to blend into their surroundings and avoid being noticed by predators. They also move in groups, called herds, which gives them extra protection. A predator is less likely to attack when there are many capybaras keeping watch.

Whether on land or in water, the capybara's movements are all about survival. With their powerful legs and webbed feet, these animals are perfectly adapted to their environment. Next time you see a capybara, remember how amazing it is that they can run, swim, and stay safe with such clever techniques.