ISBN: 978-89-6811-369-7 **Contact: Yeong-Seok Jo National Institute of Biological Resources, fright@korea.kr**

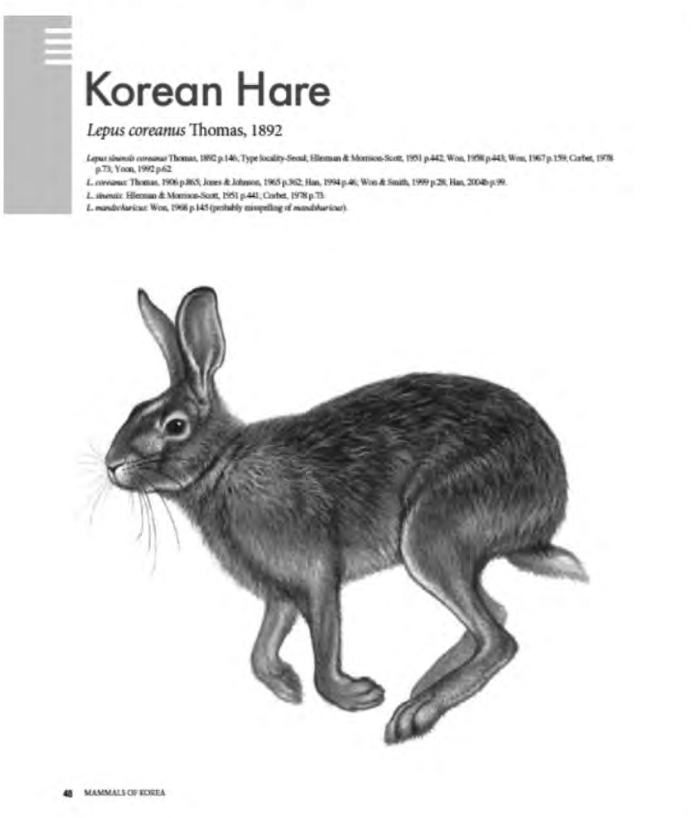
The Korean peninsula is among the most diverse landscapes on earth ranging from a complex seacoast of rocky promontories and beaches to some of the most rugged alpine peaks. A rapidly growing population challenges the conservation of biodiversity on the land and the seas across and surrounding the peninsula. Historically the home of tiger and leopards, domestic and international efforts focus on the conservation of mammals, which serve as umbrella species that encompass the needs of many other life forms. **Mammals of Korea**, the first comprehensive treatment of mammals of this peninsula, endeavors to bring the biodiversity of the Korean peninsula and surrounding waters to an international readership through colorful and stunning hand drawn images and by the use of detailed text from three professional mammalogists. The growing population in Korea has been taken by a recent wave of environmental awareness that parallels a rapidly increasing ecotourism industry.

The authors, Yeong-Seok Jo of Korea's National Institute of Biological Resources, John T. Baccus of the Texas Tech University's Department of Natural Resources, and John L. Koprowski of the University of Arizona's School of Natural Resources & the Environment, team to produce a comprehensive volume that summarizes the important natural history of the poorly known mammalian diversity of this splendid region in a richly illustrated effort that will be attractive to the interested layperson, the ecotourist, and the biological scholar.

Introductory chapters introduce the physical geography of Korea, diversity of habitats on the peninsula, outstanding wildlife viewing locales, methods of observing and studying mammals, and history of mammalogy in Korea.

Page-long species accounts detail the distribution, habitat, food habits, breeding seasons, conservation status, and basic biology of each of the 127 mammals while accompanying color artwork highlight distinctive features and field sign.

The guide to **Mammals of Korea** will introduce and welcome an international audience to the biodiversity and ecological mysteries of the peninsula.



Korean Hare

Lepus coreanus Thomas, 1892

Lepus sinensis coreanus Thomas, 1892 p.146; Type locality-Seoul; Ellerman & Morrison-Scott, 1951 p.442; Won, 1958 p.443; Won, 1967 p.159; Corbet, 1978 p.73; Yoon, 1992 p.62.
L. coreanus: Thomas, 1906 p.865; Jones & Johnson, 1965 p.362; Han, 1994 p.46; Won & Smith, 1999 p.28; Han, 2004b p.99.
L. sinensis: Ellerman & Morrison-Scott, 1951 p.441; Corbet, 1978 p.73.
L. mandshuricus: Won, 1968 p.145 (probably misspelling of *mandshuricus*).

Lepus coreanus

Systematic remarks

Previously regarded as a subspecies of *L. sinensis*, but the two species are allopatric. *Lepus coreanus* has endemic status in Korea. Although Wu *et al.* (2005) merged this species to *L. timidus* based on cytochrome *b* gene analyses, *L. coreanus* is clearly distinguished from *L. timidus* by analysis of both nuclear thyroglobulin (*TG*) gene and mitochondrial control region. Hoffmann and Smith (2005) failed to recognize a subspecies for *L. coreanus* in Korea.

Description

The Korean hare is a considerably heavier hare with darker dorsal pelage than other hares in eastern Asia. Little seasonal change occurs in the overall gray fur. The hair color changes from dark gray at the root, to light gray in the middle to silvery black at the tip. However, the tip of hairs on the chest and tail are a pinkish-gray. A white forehead spot is found in most of these hares. The pelage is mottled. Tail length of adult is usually over 60 cm.

Field signs Fecal droppings and feeding sign occur where the hare lives. Hare scats have a spherical shape (diameter 1-1.5 cm) and are composed of fibrous vegetative remains. Scats are usually brown but sometimes dark; the color is bleached with age. The hare's grazing sign is a clear oblique cut of grass. Debarking of tree trunks with the large paired incisor marks can be readily observed in winter.

Similar species This species is the only lagomorph inhabiting South Korea. The Korean pika and Manchurian hare range in extreme northern North Korea. Compared to the Manchurian hare, the Korean hare has longer hindlegs and shorter ears. The Korean hare and Manchurian hare are the closest relatives.

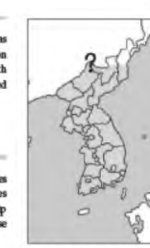
Measurements TL 500-565 mm; T 60-75 mm; HF 110-122 mm; E 76-95 mm; W 2,100-2,600 g.

Dental formula I 2/1, C 0/0, P 3/1, M 3/3 = 28.

Natural History

Activity This hare is generally nocturnal but is active in early morning and before sunset.

Food habits and foraging The primary diet is a diversity of green vegetation including shrub bark. For vitamins and assimilating more plant nutrients, the first fecal droppings are eaten, a behavior known as coprophagy. Vitamins are produced by bacteria in the hare's caecum.



Distribution and Habitats

The distribution of *L. coreanus* ranges throughout the Korean Peninsula. Although Korean hares inhabit coastal islands connected by bridges to the mainland, no record exists for the remote islands.

This hare inhabits slopes of hillsides, grassy covered forest edges, woodlands, forests and low mountains or hills below 500 m.