



# Chinchilla

## *Chinchilla lanigera*

**Description:** This squirrel sized rodent is best known for its soft fur. Chinchillas were hunted to near extinction in the wild for the production of chinchilla fur products. They have 4 toes on each of their feet. Their ears are big and round and are somewhat similar to a rabbit.



**Habitat:** Chinchillas prefer to live in rocky arid climates. They live in crevices or burrows in the rocks in high elevation, between 9,800 and 16,400 feet.

**Range:** They are native to South America, and more particularly the Andes Mountains in Chile. However, they are now popular in the pet trade and have been domesticated.



**Life Span:** In the wild, chinchillas usually live 8-10 years.



**Natural Diet:** Chinchilla are herbivores, meaning they eat only plants. In the wild they will forage for vegetation in the mountains.

**Zoo Diet:** In the Zoo, chinchillas get fresh produce and a pellet diet.

**Behavior:** Chinchillas are considered to be crepuscular, or active at dusk and dawn. They live in groups of up to 100 and spend their time foraging for food.

**Reproduction:** after a gestation period of about 111 days, the females give birth to on average 2-3 baby chinchillas. The babies are born with fur and with open eyes. Females have litters about twice a year.

**Conservation Status:** Critically endangered in the wild