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ECOLOGICAL - BIOLOGICAL FEATURES OF THE ROOT HARE (*LEPUS TOLAI*) IN THE CONDITIONS OF THE SOUTH PRIARALIE

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ANNOTATION

*The article examines the bioecological features of the Tolai Hare (*lepus tolai*) in the conditions of the Southern Aral Sea region. The tolai hare (*Lepus tolai*) is the only representative of the order Lagomorphs distributed over most of the territory of the Southern Aral Sea region.*

KEYWORDS: *species, family, detachment, class, science, practice, urbanization, hunting, biotope.*

Currently, in the world, the problem of managing populations of wild animals, including lagomorphs and determining their role in biocenoses, is one of the main tasks for modern science and practice.

Against the backdrop of global urbanization, the strengthening of hunting pressure and the reduction of the areas of natural biotopes, significant changes have occurred in the structure of the habitats of many species of animals. First of all, this concerns one of the most vulnerable groups - lagomorphs, in particular, the tsa-tolai (*Lepus tolai*).

The tolai hare (*Lepus tolai*) is the only representative of the order of Lagomorphs widespread in most of the territory of the Southern Aral Sea region. Therefore, the interest in the study of the tolai hare is determined by the versatility of the functions it performs in ecological communities.

The lack of information on the distribution, abundance, ecological - population characteristics, and the ecological role of the tolai hare in the ecosystems of

the Southern Aral Sea region led to a simplified strategy of extermination of the tolai hare populations in open spaces.

The analysis of the bioecological features of the tolai hare in the modern conditions of the Southern Aral Sea region is the most relevant and timely and is of key importance for solving many issues of theoretical and applied population ecology.

The tolai hare belongs to the class *Mammalia* (*Mammals*) *Linnaeus*, 1758, the order *Lagomorpha* (*Hare*) *Brandt*, 1855, the family: *Leporidae* (*Hares, hares*) *Fischer*, 1817, the genus *Lepus* (*Hares*) *Linnaeus*, 1758, the subgenus *Proeulagus* (*Tureulagus*), species *Lepus tolai* (*Hare-tolai*) *Pallas*, 1778.

The tolai hare (*Lepus tolai*) or sandstone is somewhat similar in appearance to the brown hare. The body length of the hare is 38.7—53.0 cm, the weight is 1.5—2.9 kg, the length of the ears is 85-119 mm (Table).



Table
Parameters of the body structure of the Roofing Hare (*Lepus tolai*)

Body length	38.7-53.0 cm
Body mass	1.5-2.9 kg
Foot length	106-128 mm
Ear length	85-119mm
Condylbasal length of the head bone	67.5-86 mm

The body color of the hare is brownish-gray or ochre-gray with a small line pattern. The tail is wedge-shaped, 75-115 mm long, black on top. The feet of the hind legs are relatively narrow and the hare-tolai, unlike other hares, is not suitable for movement in deep snow.

The distribution area includes the whole of Central Asia, Kazakhstan, Russia, Mongolia, China, North-West India, Afghanistan and North-East Iran, the desert of Arabia and North-East Africa.

On the territory of the Southern Aral Sea region, the habitat of the tolai hare is very diverse, it mainly prefers desert areas with shrubs or clumps of tall grass. But they can often be found in sandy and clay deserts, in areas with hilly terrain and on ideal plains. Frequent in tugai, especially where there are glades. The hare definitely avoids saxaul forests and salt marshes with poor vegetation and sterile ta-kyrs [6,7,8].

In summer, the tolai hare feeds on a variety of herbaceous plants, preferring cereals and sedges, less often at this time it eats wormwood. Already in the fall, tolai gradually switches to feeding on branches and bark of trees and shrubs. Especially willingly he eats comb, chingil, branches and young shoots of which, during mass reproduction of hares, are completely destroyed in large areas. In some places, the main winter food for them is wormwood. In spring, hares often dig up the roots and tubers of herbaceous plants [2].

In the conditions of the Southern Aral Sea region, the tolai hare feeds most often at night and spends the day lying. The tolai hare, as a rule, does not dig holes, exceptions are in hot sandy deserts, where they dig shallow burrows about 50 cm long. In the southern Aral Sea region, the hare often uses burrows of marmots and ground squirrels for shelter.

On the territory of the Southern Aral Sea region, the tolai hare starts rutting at the end of December, at the beginning of January. 3-5 males run

after one female, between which there are fights, often accompanied by a shrill cry.

In the Southern Aral Sea region, the tolai hare brings 3, less often - 4 litters per year. In deserts, the first lambing occurs in March. Reproduction ends in September. In a litter up to 9 hares; at the first lambing, there are often 1-2 hares, at the second and third, 3-5.

Pregnancy lasts 45-48 days, and hares are born with eyesight and wool, weighing 65-95 g. They become sexually mature the next year, that is, at the age of about 6-8 months [6,7].

The number of hare - tolai over the years is very unstable, subject to sharp fluctuations. The main natural cause of periodic extinctions of tolai is climatic conditions, as well as epizootics. Especially dangerous for him are snowy winters and prolonged cold springs, during which early broods die [3,4,6,10].

Tolai is a hunting and commercial species. It is also one of the main carriers of the causative agent of tularemia, and in natural foci of plague - of the plague microbe. Human economic activity strongly affects the number and vital activity of the hare, since it destroys or worsens its natural habitats [1,3,7].

Thus, the tolai hare (*Lepus tolai*) is the only representative of the order Lagomorphs distributed over most of the territory of the Southern Aral Sea region. Hares - tolai participated in the formation of the landscape, were the object of prey, served as food for predators, were a commercial species and pests of agricultural land, as well as carriers of various infectious diseases. In this regard, the study of the bioecological features of the tsataya hare in the modern conditions of the Southern Aral Sea region is the most relevant and timely.

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