



Capybaras: A Natural History of the World's Largest Rodent

Rexford D. Lord

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Capybaras?the largest rodents in the world?show little resemblance to their guinea pig relatives. Robust and agile, they reach the size of a small pig and weigh upward of 100 pounds at maturity. This natural history details all aspects of the present body of information about their anatomy, ecology, behavior, biology, conservation, management, and taxonomy.

Capybaras range throughout South American tropical wetlands. Largely extirpated from their former haunts through agricultural practices and poaching, they have adapted well to human management and conservation efforts and are frequently raised on ranches as valued sources of both meat and leather. The herbivorous rodents play a vital role in the ecosystems of natural grasslands, wetlands, and gallery forests and are commonly prey for caimans, anacondas, jaguars, and pumas. Rexford D. Lord draws on the extant literature and many years of personal experience in their habitats both north and south of the Amazon region?including his own ten-year study at a Venezuelan ranch?to provide detailed descriptions of capybaras' known history; the diseases, parasites, and hazards they face; and their population and behavioral characteristics. He discusses how they interact with predators and other animals and explains their long-running and growing commercial importance to humankind?including key information about their current value and future potential as an ecotourism attraction.

Featuring dozens of photographs, comprehensive tables illustrating key traits and population information, and practical explanations of current ranch management methodology, this volume is the most extensive reference work on capybaras that has ever been produced.

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