

The Private Life of the Rabbit: An Account of the Life History and Social Behavior of the Wild Rabbit

By R. M. Lockley

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Written with an evident love of animals and nature, 'The Private Life of the Rabbit' presents a completely new picture of the wild rabbit and its way of life. Mt. Lockley, who observed rabbits in Wales over a 5 year period, shows that they have a complex community life little understood by the world in general. These vegetarian creatures possess both dignity and 'animality'; psychological factors play as large a part in shaping their lives as they do in ours. One finds, too, that their reputation for promiscuity and wanton reproduction is really undeserved.

Lockley built an artificial warren with glass sides and several tracts of natural habitat—an open plain, a woodlot, a lushly vegetated savannah were enclosed and arranged for maximum ease of observation with minimum interference. This controlled rabbit colony was observed every day and night in every season and in all kinds of weather.

In Lockley's account, rabbits emerge with characteristics and personalities of their own. The nicknames he gives them (Weary Willie, Timid Timothy, Bold Benjamin, for example) in no way lessen the objective and scientific accuracy of his findings. In fact, this touch of individuality reinforces the observation that rabbits are creatures with interests, wills, and preferences of their own. Female conservatism, scent setting or 'chinning' by dominant males, the ability of the female to absorb her fertilized embryo, the stress of subordinate status...and more, are revealed here.

CONTENTS: Intro by Richard Adams * the Mind of the Rabbit * The Coney Garth * The Nucleus * The Dynasty in Plain * The Kings of Wood * Over-populated World * Hard Times * The Idyll in Savanna * Life Underground * Reingestion * Population and Birth Control * Myxomatosis * The Rabbit Wild and Free

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