

= water) + ?????? (choiros =
pig , hog) .

= = Classification and phylogeny = =

The capybara and the lesser capybara belong to the subfamily Hydrochoerinae along with the rock caviés . The living capybaras and their extinct relatives were previously classified in their own family Hydrochoeridae . Since 2002 , molecular phylogenetic studies have recognized a close relationship between Hydrochoerus and Kerodon supporting placement of both genera in a subfamily of Caviidae . Paleontological classifications have yet to incorporate this new taxonomy and continue to use Hydrochoeridae for all capybaras , while using Hydrochoerinae for the living genus and its closest fossil relatives , such as Nechoerus . The taxonomy of fossil hydrochoerines is also in a state of flux . In recent years , the diversity of fossil hydrochoerines has been substantially reduced . This is largely due to the recognition that capybara molar teeth show strong variation in shape over the life of an individual . In one instance , material once referred to four genera and seven species on the basis of differences in molar shape is now thought to represent differently aged individuals of a single species , *Cardiatherium paranense* .

= = Description = =

The capybara has a heavy , barrel @-@ shaped body and short head , with reddish @-@ brown fur on the upper part of its body that turns yellowish @-@ brown underneath . Its sweat glands can be found in the surface of the hairy portions of its skin , an unusual trait among rodents . The animal lacks under hair , and guard hair differs little from over hair . Adult capybaras grow to 106 to 134 cm (3 @.@ 48 to 4 @.@ 40 ft) in length , stand 50 to 62 cm (20 to 24 in) tall at the withers , and typically weigh 35 to 66 kg (77 to 146 lb) , with an average in the Venezuelan llanos of 48 @.@ 9 kg (108 lb) . The top recorded weights are 91 kg (201 lb) for a wild female from Brazil and 73 @.@ 5 kg (162 lb) for a wild male from Uruguay . The dental formula is 1 @.@ 0 @.@ 1 @.@ 31 @.@ 0 @.@ 1 @.@ 3 . Capybaras have slightly webbed feet and vestigial tails . Their hind legs are slightly longer than their forelegs ; they have three toes on their rear feet and four toes on their front feet . Their muzzles are blunt , with nostrils , and the eyes and ears are near the top of their heads . Females are slightly heavier than males .