

## MAMMALS

### **Amami rabbit / *Pentalagus furnessi* / Amami no kuro-usagi / 奄美のクロウサギ**

This unusual rabbit, found only on Amami-Oshima and Tokunoshima, has become identified as a symbol of the islands. Its appearance is remarkably primitive due to its relatively stagnant evolution on these islands. Its body is 40 to 50 centimeters long, with dense dark fur, very short ears, a round plump torso, and long claws for digging holes. The hind legs are extremely short for a rabbit. It feeds on a herbivorous diet of grass only, and prefers to do so in open spaces where it can keep watch for attacks from habu vipers while it eats. It is very territorial, and nocturnal. In fact, the only signs of the Amami rabbit during the day are the small round droppings that mark its nighttime movement and can be found on less traveled roads throughout the islands. At one time it was in danger of extinction due to deforestation and the introduction of the predatory alien species of mongooses and feral cats. After considerable efforts to eradicate these predators, the Amami rabbit population is now stable and thought to be increasing.