

THE USE OF RABBITS IN HUMAN RECREATION

Andrzej Gugolek^{1*}, Joanna Kręciwska²

¹Department of Fur Animal Breeding and Game Management

²Student Scientific Association of Amateur Animal Breeders, Department of Fur Animal Breeding and Game Management

University of Warmia and Mazury, Faculty of Animal Bioengineering, Oczapowskiego 5, 10-719 Olsztyn

*E-mail gugolek@uwm.edu.pl, ORCID: 0000-0002-5360-9755

Abstract

Domestic rabbits are increasingly kept for hobby and recreational purposes. For many people, breeding them is a lifelong passion that fills their free time. The article presents the possibilities of using rabbits in various forms of human recreation. The most common form of recreation using rabbits is the process of breeding or keeping them, both at home as companion animals and in backyard farms. Keeping purebred rabbits is also an opportunity to organize exhibitions and shows. Rabbits are also kept as an “attraction” in agritourism farms, open-air museums and rabbit parks. New sports include rabbit show jumping. These competitions have become popular throughout Europe and are also held in Poland. The latest trends in recreation using rabbits are rabbit cafes and bunny yoga. A controversial form of recreation for most modern people is rabbit hunting. Moreover, rabbits are depicted in many fields of art, the creation and reception of which is used for entertainment and relaxation. The information presented indicates that rabbits have found their place in many forms of recreation and other areas of human life. It is worth noting that the breeding and use of rabbits increasingly differs from the models previously adopted.

Keywords: Oryctolagus cuniculus, breeding, recreation, entertainment

Introduction

Many animal species accompany people during their leisure time, most often in recreational activities, although some of these activities are classified as sports. The latter are often subject to negative comments of an ethical and moral nature. Examples include rodeo competitions, bullfighting and some equestrian sports. Their opponents regard them as unnecessary cruelty to animals. Some forms of human recreation involving animals are also rejected or even condemned by certain groups, hunting being one example. Attitudes toward recreation and sports involving animals vary between regions of the world and also depend on tradition and the worldview of the person making the assessment (Jastrzębska et al., 2017a).

A popular animal kept by humans is the domestic rabbit (*Oryctolagus cuniculus*). Traditionally, it has been classified as a fur-bearing animal, although today it is most commonly kept either for meat production or as a companion animal. For many people in Poland and worldwide, however, rabbit breeding is a lifelong passion that fills their free time (Gugolek and Strychalski, 2018).

This article presents the possibilities of using domestic rabbits in various forms of human recreation. Some of the activities described may not be known to a wider group of readers, although they are undoubtedly worth learning about or at least noting. Modern animal science is increasingly changing its profile, moving toward the breeding and use of hobby and companion animals.

The paper was prepared on the basis of scientific literature and online sources, since many new recreational activities have not yet been described in the scientific literature. A substantial proportion of the publications used were prepared at the Department of Fur Animal Breeding and Game Management of the University of Warmia and Mazury in Olsztyn, whose staff and students deal with many aspects of rabbit breeding. The paper also draws on the authors' own observations and reflections based on their experience in rabbit breeding.

Rabbits in human recreation

According to one definition, recreation is a form of mental or physical activity undertaken outside everyday duties. Recreation is sometimes classified as a form of sport, but without the element of commercial competition. Rabbits, like other animals, can be involved in human recreation and leisure (Jastrzębska et al., 2017a).

Backyard keeping and breeding

The most common form of recreation involving rabbits is the very process of keeping or breeding them, whether they are kept at home as companion animals or in backyard rabbitries. Among the various forms of animal keeping, one of the main contemporary forms is hobby breeding, which ensures regular contact with nature and healthy physical activity. Keeping animals requires people to be active in many ways, both mentally and physically. It encourages the acquisition of biological knowledge that is essential in breeding. Physical activity is also important, for example when harvesting green fodder, drying hay, growing fodder crops, feeding animals, preparing cages and handling animals, among other tasks (Gugolek and Strychalski, 2018; Stern, 2021).

According to Stern (2021), backyard rabbit keeping, alongside poultry keeping, is among the most common ways of meeting the demand for meat as well as skins, wool and manure on small family and agritourism farms.

Keeping and breeding rabbits at home

In addition to rabbits kept for various utilitarian purposes, an increasing number are now kept in homes as companion animals. Their number is difficult to estimate, but it can be assumed that in Poland "house rabbits" rank third in popularity among animals kept in homes, after dogs and cats, together with pet rats (Zwoliński, 2014). It is worth recalling that rabbits appeared in Polish homes relatively late, as they began to be kept there only in the 1990s. Globally, however, they first appeared in British households as early as the Victorian era. They remain very popular there, and it is estimated that approximately 900,000 rabbits are kept as companion animals in the British Isles (<https://www.rspca.org.uk>; Amato, 2015).

Keeping rabbits at home as companion animals is also a form of recreation that allows people to relax after work and provides contact with an animal as a substitute for nature in an urban environment. The rabbits most often kept at home are miniature crossbred rabbits, Rex rabbits, Mini Lops, Teddy dwarfs or Hermelins (Mettler, 1993; Taborska, 2000; Hermanowicz, 2022), although animals of other medium-sized or even large, distinctive breeds, or crossbred animals, may also be kept (Kowalska and Gugolek, 2011; Grinholc and Gugolek, 2020). Animal keeping also stimulates the development of general and biological knowledge, arising from

curiosity and the desire to understand the needs of the animals under one's care. Keeping animals at home helps shape the personalities of children and young people. In particular, it develops a sense of responsibility and also teaches the pursuit of standards. It is also a lesson in partnership and a way of moderating temperament, which is why rabbits and other animals are kept in correctional institutions, shelters for homeless people, centres for people with addictions and other socially excluded groups (<http://www.owes.info.pl>; Gugolek and Strychalski, 2018).

Exhibitions and shows

Keeping animals, especially purebred animals, also creates opportunities for social meetings among breeders, gatherings of breeding organizations and the exchange of knowledge and opinions. Exhibitions and shows are another important aspect of organized animal breeding. They are a form of physical and social activity. Both participation in exhibitions and shows and their preparation require organizational, physical and mental effort. Moreover, involvement in breeders' organizations promotes prosocial behaviour and teaches competition, for example during animal exhibitions (Lorek and Gugolek, 2008).

There are many organizations in Poland bringing together rabbit breeders. These include the National Association of Rabbit Breeders, the Association of Purebred Rabbit Breeders, the Association of Rabbit and Small Livestock Breeders of the Wieluń Region, the Lublin Association of Purebred Rabbit Breeders, the Podlasie Association of Rabbit and Ornamental Poultry Breeders, the Mazovia Rabbit Association, the Łódź Association of Fur Animal and Small Livestock Breeders, the National Association of Rabbit Breeders in Gniezno, and the Nationwide Association of Purebred Rabbit and Ornamental Poultry Breeders. These organizations play an important role not only in improving breeding populations but also in social life. Breeders are not the only beneficiaries of animal exhibitions. An exhibition is also an attraction, often educational for visitors, and an opportunity for activity by organizers and expert judges. The popularity of this form of recreation in Poland is illustrated by the 19th National Exhibition of Purebred Rabbits, Ornamental Poultry and Pigeons, held on 3–4 February 2024 in Wieluń. A total of 1,081 rabbits of various breeds and colour varieties were presented at the exhibition (<https://www.radiozw.com.pl/>).

Tourist attractions

Both farm animals and wild animals have been shown to have a positive effect on generating and organizing tourist traffic (Berbeka, 2016). Rabbits are kept as attractions on agritourism farms, in open-air museums and in rabbit parks. This type of leisure provides contact with nature and an opportunity to learn about rural life in the past. Scientific studies indicate that facilities keeping various animal species and breeds are more attractive to visitors. The importance of rabbits in agritourism is noted by Jęczynek et al. (2021), who reported that rabbits were kept at one in six of the facilities they studied.

A particularly notable tourist attraction on a global scale is Japan's "Rabbit Island", Ōkunoshima. Its popularity has increased in recent years mainly because of exposure on social media. Its main attraction is the rabbits living there. It is not known exactly how they arrived on the island. There are two theories: one holds that rabbits were brought there for chemical-weapons testing, while the other states that students brought eight rabbits to the island in 1972 and that these animals subsequently reproduced. The rabbit population on the island is estimated to have exceeded 1,000 individuals. Tourists can choose to interact with the animals in various ways: they may feed, pet, cuddle and hold them. The animals are tame, approach people of their own accord and jump onto their laps (Usui et al., 2018; Usui, 2021). At the tourist centre, visitors can also make "rabbits" from local natural materials such as leaves, nuts and bamboo. Restaurants on the island also offer rabbit dishes (<https://www.national-geographic.pl>).

Show jumping – sport

Rabbit show jumping (rabbit jumping, rabbit hopping, kaninhop) is one of the “rabbit sports”. During such competitions, the animals negotiate a course accompanied by their owner-trainer, who runs alongside the obstacles and assists the animal with appropriate verbal commands. The rabbits are usually fitted with a harness and an approximately two-metre lead (Jastrzębska and Gugolek, 2016). Rabbit jumping originated in Sweden in 1970, where the first competitions were also held. Initially, the rules were modelled on equestrian show jumping, but over time they were modified to better suit the nature and physical abilities of rabbits. There are four different rabbit-jumping disciplines: a straight course, a crooked course, high jump and long jump. The sport became increasingly popular throughout Sweden, leading to the establishment of the Swedish Federation of Rabbit Jumping in 1994, which now includes more than 20 different clubs. A similar organization was established in Norway in 2002 and in Finland in 2004. Rabbit-jumping competitions are also popular in Denmark, Germany, the Czech Republic, the United Kingdom and the United States (<http://petslady.com>; <http://rabbithoppingnz.wixsite.com>). The popularity of this sport in Europe is illustrated by the activities of German and Czech organizations of rabbit-jumping enthusiasts. In 2024, 40 jumping competitions were scheduled in Germany and 18 in the Czech Republic. The European Championships were held on 3 May 2024 in Switzerland (<https://www.kanin-hop.de>; <https://kralicishop.eu>).

The first rabbit-jumping demonstrations and competitions have also been held in Poland. This took place in 2018 during the National Exhibition of Purebred Pigeons and Small Livestock in Kielce (Kędzierski, 2018). This type of recreation/sport involving rabbits is attracting increasing numbers of supporters, but it should be noted that, as with other sports involving animals, it also has opponents. They accuse the owners of competing animals of cruelty. The authors consider these allegations unfounded because in this sport—or rather form of recreation—the human and the animal form a team that jointly undertakes the effort required to negotiate the obstacles.

Rabbit cafes and bunny yoga

Animal cafes are one of the newer trends in recreation involving animals. Cat cafes were the first to appear, but cafes featuring other animal species, including rabbits—the so-called bunny cafes—also exist. The first such cafe opened in Vancouver, Canada, in June 2021. Another rabbit cafe was opened in Tokyo. The first such cafe in Europe, however, opened in Kraków, Poland, in 2022. It is an innovative concept combining a cafe with a rabbit sanctuary. According to the cafe operators, its aims are to educate guests about rabbit care and adoption, provide opportunities for unusual and therapeutic experiences with these animals, and ensure appropriate living conditions for the resident rabbits. Similar establishments have also opened in other cities, including Warsaw, Lublin, Katowice, Rzeszów and Zakopane (<https://bunnycafe.pl>). Another new form of recreation involving rabbits is bunny yoga, modelled on puppy yoga, in which participants practise yoga in the company of rabbits (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eDIfm0lka4E>).

Hunting recreation

For most people today, rabbit hunting is a controversial form of recreation. From a historical perspective, however, it is worth recalling that hunting was a common pastime in past centuries. Evidence of this can be found in the English word “game”, which means not only “a game” but also “hunting” and “game meat” (Jastrzębska et al., 2017b). Hunting is an activity in which humans have always engaged. Over the years, it has changed from an important means of obtaining food into a way of spending leisure time in nature, with increasing emphasis on the conservation of game animals (Cheda, 2010; Chmiel and Derewiecki, 2017).

Rabbit hunting is also practised in Poland, and under Polish hunting law the wild rabbit is classified as a game species. However, rabbit hunting is not as popular in Poland as in the United Kingdom, France or Spain, where it has a long tradition. Many forms of rabbit hunting are practised worldwide. Rabbits are hunted with firearms, dogs, birds of prey or ferrets. Ferreting has received considerable attention in British and American hunting literature (Mannix, 1967; Carnegie, 1988). This form of hunting is not permitted in Poland, whereas neighbouring Czechs do hunt rabbits with ferrets (Hanzal et al., 2016). It is also worth noting that rabbit hunting contributed to the development of specialized hunting dog breeds, including rabbit dachshunds, which flush animals from burrows, and numerous retrieving breeds (Biały, 1994).

Entertainment, culture and art

Entertainment is also a form of recreation and leisure. It is a very broad concept closely connected with people and their culture. Entertainment may include creating and experiencing various forms of art, watching films, listening to music or reading books (Obidziński, 2015).

Rabbits are depicted in many fields of art, whose creation and appreciation serve entertainment and relaxation. Representations of rabbits are numerous in the visual arts, especially painting. Works by Richard Buckner, a British portrait painter, often depicted children with domestic rabbits. Two representatives of nineteenth-century German genre painting, Hermann Kaulbach and Felix Schlesinger, also portrayed children in the company of rabbits (<https://sztukadluga.com>).

Films and “rabbit videos” can be found on various websites and social media platforms such as Facebook and Instagram. It is very popular for owners to create accounts for their pets and post photographs and short videos from the animals’ everyday lives. This activity is appreciated not only by owners but also by people who, for various reasons, cannot keep a rabbit of their own and enjoy following the accounts of these animals.

Rabbit characters frequently appear in animated films. Perhaps the best-known example is Bugs Bunny from the Warner Bros. cartoon series. Although the character resembles a hare more than a rabbit, he is nevertheless called “Bunny”. Rabbits also appear in stories from around the world, most often as positive characters. These works, originally published as books, have frequently been adapted for the screen. One example is the White Rabbit from Lewis Carroll’s *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*. Another well-known character is Peter Rabbit, created by Beatrix Potter and featured in the book and film of the same name. Winnie-the-Pooh also includes Rabbit, a friend of the main characters. Many more similar examples can of course be found (<https://www.familyeducation.com>).

It is also worth recalling *Watership Down* by the distinguished British writer Richard Adams. The book tells the story of a group of rabbits that flee a warren destroyed by humans, struggle to survive and experience dramatic adventures before eventually settling at a place called Watership Down. Although originally intended for children, the book achieved worldwide success, including among adult readers, owing to its positive message. It was adapted into a film and animated television series, and even inspired a stage production (Cox and Riches, 2010). Rabbits can also inspire musical works; examples include the songs *What a Day* by Ben Howard and *How Did We Get So Dark?* by Royal Blood (Kręciwska, 2022).

One of the favourite forms of entertainment in the past was the performance of illusionists, and a common trick was for the magician to conjure up and pull a rabbit from an apparently empty top hat (Randi, 1992).

Handicrafts and culinary uses

Products obtained from rabbits can also be used in recreational handicrafts. For example, Angora rabbit wool is used in knitting, rabbit meat in culinary activities, and manure in amateur gardening (Gugolek and Strychalski, 2018; Stern, 2021). Particular attention should be paid to Angora wool, now largely forgotten despite its many valuable qualities; Angora rabbits were kept in large numbers in Poland in the previous century (Kopański, 1989). These animals are slowly returning to Poland, not to production farms but to exhibitions as hobby-bred animals. For example, at the 3rd Tarnów Exhibition of Purebred Pigeons, Ornamental Poultry and Purebred Rabbits, held in November 2023, ten Angora rabbits were exhibited (Catalogue of the 3rd Tarnów Exhibition..., 2023).

Other forms

Rabbits can also be used in other human activities that are not recreational. Like other animal species, they are very useful in the education of children and young people. In Western Europe and the United States, animals are kept in many educational institutions as part of “rabbits as classroom pets” programmes (<http://nswschoolanimals.com/>). Rabbits are also widely used in scientific research, which often raises considerable controversy. Nevertheless, it must be acknowledged that humanity owes a great deal to laboratory rabbits. The recent COVID pandemic showed that, despite advances in medicine, we are not entirely safe and cannot completely dispense with laboratory animals. Without rabbits and other species on which numerous multidisciplinary studies have been and continue to be conducted, many medical problems could not have been solved (Manning et al., 1994; Booting and Morrison, 1997; LaFollette et al., 2020).

Rabbits may also have therapeutic value. It is difficult, however, to claim that rabbits themselves heal people or that contact with them directly improves human health. The effect of rabbits, like that of other animals used in animal-assisted therapy, is rather indirect. Animals calm people, help them “open up”, activate them and encourage a more positive attitude toward life.

Summary

The information presented above shows how many forms of recreation and other areas of human life can include rabbits. It is worth noting that the ways rabbits are used increasingly depart from previously established models. Further public education and the popularization of the breeding of these versatile animals, which have already provided so many services to humans, are necessary.

References

- Amato S. (2015). *Beastly Possessions: Animals in Victorian Consumer Culture*. University of Toronto Press. Toronto, 306 pp.
- Berbeka J. (2016). Znaczenie zwierząt w generowaniu ruchu turystycznego i jego organizacji. *Ekonomiczne Problemy Turystyki*, 1(33): 199–210.
- Biały K. (1994). *Podstawy łowiectwa*. Wydawnictwo Łowiec Polski. Warszawa, 203 ss.
- Booting J.H., Morrison A.R. (1997). *Badania na zwierzętach niezbędne medycynie*. Świat Nauki, 4: 26–29.
- Carnegie W. (1988). *Ferrets and ferreting: a practical manual on breeding, managing, training and working ferrets*. Nimrod Press Ltd. Alton, Hants, 68 pp.

- Cheda J. (2010). Łowiectwo i jego rola w życiu społecznym Wielkiej Brytanii i Polski. *Civitas Hominibus*, 5: 91–105.
- Chmiel K., Derewiecki T. (2017). Zwierzęta towarzyszące aktywności fizycznej dawnych Polaków. *Rozprawy Społeczne*, 11(3): 71–74.
- Cox M., Riches C. (2010). *A Dictionary of Writers and their Works*. Oxford University Press. Oxford, 688 pp.
- Grinholc S., Gugolek A. (2020). Królik zajęczak – rasa amatorska czy użytkowa? *Wiad. Zoot.*, 58: 21–27.
- Gugolek A., Strychalski J. (2018). Wykorzystanie królików w rekreacji, edukacji i wspomaganiu terapii człowieka. *Króliki*, 3: 3–13.
- Hanzal V., Hart V., Forejtek D., Mrkvickova K., Koranova D. (2016). *Myslivost II*. Druckvo. Praga, 320 pp.
- Hermanowicz N. (2022). Porównanie wyników reprodukcji samic oraz wzrostu królicząt dwóch ras królików miniaturowych. *Praca inżynierska*. UWM Olsztyn.
- Jastrzębska A., Gugolek A. (2016). Skoki królików – nowy sport z udziałem zwierząt w Polsce? *Króliki*, 1(53): 5–12.
- Jastrzębska A., Gugolek A., Strychalski J. (2017a). Zwierzęta w sporcie rekreacji i rozrywce. Cz.I. *Wiad. Zoot.*, 1: 87–93.
- Jastrzębska A., Gugolek A., Strychalski J. (2017b). Zwierzęta w sporcie rekreacji i rozrywce. Cz.II. *Wiad. Zoot.*, 2: 173–181.
- Jęczmyk A., Uglis J., Steppa R. (2021). Can Animals Be the Key to the Development of Tourism: a Case Study of Livestock in Agritourism. *Animals*, 11(8): 2357.
- Katalog III Wystawy Gołębi Rasowych, Drobiu Ozdobnego oraz Królików Rasowych. (2023). Tarnowski Związek Hodowców Gołębi Rasowych i Drobno Inwentarza. Tarnów.
- Kędzierski G. (2018). Relacja z Krajowej Wystawy Kielce 2018. *Gołębie i Drobny Inwentarz*, 78: 4–8.
- Kopański R. (1989). *Chów królików angorskich*. PWRiL, Warszawa.
- Kowalska D., Gugolek A. (2011). Oryginalne rasy królików. *Prz. Hod.*, 4: 31–33.
- Kręciwska J. (2022). Wykorzystanie zajęczaków w rekreacji człowieka. *Praca licencjacka*. UWM Olsztyn.
- LaFollette M.R., Riley M.C., Cloutier S., Brady C.M., O'Haire M.E., Gaskill B.N. (2020). Laboratory animal welfare meets human welfare: a cross-sectional study of professional quality of life, including compassion fatigue in laboratory animal personnel. *Front. Vet. Sci.*, 7: 114.
- Lorek M.O., Gugolek A. (red.) (2008). *Zwierzęta amatorskie i towarzyszące*. Wydawnictwo UWM Olsztyn, 88 ss.
- Manning P.J., Ringler D.H., Newcomer C.E. (1994). *The Biology of the Laboratory Rabbit*. Academic Press. University of Minnesota Health Sciences Center, Minneapolis, U.S.A, 483 pp.
- Mannix D.P. (1967). *A sporting chance: unusual methods of hunting*. E.P. Dutton & Co., Inc. New York, 253 pp.
- Mettler M. (1993). *Króliki miniaturowe*. Oficyna Wydawnicza Multico. Warszawa, 64 ss.
- Obidziński M. (2015). Rozrywka. Ujęcie w perspektywie koncepcji działania w czasie. *Fides et Ratio*, 21(1): 144–168.
- Randi J. (1992). *Conjuring*. St. Martin's Press. Nowy Jork, 314 pp.
- Stern A. (2021). *Przydomowy chów królików*. Oficyna Wydawnicza Multico, 80 ss.
- Taborska M. (2000). *Królik miniaturowy*. Agencja Wydawnicza Egros. Warszawa, 108 ss.
- Usui R. (2021). Feral animals as a tourism attraction: characterizing tourists' experiences with rabbits on Ōkunoshima Island in Hiroshima, Japan. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 25(16): 2615–2630.

- Usui R., Wei X., Funck C. (2018). The power of social media in regional tourism development: a case study from Ōkunoshima Island in Hiroshima, Japan. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 21(18): 2052–2056.
- Zwoliński C. (2014). Ocena skali hodowli zwierząt amatorskich w województwie warmińsko-mazurskim na podstawie ogłoszeń sprzedaży zamieszczonych na portalu Tablica.PL. XLIII Międzynarodowe Seminarium Kół Naukowych. UWM Olsztyn.
- <http://nswschoolanimals.com/rabbits/rabbits-environment/>
- <http://petslady.com/article/hop-it-bunny-show-jumping-really-thing>
- <http://rabbithoppingnz.wixsite.com/rabbithoppingnz>
- http://www.owes.info.pl/biblioteka/13atlas_bobrych_praktyk_wandzin.pdf
- https://bunnycafe.pl/?gad_source=1&gclid=EAIaIQobChMIObN0-_hhAMVpG9BAh13uw-KYEAAAYASAAEgJ0t_D_BwE
- <https://sztukadluga.com>
- https://www.familyeducation.com/entertainment-activities/beyond-the-easter-bunny-20-other-famous-rabbits?fbclid=IwAR0Jk1y2CytbMgV5CARBdrfwyZTZ7MhlgAC-lzWz_8VBQ3LSLMdZGLJGmjiA#toc-2-peter-rabbit-the-tale-of-peter-rabbit
- <https://www.national-geographic.pl/traveler/artykul/wyspa-krolikow-jak-zwierzeta-pojawily-sie-na-wyspie-czy-warto-wybrac-sie-na-japonska-wyspe-okunoshima>
- <https://www.rspca.org.uk/adviceandwelfare/pets/rabbits>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eDIfm0lka4E>
- <https://www.kanin-hop.de/turnierberichte/termine-2024/>
- <https://kralicishop.eu/akce/2-kvalifikacni-zavod-na-me/>
- <https://www.radiozw.com.pl/ponad-tysiac-krolikow-pokazano-na-19-ogolnopolskiej-wystawie-krolikow-rasowych-drobieu-ozdobnego-i-golebi-w-wieluniu>

Approved for publication: 8 April 2024

THE USE OF RABBITS IN HUMAN RECREATION

Andrzej Gugolek, Joanna Kręciewska

SUMMARY

Domestic rabbits are increasingly kept for hobby and recreational purposes. For many people, breeding them is a lifelong passion that fills their free time. The article presents the possibilities of using rabbits in various forms of human recreation. The most common form of recreation using rabbits is the process of breeding or keeping them, both at home as companion animals and in backyard farms. Keeping purebred rabbits is also an opportunity to organize exhibitions and shows. Rabbits are also kept as an “attraction” in agritourism farms, open-air museums and rabbit parks. New sports include rabbit show jumping. These competitions have become popular throughout Europe and are also held in Poland. The latest trends in recreation using rabbits are rabbit cafes and bunny yoga. A controversial form of recreation for most modern people is rabbit hunting. Moreover, rabbits are depicted in many fields of art, the creation and reception of which is used for entertainment and relaxation. The information presented indicates that rabbits have found their place in many forms of recreation and other areas of human life. It is worth noting that the breeding and use of rabbits increasingly differs from the models previously adopted.

Keywords: *Oryctolagus cuniculus*, breeding, recreation, entertainment