**Patagonian Cavy/ Mara**

**Native to:** Patagonian shrub lands in Argentina

**Predators:**  large cats, foxes, and birds of prey while they are young, large constrictors, caiman

**Prey:** herbivores- grasses, herbs, leaves, nuts, seeds, flowers

**Facts:**

* Rodents- their incisors never stop growing
* Hunted for their fur
* They are considered near threatened as a species.
* Produce a variety of sounds from grunting to whistles, which are thought to be used for communication
* Males spend most of their time watching for predators and guarding the female, whereas females spend most of their time foraging and eating
* Fully grown they are about 18lbs to 25 lbs
* Males are generally larger than females
* Their feces is an important part of the ecosystem as it spreads the seeds and fertilizes the grasslands.

**Defense Mechanisms:**

* Long, strong legs can either hop powerfully, or gallop like a horse
* They can leap over 3 feet vertically in the air, and about 3 times their body length in a single bound

**Reproduction:**

* Couples remain in monogamous pairs for life
* In the wild, females produce one litter a year, and have 1-2 pups per litter
* Live in communal groups of 1-22 pairs of adults, and their young- all in one underground den
* Males mark the females with their urine and pheromones

**Lifespan:** 6 to 8 years in the wild around 10 to 12 years in captivity

**Handling Tips:**

Theo is a 2 year old male. He has very powerful back legs, hold him close to your body supporting his hind are and entire body weight.