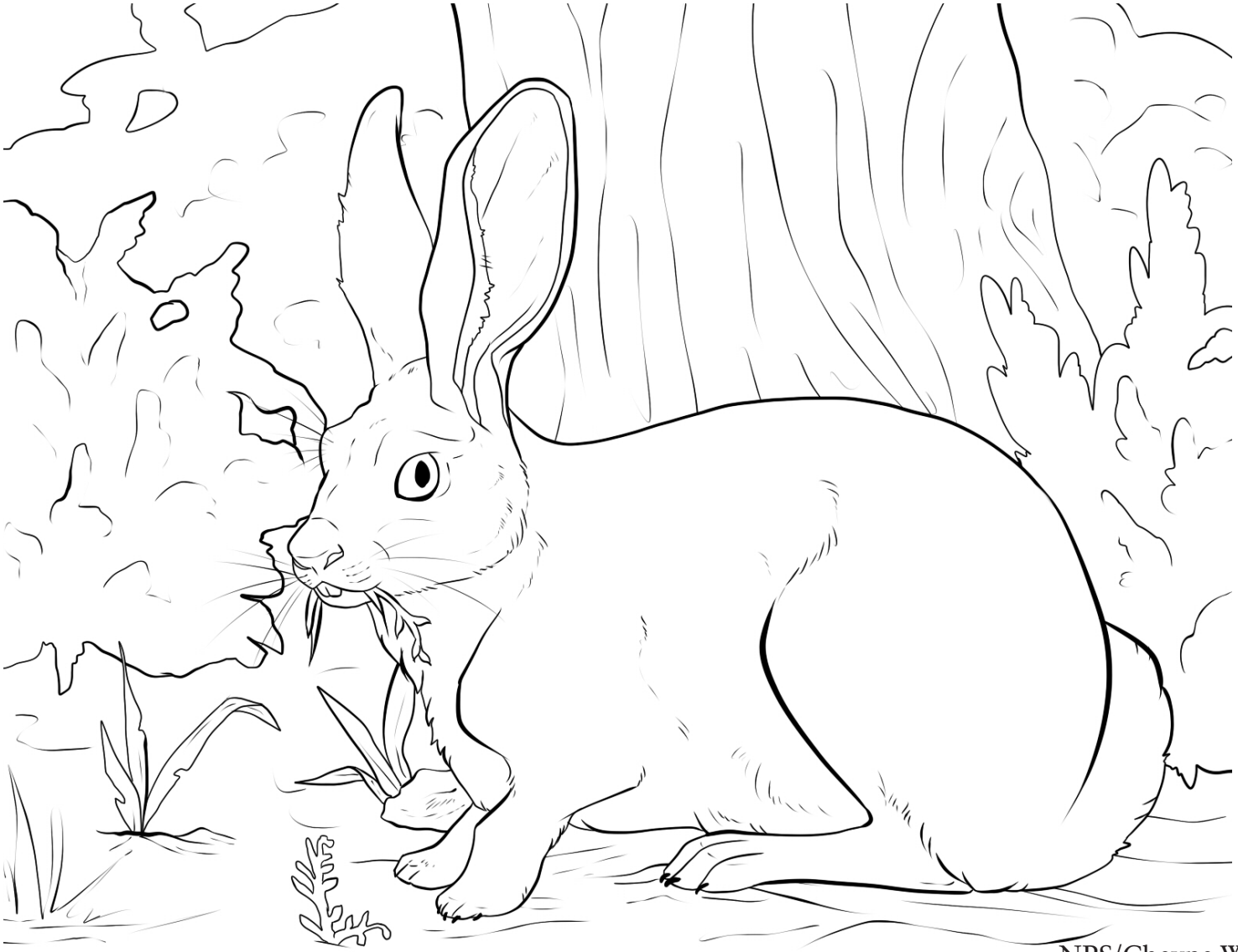
National Trails

Color the Trails

Jackrabbits are bigger than cottontail bunnies and they have big, furry feet and long, powerful hind legs that help them run up to 40 miles per hour. They live in the deserts and scrublands of the West, where they are prey for coyotes, hawks, owls, mountain lions, and other predators. Emigrants following the wagon trails west were surprised to find these big hares with their long, long, ears.

People called them "jackass rabbits" because their ears looked like those of a donkey, or jackass. Those "donkey ears" help jackrabbits stay cool in the desert. Warm blood from the animal's body flows into the veins of the big ears, allowing the heat to escape into the air. That means they don't need to pant like a dog or sweat like a person to stay cool.



JACKRABBIT

NPS/Cheyne Warren