

Ancient Lore of the Lemmings

by

Dr. Whiskers, Ph.D., Professor Emeritus
Lemmini University
Fennoscandia

This story was first presented here on Friday, December 20, 2019, and was also printed in the January 2020 issue of the *Frontiersman*.

This document is approximately 814 words long.

Additional stories are available on my [personal website](#).

This story is LiteraShare.

That means that it isn't for sale and that it isn't protected by a formal establishment copyright. As the author, I ask you to extend to me the courtesy that is reasonably due. If you copy the story, then copy all of it including my name and address as shown on each page, and this LiteraShare Statement. I invite you to provide such copies for other readers. If you quote from the story, then do so accurately and give me credit. If you care to make a voluntary contribution to me, then I prefer cash. For checks, money orders, or PayPal payments, please inquire.

This page was intentionally left blank.

Ancient Lore of the Lemmings

Welcome, students, to this lecture series at Lemmini University. Today's lecture presents a tale that's told throughout all of lemming society, during the long winter months when we huddle in our burrows, under the snow. The tale cannot be disputed because it's details have been accumulated from antiquity by thousands of lemmings, from burrows near and far. And, as we all know, the lore and oral history of lemmings cannot be questioned. We lemmings are keen observers, accurate reporters, and we never embellish or exaggerate what we see. So, listen closely, my dear students. I'll pass this tale on to you and, one day, you will pass it on to your own students, if you become a professor, or to your children.

There exists, outside of our normal haunts, a race of very large creatures. They don't walk as normal animals should, but stand upright on their back legs. So large are they that their heads seem to us to be among the clouds. When one of them walks nearby, all of the ground near it bounces. Thus, we call these large and terrifying creatures bouncers.

Reports of these creatures have been received from all over the world, not just from our own beloved tundra, and not just by lemmings, who never go that far away, but by other creatures as well, voles, mice, muskrats, hamsters, even rats which, although they're much less trustworthy than we are, have travelled much further. Surprisingly, their reports are in substantial agreement with what we ourselves have observed.

These creatures, these bouncers, live extremely long lives, unimaginably long lives. We know this to be true because accurate descriptions of the same individuals have been given by observers over many generations of lemmings. The bouncers travel to places far beyond the tundra, riding in giant magical flying leaves or on huge, foul-smelling contrivances made from furs, rocks, and logs. Although a single bouncer can live many times the life of a lemming, we have been learning about them for countless of our own generations, and with the accumulation of the facts, our fascination knows no bounds. It has come to be accepted that these bouncers have extremely long cycles of activity, even longer than their individual lives. They will live in scattered groups for hundreds of their generations, thousands of ours but, eventually, inevitably, they begin to form enormous breeding clusters in which millions of them jam together in huge nests that they build of sticks and rocks. In those clusters, they multiply enormously. During just a few hundreds of our generations, they become more numerous than, well, than anything. Eventually, their population exceeds their habitat. Then, they're overcome by war, famine, and plague. After their period of massive reproduction ends, they die by the billions.

Scholars have debated this improbable behavior for thousands of our generations but, recently, reports have begun to arrive, primarily by way of the rats, of bouncer breeding clusters of sizes that defy all powers of description. We don't understand why such behavior should periodically recur but it now seems likely that another such cycle is nearing its end. We consider the bouncers to be a lesson in our own

Ancient Lore of the Lemmings

good fortune to be lemmings, and never to have to face such a desperate population cycle.

This cycle of population growth of the bouncers won't be completed during the lives of lemmings who are now alive but, within a few generations it will come to pass. We're trying, for the first time, to establish a corps of elite observers within a nearby breeding cluster, to observe the behavior of the bouncers. The collapse won't happen within our lifetimes but, hopefully, our corps of elite observers will witness the event up close, first hand, and secure for future generations of lemmings a better understanding of these amazing creatures, the bouncers. Thank you for attending this lecture, and good luck.