

UTOWN@UBC Nature Club



Mammal Guide

**Make new friends while getting to know your
human, plant and animal neighbours!**



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In this guide you will find some examples of the diversity of mammals around us.

Tamara Eder and Don Pattie, Lone Pine Publishing, 2001.

www.geog.ubc.ca/biodiversity/efauna/





Big Brown Bat

Scientific Name: *Eptesicus fuscus*

Description: The big brown bat has brown fur that looks oily and glossy. Its face, ears and wings don't have fur and are black. Despite its name, this bat only measures between 9 and 14 cm, about the same size as a chickadee, and weighs 12 to 28 g (the weight of 5 to 11 pennies).

Den: In the summer, big brown bats roost under loose tree bark and in tree cavities. During winter, they hibernate in caves, mines, and old buildings. This bat is probably the most commonly seen in Vancouver because it is often found in buildings.

Food: This bat flies quickly so it likes to eat fast, flying prey, such as beetles, wasps, flies, mosquitoes, and dragonflies.

Notes: Many people are scared of bats, but in Canada, all bats are harmless to humans. Bats even help people; they can control insects in gardens and parks.

Tracks: You aren't likely to find a bat track, they spend most of their time flying!

Photo: wikipedia Angilbas, used though a creative common licence.



Domesticated & Feral Cats

Scientific Name: *Felis catus*

Description: Cats can be many different colours, shapes and sizes. There are around 40 different breeds of cats - some do not have any fur at all! The average weight of a domestic cat is between 4 and 5 kg (about the weight of a one month old baby), but some can weigh up to 11 kg (the weight of a 2 year old child).

Den: Domesticated cats live in human houses and backyards. Feral cats do not live with humans; they are wild and no longer domesticated. Feral cats seek refuge in places such as old buildings, garages, and barns. They are found on every continent except Antarctica.

Food: Cats are carnivores so need to eat meat. Cats like to hunt small animals like insects, rodents and birds, using their sharp claws and teeth. Obviously, most of them eat cat food which is usually made of grains, vegetables and meat.

Notes: Cats have sandpaper-like tongues covered with tiny hooks that act like hair brushes for cleaning and grooming their fur.

Photo: wikipedia Alvesgaspar used though a creative common licence. Tracks: Kim A. Cabrera www.bear-tracker.com



Common Raccoon

Scientific Name: *Procyon lotor*

Description: Raccoon fur can be blackish to brownish grey with lighter areas on the sides of the belly. Raccoons have 4 to 6 black and white rings along their bushy tail, which can measure up to 40cm (about the length of a child's arm). These critters can weigh anywhere from 5 to 14 kg (the weight of a 4 year old child). You can easily recognize raccoons from their "black bandit mask" and white "eyebrows."

Den: Raccoons are usually found in damp areas near streams, lakes and ponds where they often make homes in hollow trees by covering the floor with grass and leaves. In the city, raccoons create homes beneath buildings, or even under old construction rubbish!

Food: In the spring and summer seasons, raccoons eat many different types of insects and worms, but also like the fruits and nuts that come out in late summer and fall. Raccoons will eat clams, frogs, fishes, birds, eggs, and even small mammals.

Notes: Raccoons are usually nocturnal -resting in the daytime and active at night. Be careful, they can bite!

Photo: flickr harlequeen (also used on cover) used though a creative common licence. Tracks: Kim A. Cabrera www.bear-tracker.com



Coyote or American Jackal

Scientific Name: *Canis latrans*

Description: Coyotes can grow up to 1.4 m long, about the size of a medium dog, and weigh up to 20 kg (the same weight as a 4 year old). Coyotes have thick grey or reddish-grey fur with a pointy nose, and a reddish brown snout with a grey patch of fur between their eyes. The fur on the chest and belly is nearly white, and its bushy tail has a black tip.

Den: Coyote homes are usually burrows (or holes) in hills; they may use other animals' old burrows and expand them. In the city, coyotes can make homes in abandoned cars or under a pile of construction material.

Food: Coyotes are carnivores, eating mostly small mammals like voles, squirrels and mice. They will sometimes eat birds, reptiles and even carrion (animals that are already dead).

Notes: Did you know that coyotes are able to mate and breed with house dogs? Their puppies are called "coydogs" or "dogotes".

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Domesticated & Feral Dogs

Scientific Name: *Canis lupus familiaris*

Description: There are over 150 different breeds of domesticated dogs in different shapes, sizes and colours. Small dogs (like Chihuahuas) can be the size and weight of a small cat, while large dogs (like Saint-Bernard and Bernese mountain dogs) can weigh as much as a person.

Den: At home, domesticated dogs may sleep on a dog bed, in a kennel, or inside a dog house. In the wild, escaped domestic dogs, now wild and known as feral dogs, often try to find shelter in old buildings to stay warm and dry.

Food: Feral dogs are carnivores and scavengers, both hunting animals and looking for dead animals. When they live with humans, they are usually omnivores, eating both animals and plants. Dog food is usually made of grains, vegetables and meat.

Notes: Did you know that dogs' ancestors are gray wolves? Humans started to tame dogs to protect themselves from other wild animals, to use them as a source of food and fur, and as working animals for jobs like hunting and herding.

Photo: wikimedia Elf used though a creative common licence. Tracks: arthursclipart.org



Douglas Squirrel

Scientific Name: *Tamiasciurus douglasii*

Description: This small and energetic squirrel grows to about 35 cm long, tail included, which is just a little longer than a regular ruler. The Douglas squirrel can weigh up to 300 grams (probably less than your running shoes). In summer, they are grey on the back and light orange on the belly, while in the winter, they are much browner with a grey belly. You can recognize them by looking for the funny tufts of hair on their ears!

Den: In winter, Douglas squirrels make homes inside hollow trees or old woodpeckers' holes. In the summer, they make dreys, which are cozy nests of mosses, leaves, and bark, found high in trees.

Food: These squirrels are herbivores, mostly eating the seeds and cones of conifer trees like firs, pines, spruces, and hemlocks. Sometimes they eat other seeds, nuts, berries, and mushrooms.

Notes: The name that First Nations tribes give to the Douglas Squirrel, "Pillilooet," comes from the alarm-like sound that these squirrels make to warn each other of predators.

Photo: flickr Michael Scheltgen used though a creative common licence. Tracks: Kim A. Cabrera www.bear-tracker.com



Front



Rear



Eastern Grey Squirrel

Scientific Name: *Sciurus carolinensis*

Description: The eastern grey squirrels found in Vancouver, unlike what their name implies, are mostly black. These squirrels are larger than the Douglas squirrels; growing up to 50 cm long (about the length of a newborn) and weigh up to 710 g (that's about the weight of a dozen donuts).

Den: Eastern grey squirrels live in trees throughout the year. They build dreys, a round nest made of twigs and leaves, or they use natural hollows or woodpecker holes.

Food: These squirrels are herbivores, eating seeds mainly from oak, maple, ash, and elm trees. In the warmer months, the eastern Grey Squirrel eats the buds, flowers, and leaves of plants; and sometimes eggs and young birds.

Notes: In Eastern Canada, it is much more common to find these squirrels with grey fur (making sense of the name: "eastern grey squirrel").

Photo: flickr Rhys Asplundh used though a creative common licence. Tracks: Kim A. Cabrera www.bear-tracker.com



Front



Rear



House Mouse

Scientific Name: *Mus musculus*

Description: House mice's fur can be brown, grey, or almost all black on its back with a light grey belly. These mice have pointy noses with lots of whiskers for sensing. They have hairless tails and ears, and big beady black eyes. Including its tail, house mice grow up to 20 cm long (same length as a pencil) and weigh up to 25 g (the weight of 10 pennies).

Den: House mice can make nests from shredded paper and old rags throughout building walls and floors. Sometimes, house mice use plants and old fur squeezed together for bedding.

Food: In the wild, house mice eat seeds and different parts of plants (like their stems and leaves), but they are very open to eating insects, dead animals, and food and garbage from humans!

Notes: Did you know that house mice can give birth to about 10 litters each year? Each litter averages 8 babies, so that's around 80 baby mice from one mother every year.

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Norway Rat

Scientific Name: *Rattus norvegicus*

Description: The Norway rats' back fur is brown, reddish or black with some streaks of grey. Their belly is light grey to almost white and their tail is long and scaly with very few hairs. They measure 33 to 46 cm (as long as a ruler or a little longer) and weigh up to 480 g (about the weight of a guinea pig).

Den: Norway rats make homes in abandoned buildings where they scratch out holes. They build big nests out of grass and leaves in the wild, but often use paper and rags in the city.

Food: Rats are omnivores that will eat almost anything! They'll eat grains, insects, fruit and garbage. They even kill and eat young farm animals sometimes.

Notes: A long time ago, Norway rats were found only in China, living in burrows in the wild. Some populations of rats began to live in human homes, buildings, and ships. They followed humans all over the world. Now, they can be found wherever humans live.

Photo: flickr monkey wing, used though a creative common licence. Tracks: Derek Tan.



Striped Skunk

Scientific Name: *Mephitis mephitis*

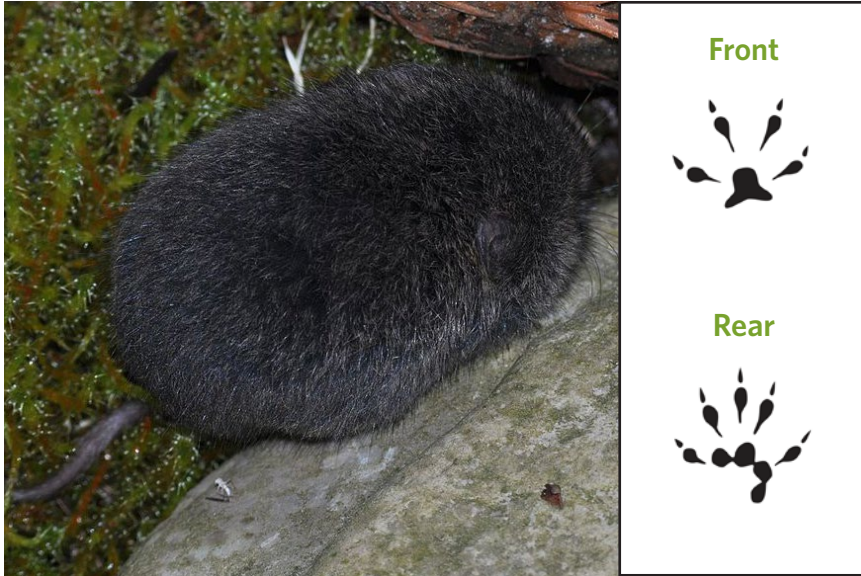
Description: The striped skunk is a black-furred mammal with white stripes starting at its nose, splitting around its neck and joining again at the end of the tail. These skunks can grow up to 80 cm long and weigh about 2 to 4 kg (the same as a house cat).

Den: In the wild, you can find skunks burrowed in underground nests made of dried leaves and grass, but in the city, their homes are usually underneath buildings, near garbage or gardens.

Food: Striped skunks are omnivores, eating both plants and animals. These skunks have a huge range of food that they eat, from small mammals and fruits in the fall, to insect larvae, bees, birds' eggs, and green plants in the spring and summer.

Notes: Did you know that skunks do not spray immediately when threatened? If the black and white warning colours do not scare off predators first, then the skunk will hiss, stomp their feet and stand tall. If this doesn't scare you away you might get sprayed!

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Townsend's Vole

Scientific Name: *Microtus townsendii*

Description: The Townsend's vole has dark brown fur and a blackish brown tail. These voles have big ears, beady black eyes, and weigh only up to 82 grams (as little as 5 tablespoons of sugar). They can grow up to 23 cm long, tail included (about the length of 3 credit cards).

Den: Townsend's voles make their nests from dried grasses. These nests are underground in the hot and dry seasons. During the rainy parts of the year you may be able to find these nests above ground on small hills.

Food: These voles eat plants found in marshes and grasslands, like young cattails and grasses. Sometimes these mammals will eat bark from shrubs, and the roots of conifer trees.

Notes: Voles dig underground, building complex tunnels that are used generation after generation. They use the path intersections as toilets.



Vagrant Shrew

Scientific Name: *Sorex vagrans*

Description: The vagrant shrew has light brown fur on its back in the summer, but it darkens in the winter. Its belly is grey to brown. Shrews grow from 9 to 12 cm (the size of a credit card) and weigh only about 7 g (that's less than 2 teaspoons of salt).

Den: Shrews live in forested areas that are moist and close to the water. They build their nests out of grass in old rotting logs or stumps.

Food: Vagrant shrews are carnivores, and mostly insectivorous, eating mainly creepy crawlers found in soils like insects and their larva, and worms. They will also eat spiders and snails, dead and rotting animals, and sometimes a few plants.

Notes: These animals also use complex underground pathways that were made by voles.