

Tales of Their Trails

(Animal Track Guide)

Tri-County School Forest



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Table of Contents

<u>Species</u>	<u>Page</u>
Badger	1
Bear, Black	2
Beaver, American	3
Bobcat	4
Chipmunk, Eastern	5
Cougar	6
Coyote	7
Deer, Mule	8
Deer, White-Tailed	9
Fisher	10
Fox, Gray	11
Fox, Red	12
Hare, Snowshoe	13
Lemming, Southern Bog	14
Marten, Pine	15
Mink	16
Mole, Common	17
Mole, Star-nosed	18
Mouse, Deer	19
Mouse, House	20
Mouse, Jumping Meadow.....	21
Mouse, White-Footed.....	22
Muskrat.....	23
Opossum, Virginia.....	24
Rat, Norway.....	25
Shrew, Masked.....	26
Shrew, Pygmy.....	27
Shrew, Short-Tailed.....	28
Skunk, Striped.....	29
Ground Squirrel, 13 Lined.....	30

Squirrel, Red.....	34
Vole, Meadow.....	35
Weasel, Least.....	36
Weasel, Long-Tailed.....	37
Weasel, Short-Tailed.....	38
Wolf, Timber.....	39
Wolverine.....	40
Woodchuck.....	41

Badger (*Taxidea taxus*)



The badger is a chunky-bodied weasel that is well adapted for digging, with its long claws, and powerful limbs. They are a little over two feet long including the tail, and weigh anywhere from 12-30 pounds. It is active day, or night, feeding on squirrels, prairie dogs, rats, reptiles, birds, and a variety of insects.

The badger is solitary, and very territorial. It dens in the ground, digging a new hole almost every night. Badgers prefer areas with pliable soils.

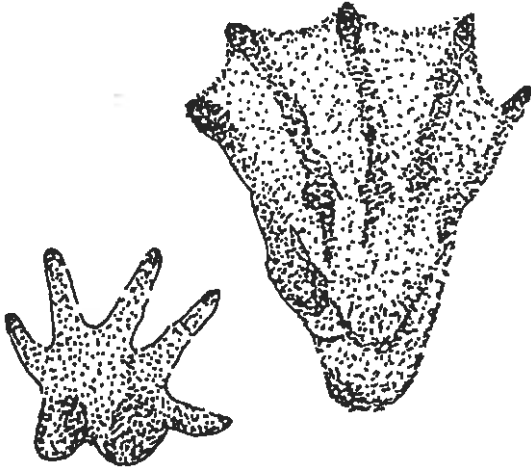
Black Bear (*Ursus americanus*)



The black bear is a large, chunky carnivore that averages five feet long, and weighs about 300 pounds. They are occasionally omnivorous, eating buds, berries, nuts, insects, birds, mice, fawns, fish, carrion and many other things.

The bear is usually solitary and nocturnal, though it is often seen during the day. They den in rock caves, hollow logs, and beneath fallen trees. A black bears home range can be anywhere from two to five miles.

American Beaver (*Castor canadensis*)



The beaver measures from two to two and a half feet long (not including their tail) and weighs from 30 to 70 pounds. Their tail is paddle shaped, and hairless.

Beavers are nocturnal. The beaver makes its home along the edge of rivers and stream, where it either burrows in a bank, or builds an elaborate mud-and-stick lodge. It feeds on the inner bark of trees, primarily aspen. Beaver dams and lodges (establishment and decay) are important parts of natural system.

Bobcat (*Lynx rufus*)



The bobcat is two and a half to three feet long from the tip of its nose to the end of its tail. It weighs between 15 to 30 pounds. It is solitary, and nocturnal.

The bobcat's primary food includes rabbits, and rodents, though it eats whatever it can find. In areas where food source is plentiful, the range is about square miles; in poor areas it may range up to 50 square miles. Bobcats are excellent stalkers, and hidiers.

Eastern Chipmunk (*Tamias striatus*)



Chipmunks are about four to six inches long. They can weigh anywhere from two to four pounds, and are various shades of brown, with distinct body types, and moderately long tails. The home range for chipmunks is one to two acres.

Chipmunks feed on nuts, berries, grains, and seeds. During winter, they eat the food they have stored up during the fall.

Cougar (*Felis concolor*)



The cougar, or mountain lion, is the largest North American cat. It is a tawny gray animal, weighing from 60 to 230 pounds. It measures six to nine feet tall from its nose, to the tip of its tail.

At one time the cougar roamed throughout North America. The range of the cougar is about 25 square miles. It is found in isolated places in the Rocky Mountains, and the southwestern states. Recently populations have expanded to eastern edges of the Rocky Mountains, and isolated individuals (primarily juvenile males seeking new territories) have been documented across the mid-west and east. Their primary food is deer, porcupines, raccoons, marmots, and rabbits. They can kill larger animals, and they are typically ambush hunters, often from above. The cougar will typically not attack people unless it is injured, concerned, or diseased.

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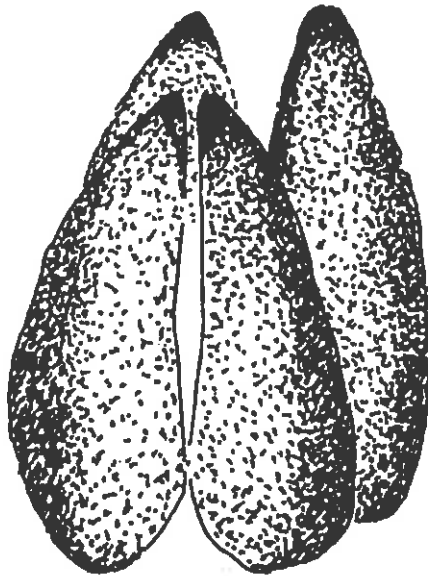
Coyote (*Canis latrans*)



Coyotes vary greatly in size. The average from three and a half to four and a half feet long, including their long, bushy tails. Coyotes weigh 20 to 45 pounds at maturity.

Coyotes are considered to be nocturnal. Their home range covers about 16 square miles. They eat almost anything that they can catch, including birds, and a variety of fruits, nuts, and leaves. Coyotes were once limited to western areas of the country, but they have expanded their range across the United States. Wolves will exclude coyotes from their territories, meaning that coyotes are limited to the fringes of wolf territory where both predators are found.

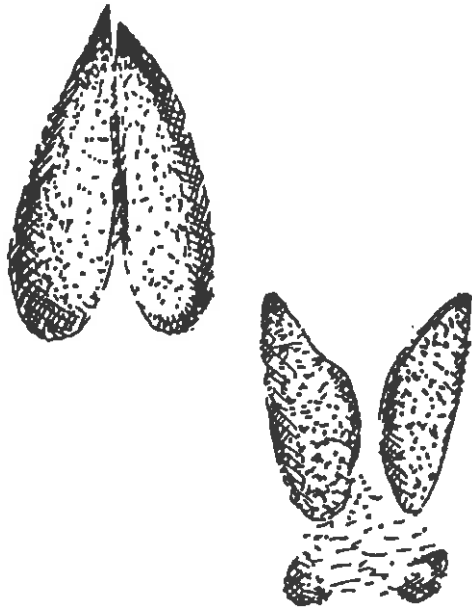
Mule Deer (*Odocoileus hemious*)



The mule deer is three to three and a half feet tall at the shoulders, and weighs up to 400 pounds. Its tail is more round than that of a white tail, and it has a black tip.

The mule deer feeds on a variety of grasses, twigs, buds, berries, mushrooms, and acorns. They are crepuscular, being most active in the early morning, and evening hours. Mule deer live exclusively in the western half of the United States.

White-Tailed Deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*)



The white-tailed deer has a distinctive white tail with a coat of fine, light brown to grayish white hair. It feeds on grasses, leaves, twigs, buds, bark, and nuts. They are the most widely hunted animal, but they are also excellent hidlers.

White-tailed deer have a very wide range, across the Eastern United States and into the Rocky Mountains. They often seen feeding in the same areas during the evenings, and they also use the same trails through the forests, and meadows.

Fisher (*Martes pennanti*)



The fisher has a long body, which ranges in length from 31 to 41 inches. The fisher also has a very bushy tail that is 11 $\frac{3}{4}$ to 16 $\frac{5}{8}$ inches in length. The fisher can weigh anywhere from three to 18 pounds. The fisher is omnivorous, feeding on berries and nuts, as well as flesh.

The habitat of the fisher is in mature, dense, coniferous or mixed coniferous and hardwood forests with a closed canopy. Their dens may be either in trees, or in the ground. They are popular in Northern areas of Wisconsin.

Gray Fox (*Urocyon cinereoargenteus*)



The gray fox measures 31 to 34 inches in length, excluding the tail. The color of the gray fox is grizzled gray on the back, to a red color on the sides of the body. The weight of the gray fox is 7 ¼ to 13 pounds. It feeds heavily on small mammals, birds, insects, and plant material including corn, apples, nuts, and cherries.

Their habitat is varied, but is often found in wooded and bushy areas. The dens of the gray fox may be found in a variety of places-the ground, among rocks, or even in a hollow tree. Grey fox often climb trees, sun in trees, den in trees, and even store food in trees. They prefer more wooded habitats than their red cousins. Grey fox are also more likely to be found in close proximity to humans.

Red Fox (*Vulpes fulva*)



The red fox measures about 3 ½ long from the nose to the tip of its long, bushy tail. Its home range is about two square miles, and it sometimes travels up to five miles during the night.

The red fox is primarily nocturnal, though they have been seen in isolated places during the day. The fox eat rodents, rabbits, and ground birds. Foxes are also very playful animals. They prefer semi-wooded areas, but are very adaptable.

Snowshoe Hare (*Lepus americanus*)



The snowshoe hare is about one to 1 ½ feet long and weighs about four pounds. It can easily be recognized by its large feet and its seasonal changes of color; brown in the summer, and white in the winter.

The hare feeds mainly at night, spending the day in protected dens beneath trees, or brush. They inhabit thick coniferous woods and forests where there is plenty of vegetation in the summer, and lots of long-growing vegetation, tender bark, and buds in the winter.

Southern Bog Lemming (*Synaptamys borealis*)



The southern bog lemming is a short-tail vole. It ranges on length from 4 5/8 to 6 1/8 inches, excluding their tail. The color of the southern bog lemming is brown on the back, and silvery underneath. Grass and clovers are the bulk of its diet. The southern bog lemming may also eat fungi and algae.

Their habitat is usually grassy meadows and often in dry bloom sedge. The southern bog lemming lives in a system of subsurface runways, and burrows- about six inches below the ground.

Pine Marten (*Martes americana*)



The pine marten is weasel-like, with a bushy tail. The length of the pine marten ranges from $19 \frac{1}{4}$ to twenty-seven inches. The average weight is 1 to $3 \frac{1}{2}$ pounds. Red-backed voles and other small rodents are the marten's meal. Its varied diet includes carrion, insects, earthworms, eggs, berries, and honey.

Their habitat consists of forests with numerous dead trunks and branches. They prefer vast tracks of mature mixed forest, primarily of the north. Their selective habitat requirements makes them a threatened species. Pine marten dens are usually in a tree, in a convenient cavity, and can be hard to find during summer months.

Mink (*Mustela vison*)



The mink is dark brown, with a whit patch on its chin. Its size varies greatly. Most are about two feet long (including their tail) and weigh 1 ½ to three pounds. They are nocturnal, solitary, and very territorial. They love the shorelines of lakes, streams, and ponds. Mink are excellent swimmers and divers, and they love to play in the water too! They prey on mice, rats, frogs, fish, crayfish, and birds.

Common Mole (*Scalopus aquaticus*)



The common mole is very short, with velvety fur. The fur is brown or tan. The length of a mole is 3 $\frac{1}{4}$ to 8 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches. Their average weight is 3 to 5 ounces. It feeds mainly on earthworms, but also eats larvae and many species of adult insects.

The habitat of the common mole consists mostly of open fields, waste areas, lawns, gardens, and sometimes woods. The nests are underground, usually beneath a log, stump, or boulder.

Star-Nose Mole (*Condylura cristata*)



The star-nosed mole has black fur with a long, hairy tail. There are also twenty-two fleshy projections coming from the nose. The length of this mole ranges from 6 to 8 $\frac{1}{4}$ inches. The average weight is one to two $\frac{5}{8}$ ounces. This mole eats many aquatic animals, including fish.

Their habitat is wet woods, fields, or swamps. Its nests are constructed of leaves, grass, or other vegetation, usually in a raised area above the moist habitat.

Deer Mouse (*Peromyscus maniculatus*)



The deer mouse is often gray to red on the backside, and white on the belly. The tail is distinctly colored and short-haired. The length of the head of the body is three to four inches with a tail of two to five inches. The average weight is $\frac{3}{8}$ to $\frac{7}{8}$ ounces. They feed on various foods, including seeds, nuts, small fruits, berries, insects, and centipedes.

The deer mouse is nocturnal and usually rests during the day in logs, burrows, trees, buildings, or even bird nests. Their habitat is in prairies and under grasslands.

House Mouse (*Mus musculus*)



The house mouse is 5 1/8 to 7 3/4 inches in length. It is grayish brown on the backside and just as dark on the belly. The average weight is 5/8 to 3/4 ounces.

The habitat of the house mouse is in buildings and areas with good ground cover, especially cultivated fields.

Jumping Meadow Mouse (*Zapus hudsonius*)



The jumping meadow mouse is brown on the backside with a white belly. The length is $7 \frac{3}{8}$ to $10 \frac{1}{8}$ inches. The average weight is $\frac{3}{8}$ to one ounce. It feeds on the seeds of grasses and many other green plants.

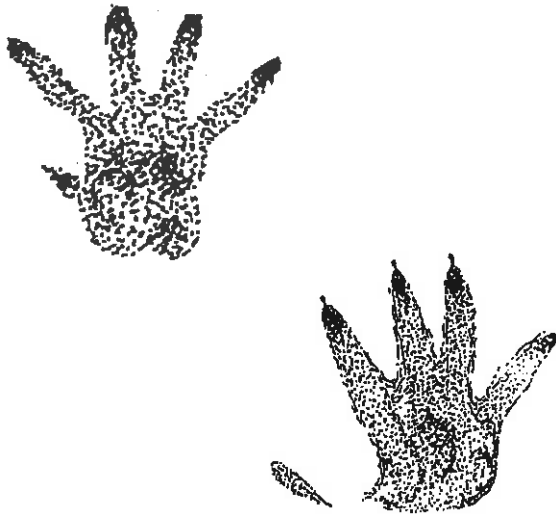
The nests are made out of grass and can be found in a protected place, such as under a board or clump of grass.

White-Footed Mouse (*Peromyscus leucopus*)



The white-footed mouse is about 3 ½ to 4 ½ inches long, not including the tail. The mouse is brown with white feet and under parts. They live in thickly wooded areas, using stumps, logs, bushes, bird nests, and holes in the ground for burrows.

Muskrat (*Ondatra ziberthica*)



Musk rats are 10 to 14 inches long, excluding their tails. They weigh two to four pounds. Musk rats are found in marshes and along streams, and pond-sides. Most often, muskrats live in excavated bank burrows, or beaver like houses made of sticks and vegetation. They eat cattails, reeds, pondweed, and occasionally clams, crayfish, frogs, and turtles. They're mostly nocturnal, solitary animals.

Virginia Opossum (*Didelphis marsupialis*)



The opossum is a grey animal with a pointed nose, and a long, skin-like tail. Including the tail, it measures about 2 ½ feet long, and it can weigh anywhere from five to ten pounds. Opossums are the only marsupial animals in North America. They give birth to tiny young which mature in the mother's pouch.

They are scavengers, eating a variety of foods, including fruits, nuts, insects, grubs, and carrion.

The opossum dens in hollow logs, brush piles, old buildings, and tree cavities. Its home range is about 25 acres, but at times occupies up to 60 acres. Central Wisconsin is about the northern limit of their habitat.

Norway Rat (*Rattus norvegicus*)



The Norway rat is brownish gray in color. It measures about 14 inches long, including the tail, and weighs around a half pound.

The rat is nocturnal, and rarely seen during the day, it stays in dark places or holes. It feeds on grains, grasses, or anything it can easily consume. It is probably the most widespread mammal on Earth, as it has followed humans from pole to pole. Norway rats can be problematic invasive species.

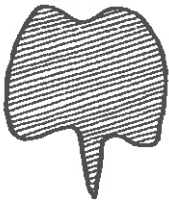
Masked Shrew (*Sorex cinereus*)



In light snow



In loose snow



In deep snow

The masked shrew is $2 \frac{3}{4}$ to $4 \frac{3}{8}$ inches in length. The color is brown on the backside, and silvery grey on the belly. The average weight of this shrew is $\frac{1}{16}$ to $\frac{1}{4}$ ounces. It feeds on moths, beetles, larvae, slugs, snails, and spiders.

The common habitats of the masked shrew are moist fields, bogs, marshes, and moist woods. It makes a nest of leaves, or grass under a log or a stump or in a clump of vegetation.

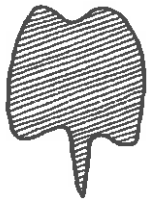
Pygmy Shrew (*Sorex hoyi*)



In light snow



In loose snow



In deep snow

The pygmy shrew is a tiny shrew, often weighing no more than a dime. The color is brown to gray on the backside, and pale or silvery on the belly. The pygmy shrew ranges in length from 3 1/8 to 3 7/8 inches. It feeds on tiny insects, larvae, spiders, and other small invertebrates.

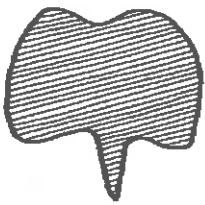
Short-Tailed Shrew (*Blarina brevicaatla*)



In light snow



In loose snow



In deep snow

The short-tailed shrew is the largest shrew in North America. It is dark gray in color, with a short tail. The length of the head and body is 3 to 4 inches, with a tail of $\frac{3}{4}$ to one inch. The average weight of the shrew is $\frac{1}{2}$ to one ounce. The short-tailed shrew feeds on centipedes, beetles, and other invertebrates.

The short-tailed shrew can be found in all land habitats, except deserts.

Striped Skunk (*Mephitis mephitis*)



The striped skunk is only about two feet long, including the tail. The skunk weighs up to 12 pounds. It is mainly a nocturnal scavenger, feeding on almost anything it can find.

The skunk prefers to den underground or beneath buildings, though sometimes they hole up in hollow logs, brush piles, or rock piles.

13-Lined Ground Squirrel (*Spermophilus tridecemlineatus*)



The thirteen-lined ground squirrel has 13 alternating brown and white longitudinal lines on its back, and sides. They are $6 \frac{3}{4}$ to $11 \frac{5}{8}$ inches long, and weigh about $3 \frac{7}{8}$ to $9 \frac{1}{2}$ ounces. Grass, and weed seeds, caterpillars, and grasshoppers are the diet of this squirrel.

The habitat of the thirteen-lined ground squirrel is in short grass areas and wherever grass is kept mowed, such as the lawns of golf courses. The home range is two to three acres.

Flying Squirrel (*Glaucomys sabrinus*)



Flying squirrels are small with soft fur – brown in the back, and white on the belly. The flying squirrel has a loose fold of skin between the four legs, and hind legs, which enable them to glide through the air. The length of this squirrel is $10 \frac{3}{8}$ to $14 \frac{1}{2}$ inches. The usual weight is $1 \frac{1}{2}$ to $2 \frac{1}{2}$ ounces. The flying squirrel feeds in nuts, seeds, and insects.

Hollows in trees are perfect nesting sites for these squirrels. They are only active at night, meaning that many are not aware of their presence.

Fox Squirrel (*Sciurus niger*)



The fox squirrel is the largest tree squirrel, and is grey on the back and yellowish on the belly. This squirrel has a large bushy tail with yellow tipped hairs. The fox squirrel is $17 \frac{7}{8}$ to 28 inches in length and weighs $17 \frac{3}{4}$ to $37 \frac{1}{2}$ ounces. The fox squirrel eats mostly hickory nuts and acorns.

Their habitat is in wooded areas, particularly in oak-hickory stands.

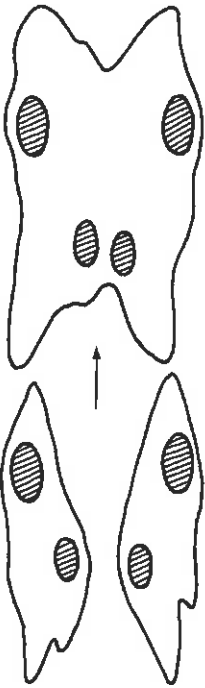
Gray Squirrel (*Sciurus carolinensis*)



Gray squirrels are gray with white bellies and long, bushy tails. Their bodies are eight to twelve inches long, and their tail is almost just as long! Gray squirrels are usually tree-dwelling animals. Their home range is usually one to seven acres. Gray squirrels build their nests in cavities, or in big, leafy domes. These domes are high enough in trees to discourage predators.

Gray squirrels feed on nuts, berries, and a wide variety of seeds in the summer. They are often seen running about in the winter in search of their food.

Red Squirrel (*Tamiasciurus hudsonicus*)



The red squirrel is the smallest tree squirrel in its range. It is rust red to grayish red on the backside to white in the belly. There is also a black line that separates the red back from the white belly. The total length of the red squirrel is $10 \frac{5}{8}$ to $15 \frac{1}{4}$ inches and their weight is 5 to $8 \frac{7}{8}$ ounces. The red squirrel will eat, or store acorns, beechnuts, and seeds of hickory. They seem to prefer pine cones where available.

The common habitat for the red squirrel is any type of forested area, but they tend to prefer mixed forests.

Meadow Vole (*Microtus pennsylvanicus*)



The meadow vole ranges from 3 to 5 inches in length, and varies in color from gray to dark brown.

The vole's range is up to one acre. You can usually find distinctive vole runways, a little over an inch wide. Voles are easily seen most anytime of the day, or night, but they are awfully quick.

Least Weasel (*Mustela nivalis*)



The least weasel is a tiny weasel which is brown on the backside, and white in the belly. The tail is short and brown colored. This weasel's length is $6 \frac{3}{4}$ to $8 \frac{1}{8}$ inches and it weighs about $1 \frac{1}{4}$ to $1 \frac{3}{4}$ ounces. The least weasel may be active day or night, and it eats shrews, voles, birds, and insects.

Their habitat is in grassy and brushy fields. The least weasel will dig in the abandoned burrow of another small mammal.

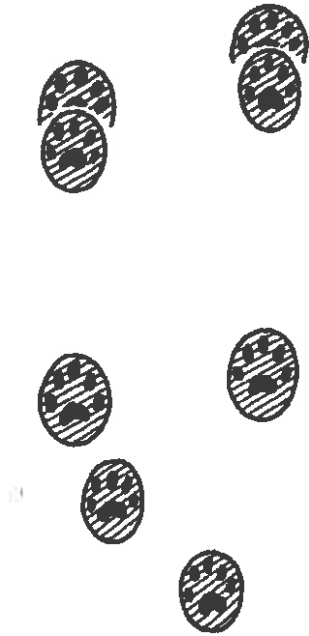
Long-Tailed Weasel (*Mustela frenata*)



The long-tailed weasel is primarily brown in the summer, and white in the winter. It measures 10 inches long, excluding the its 4 to 6 inch tail, and weighs from 3 to 12 ounces.

Weasels are active during the day and night, feeding on mice, rats, chipmunks, ground squirrels, birds, eggs. Rabbits, berries, seeds, and anything else it can catch and kill. This species dens in old burrows of other animals, preferring logs.

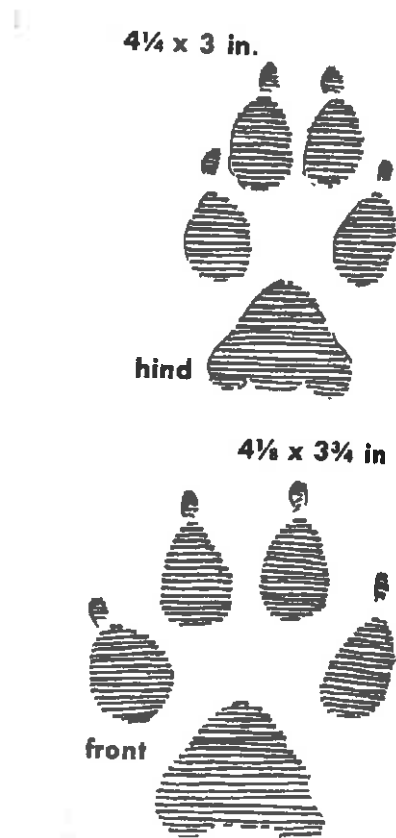
Short-Tailed Weasel (*Mustela erminea*)



The short-tailed weasel has an elongated body which is dark brown on the backside, and white on the belly. The tail is brown with a black tip. The length of this weasel is 7 ½ to 13 ½ inches, and the weight is 1 ¾ to 6 3/8 ounces. This weasel is active during the day or night and mice and/or meadow voles are its main food.

Their habitat is in open woodlands. The den may be found within a log, stump, brush pile, or stone wall. The den usually has several entrances.

Timber Wolf (*Canis lupus*)



The timber wolf is very large, with a long, bushy tail that ends in a black tip. The length of this wolf is 4'3" by 6'9" and weighs 57 to 130 pounds. The timber wolf usually hunts at night, and feeds primarily on large mammals, including moose, caribou, and deer.

Their habitat is usually open tundra and forests. Dens are usually in grassy areas with plenty of mice, and a wide view. Timber wolves have reclaimed much of their former range with Federal protection under the Endangered Species act. In recent years they have been delisted in the Great Lakes area, and are continuing to expand their range.

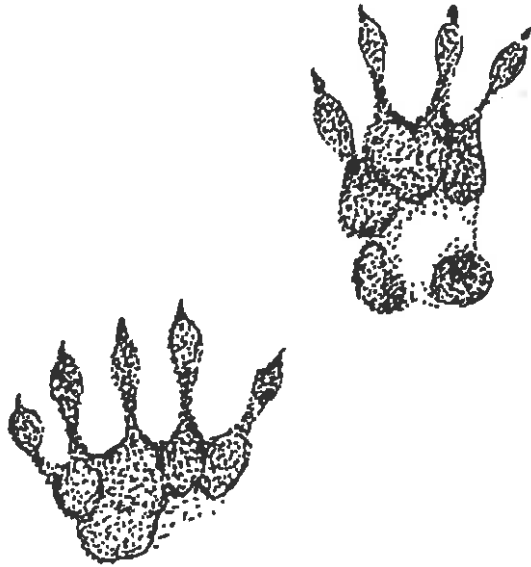
Wolverine (*Gulo luscus*)



The wolverine is a powerful, bear-like weasel. It is about 3 ½ feet long, and weights 40 to 60 pounds. Active by day, and night, it is primarily a carrion (flesh unfit for food) eater, but will eat any animal that it can kill. It will also eat berries, and eggs.

Wolverines climb well, and are excellent swimmers. They den in sheltered ground, or in brush under logs. Wolverines prefer northern coniferous forests and are rare in the lower United States.

Woodchuck (*Marmota monax*)



Woodchucks are wide-bodied, burrowing rodents. They measure 18 to 30 inches from their nose to the tip of their tail. They weigh about 5 to 20 pounds. The general color varies from yellowish brown to gray. Woodchucks are mainly active during the day. They dig burrows 4 to 6 feet deep, and up to 45 feet long with several entrances. Most hibernate through the fall, and winter. They are also solitary, and territorial.