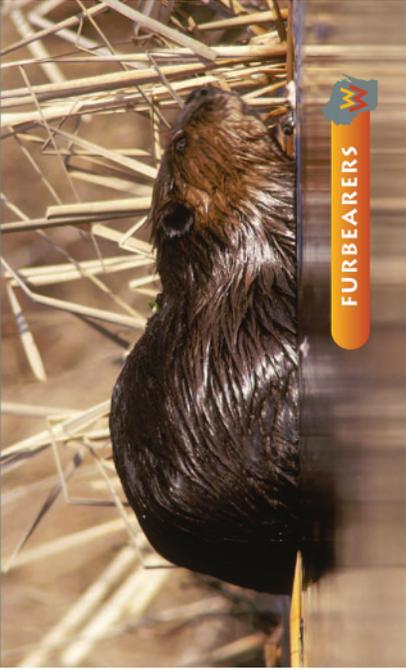


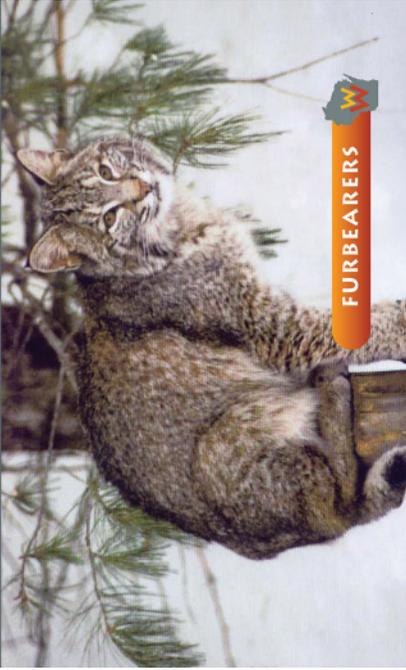
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RABBITS & HARES



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LARGE MAMMALS



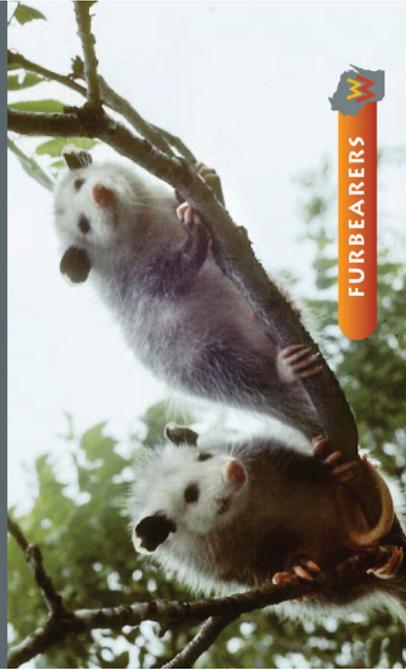
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LARGE MAMMALS



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EASTERN COTTONTAIL

Sylvilagus floridanus

BASIC ID: Grayish brown, mid-sized mammal with cottonball tail, big eyes, long ears and large hind legs & feet.

HABITS: Cottontails sit very still if caught in the open away from their burrow, but will burst away with amazing speed if people or predators get too close. Their furry, hopping feet leave distinctive tracks: two large hind feet usually in front of two smaller forepaws. Their toe pads or claws don't show well in the tracks due to the dense fur. They leave round pellet droppings along runways & distinctive sharp, angled cuts on berry bushes and saplings. These strict vegetarians are prolific breeders, raising 3-4 litters per year.

HABITAT: Found throughout Wisconsin along edges of fields & forest. They often hide in brush piles & hedgerows. In winter, they leave depressions in the snow, called **forms**, & make well-traveled paths under sheltering evergreens.

WILD! This thin-skinned mammal provides an important source of food for our native hawks, owls, foxes, coyotes and mink.

For more info, visit WIDNR's Wildlife Notebook:
<http://dnr.wi.us/org/land/wildlife/publ/wlnotebook.htm>

Photo: Vladimir Ivanov
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WM-514 2009



BOBCAT

Felis rufus

BASIC ID: Bobcats are larger than domestic cats, ranging from 15 to more than 50 pounds. Recognize this native feline by the small ear tufts, small feet, and short tail with a black tip only on the top side.

HABITS: Bobcats are secretive mammals of our northern and central forests. They eat a variety of animals, insects and plants.

HISTORY: Once considered a varmint, bobcats are now valuable furbearers and harvested on a limited basis by licensed hunters and trappers.

WILD! Juvenile bobcats without a "home" may wander more than 100 miles before establishing a territory and marking it with urine and feces.

For information: please see wildlife management publication, *The Bobcat* (WM-056), or order it at:

www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/land/wildlife/PUBL

Photo: Dean Dix
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WM-445 2004

BEAVER

Castor Canadensis

BASIC ID: The beaver is the largest North American rodent and is easily recognized by its flat scaly tail and webbed hind feet. Beavers have large incisors (front teeth) for cutting down trees to build their dams and lodges (homes).

HABITS: Beavers live in wetlands, lakes, and rivers, and prefer to eat the inner bark of aspen trees. Their dams may cause flooding and damage to roads and trout streams while making excellent habitat for other wildlife. Regulated trapping helps to control beaver numbers.

HISTORY: The first European explorers came to what is now Wisconsin in search of beaver. Felt hats made of beaver fur were prized fashion in Europe in the 1600s.

WILD! Beavers have transparent inner eye-lids that serve as goggles and protect their eyes while underwater.

For information: please see Wildlife Management publication, *The Beaver* (WM-009), or order it at:

www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/land/wildlife/PUBL

Photo: Scott Nielsen
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WM-425 2003

OPOSSUM

Didelphis virginiana

BASIC ID: The opossum has grayish-white fur; a long, naked tail; and black, hairless ears. Its prehensile tail and opposable "big toes" on its back feet allow it to grasp and hold objects.

HABITS: Opossums are true omnivores and eat just about anything. They are solitary animals that switch dens every couple of days or so.

HISTORY: This marsupial (pouched animal) is actually a southern species that migrated northward. It is not well adapted to cold weather and will often have frostbite on its ears or tail.

WILD! A new litter of opossums contains as many as 17 to 21 babies. The whole litter weighs less than a penny!

<http://dnr.wi.gov/org/caer/ce/seek/critter/mammal/opossum/htm>

Photo: Herbert Lange
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WM-463 2005

MOOSE

Alces alces

BASIC ID: This largest member of the deer family is distinguished by its huge head, bulbous snout, small rump, long, spindly legs and—in bulls—enormous, flattened and pronged antlers spreading to 6 feet. Moose stand over 6 feet at the shoulder, are 6.5-9 feet long & weigh 725-1,100 pounds! Their coat ranges from dark tan to blackish-brown; legs are lighter. Calf is dull red-brown. Bulls have a long, dangling flap of skin, called a "bell," below the throat. Cows lack antlers.

HABITS: Spring thru fall, moose feed on tree leaves or on aquatic plants while standing in shallow water. In winter, they survive by browsing on twigs. Bulls call in deep throaty grunts & moans. Usually, only one calf is born from mid-May through early June. It stays with its mother until the following year when she chases it away just before her new calf arrives. Moose are good swimmers with keen hearing but poor vision.

HABITAT: Originally inhabiting forested wetlands & shallow lakes in northern Wisconsin, infectious brainworms (transmitted from deer) have caused the decline of this native mammal. It now only occasionally immigrates into our state from neighboring Minnesota or Michigan.

WILD! Moose need large areas of wilderness to thrive.

For more info, visit WIDNR's Wildlife Notebook:
<http://dnr.wi.us/org/land/wildlife/publ/wlnotebook.htm>

Photo: Eliza Snow
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WM-503 2009



ELK

Cervus elaphus

BASIC ID: Elk are the second largest member of the deer family in Wisconsin. Bulls weigh up to 900 pounds & stand 5 feet at the shoulder. Cows are 25% smaller. Both sport a dark brown mane from head to brisket. The light cream-colored rump is easily seen from great distances.

HABITS: Elk do best where forest and open areas occur together. In this "edge" habitat, they graze on grass & forbs (herbs) & browse on leaves, needles, buds & tree bark. Elk usually stay in groups: bulls in bachelor groups; cows & calves in nursery groups. Nursery groups include mothers, calves, heifers and older, barren, cows. In fall, bulls gather & defend a harem of cows from other "eligible suitors."

HISTORY: Prior to 1800, elk were found over most of North America. Unregulated, over-hunting drastically reduced their numbers, until they were no longer found in Wisconsin. In 1995, 25 elk from Michigan were released near Clam Lake. Today, Wisconsin elk are descendants of these original reintroduced animals.

WILD! Mature bulls develop enormous forked antlers, up to 45 pounds a pair, in just three months!

For more info, visit WIDNR's Wildlife Notebook:
<http://dnr.wi.us/org/land/wildlife/publ/wlnotebook.htm>

Photo: Matt McKay, WIDNR
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WM-502 2009



RED FOX

Vulpes vulpes

BASIC ID: Red foxes weigh 10-15 lbs. and may be red, sandy blonde, black or silver with bushy, white-tipped tails. They usually have a white chin, throat and belly.

HABITS: Red foxes eat plants and insects, but prefer small mammals such as mice or cottontails. They live in fields and woodlots and are most active at night.

HISTORY: Farming and logging by early settlers increased fox habitat. Today, foxes compete with expanding coyote populations for space. They are, however, still plentiful.

WILD! Foxes often "bite off more than they can chew" by killing more than they can eat at the moment. Extra food is often buried for future use.

For information: please see wildlife management publication, *The Red Fox* (WPM-063), or order it at:

www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/land/wildlife/PUBL

Photo: Herbert Lange
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WM-447 2004

RACCOON

Procyon lotor

BASIC ID: Raccoons are easily recognized by their black facial "masks" and ringed tails. They have five elongated toes on each foot, and are flat-footed.

HABITS: Raccoons are an "omnivore" which means they will eat almost anything! They eat grass, beetles, bird eggs, crayfish, even people's garbage! They are found in nearly any setting, may carry parasites, and may become troublesome around our homes.

HISTORY: Raccoons are very adaptable and present statewide. Regulated, licensed trappers help to reduce high populations and allow humans and raccoons to coexist.

WILD! Raccoons are able to use their feet like hands. The name "raccoon" comes from a Native American (Algonquin) term which means, "He who scratches with hands." (Please don't feed raccoons!)

For information: please see Wildlife Management publication, *The Raccoon* (WPM-062), or order it at:

www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/land/wildlife/PUBL

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WM-438 2003