

Mammal Characteristics

What is a mammal? Here are the five main characteristics that makes a mammal a mammal.

1. They are covered with hair/fur.
2. They are warm-blooded.
3. Usually born live and go through a gestation period before birth.
4. Young are fed with milk produced by mammary glands.
5. They have larger and more complex brains.

By the Numbers

There are over **6,800 different species** of mammals in the world. In Virginia, there are approximately **120 species**. Worldwide, there are **27 different orders** and this brochure covers the **6 orders** found in the area.

Fun Fact: Over 70% of mammal species are in the orders Rodentia, Chiroptera and Eulipotyphla.

Additional Resources

The following links provide additional information for those curious to learn more about the world of Mammalogy.

<https://animaldiversity.org/accounts/Mammalia/>

<https://www.mammaldiversity.org/>

Lagomorpha:

Lagomorphs are small to medium-sized mammals with short tails. They have a large pair of upper front incisors with a secondary pair of peg teeth behind them. All lagomorphs are terrestrial and herbivores.

- Eastern Cottontail



Didelphimorphia:

Didelphimorphs are American marsupials. They have many teeth, a prehensile tail and their hind limbs are clawless with slightly opposable thumbs. Many have a well-developed pouch to carry their young.

- Virginia Opossum



Chiroptera:

Chiropterans are bats and they are the second largest order following rodents, making up roughly 20% of mammalian species. They are the only mammals that have true wings and flight. All of the species we have are insectivorous and use echolocation to navigate and hunt insects.

- Little Brown Bat
- Big Brown Bat
- Tricolored Bat
- Northern Long-eared Bat
- Eastern Red Bat
- Hoary Bat



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VIRGINIA STATE PARKS

Claytor Lake State Park
presents

A Checklist of Mammals



www.virginiastateparks.gov

A Guide to this Brochure:

This brochure provides an introduction to **Mammalogy**, the study of mammals, and a checklist of the species you are **most likely** to find at Claytor Lake State Park (CLSP). Mammals are found everyday at the park, but some species are rarer than others. This is to help you understand the different orders, what their characteristics are and to help you identify the critters you see!

Getting Started:

The group of animals most frequently seen at Claytor Lake are mammals, in fact if you look in the mirror you will see one. In nature they look a bit different though, at CLSP these will appear as furry friends.

Although the park has many mammals around, many are not active during the day, demonstrating nocturnal or crepuscular behavior. Sightings will be higher at dawn or dusk for this reason.

Please respect wildlife, do not touch or feed wild animals.

If you see an animal displaying odd behavior, report to a park ranger.

Rodentia:

Rodents are the largest order of mammals, making up over 40% of all mammalian species. They have highly specialized teeth for gnawing and all have an upper and lower pair of teeth called incisors. Their incisors never stop growing, so they grind and gnaw to keep them short and sharp.

- American Beaver
- Muskrat
- Eastern Meadow Vole
- White-footed Mouse
- Eastern Deermouse
- House Mouse
- Eastern Chipmunk
- Eastern Gray Squirrel
- Eastern Fox Squirrel
- Southern Flying Squirrel
- Groundhog



Artiodactyla:

Artiodactyls are even-toed ungulates that bear their weight equally on two toes rather than a single central toe. In the hind limbs, the bones of the ankle are reduced which helps for running fast and efficiently.

- White-tailed Deer



Carnivora:

Carnivorans are placental mammals that specialize primarily in eating flesh. Despite their name, not all carnivorans are carnivorous and not all carnivores are in this order.

They are divided into two suborders, the **Feliformia**, containing the true felids and several "cat-like" animals; and the **Caniformia**, containing the true canids and many "dog-like" animals.

The feliforms include the Felidae, Viverridae, hyena, and mongoose families. The caniforms include the Caninae, Procyonidae, bears, mustelids, skunks and pinnipeds.

- Bobcat
- Coyote
- Gray Fox
- Red Fox
- Striped Skunk
- Eastern Spotted Skunk
- North American River Otter
- Least Weasel
- Long-tailed Weasel
- American Mink
- American Black Bear
- Common Raccoon

