



Carl Nielson

Black-tailed Deer

(*Odocoileus hemionus columbianus*)

Description: Among our most visible and widespread wildlife species. Coat color changes with the season, reddish-brown in summer to grayish in winter. Male (buck) weighs up to 140 lbs.

Habitats: Occurs in most habitats, but varies by season and food availability.

Territory/Home Range: Home range varies considerably based on topography and food availability.

Occurrence: Very common and seen by many visitors.

Food Habits: Feeds on a wide variety of shrubs and forbs (broad-leaved herbaceous plants) in brush-covered areas. Preyed upon by mountain lions; coyotes and eagles often prey on fawns.

Life Cycle: Males develop antlers in spring for fall breeding season and shed them in winter. Fawns are born in spring (litter size 1-3) and spend most of their time with their mothers. Fawn's spotted coat helps as camouflage until they are weaned and develop a grayish winter coat, which provides camouflage in fall forests. Life span 9-10 years.

Human Interaction: Common in forested suburban areas.

Common, But Rarely Seen

Long-tailed weasel is very secretive. Goes into burrows after rodents and rabbits. **Western harvest mouse** lives in grassy areas, feeds mainly on seeds. **White-footed mice**—three species of white-footed mice found in the park. **California meadow mouse or vole** is abundant in grassland areas; feeds on grass, seeds, roots, bark. **Dusky-footed woodrat**—sometimes called “packrat” because it tends to collect things and store them in nests. Nest looks like pile of sticks (2-4 ft. high), contains many passages and rooms. Eats seeds, nuts, berries. **California pocket gopher** is seen throughout the park and is common in suburban areas. Feeds on roots, grasses, herbs, seeds. **Ornate shrew** is our smallest mammal. Aggressive predator. Has such a high metabolism, it must eat constantly. Eats insects, sow bugs and spiders.

Feral Mammals

A feral animal is a domestic animal that escaped or was allowed to go wild.

Feral cats compete for food with native wildlife such as weasels, owls, hawks and snakes. **Feral dogs** often were abandoned by owners. Non-feral pet dogs that run loose at night can hunt and kill wildlife in the park. **Feral pigs**, common in the park since its inception, likely escaped from local ranches. They damage land by rooting in damp soil, destroy native plants and cause soil erosion. The park has a program to control the feral pig population.

Mammals, like all features of a state park, are protected by law. Please do not feed, capture or harm wildlife.

The mission of the California Department of Parks and Recreation is to provide for the health, inspiration and education of the people of California by helping to preserve the state's extraordinary biological diversity, protecting its most valued natural and cultural resources, and creating opportunities for high-quality outdoor recreation.

California State Parks supports equal access. Prior to arrival, visitors with disabilities who need assistance should contact Mount Diablo State Park, 925.673.2891 (Bay Sector Office) or 925.837.6129 (Junction Ranger Station). This publication is available in alternate formats by contacting Mount Diablo State Park, 925.673.2891.



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Common Mammals of Mount Diablo State Park



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Gray Fox

(*Urocyon cinereoargenteus californicus*)

Description: Grizzled upper parts, strong neck, black-tipped tail. Weighs 8-15 lbs.

Habitats: Wooded, brush, grassy areas.

Territory/Home Range: Territorial; can be aggressive during breeding season. Marks territory with scat, urine and pungent musk.

Occurrence: Fairly common, but not often seen. Is nocturnal or crepuscular (active at dawn and dusk). Dens in hollow trees, stumps or appropriated burrows during day.

Food Habits: Solitary hunter. Preys upon rabbits, hares, voles, shrews, squirrels, birds and their eggs. Eats fruits such as berries. Strong, hooked claws allow it to climb trees to escape predators or to reach prey. Descends by jumping from branch to branch or by descending slowly backward.

Life Cycle: Breeds Feb.-March, gestation period about 53 days. Litter size 1-7. Kits begin to hunt with parents at 3 months. Family remains together until fall when young reach sexual maturity and disperse. Life span 6-10 years.

Human Interaction: Little conflict with humans; beneficial in controlling rodents. Featured prominently in Native American folklore and creation stories.



Coyote (*Canis latrans*)

Description: Gray to brown coat, pointed muzzle, large ears, black-tipped bushy tail; weighs 15-35 lbs. Uses many different vocal sounds to communicate.

Habitats: Occurs in virtually all habitat types. Prefers downed tree hollows or caves for dens.

Territory/Home Range: Can cover 10-15 miles in a night. Home ranges do not overlap. Uses urine and scat to mark territory.

Occurrence: Widespread throughout the park. Mostly active at night, dawn and dusk, but sometimes can be seen in daylight hunting for ground squirrels or gophers.

Food Habits: Prefers small mammals, but will hunt anything from insects to deer and will even eat fruit. Coyotes travel in family groups and often hunt in pairs.

Life Cycle: Breeds from winter into spring; 2-month gestation period. Litter size 4-6 pups. Life span 10-12 years.

Human Interaction: Range and populations have increased despite human encroachment. Attacks on humans are uncommon and rarely serious. Is known as a trickster in Native American mythology and is prominent in Native American creation stories.



Stockbyte

Mountain Lion (*Felis concolor*)

Description: After the jaguar, it is the second largest cat in North America (males 125-190 lbs., females 80-125 lbs.). Uniform tawny color, no body markings, long tail.

Habitats: Occurs in all habitat types. Prefers dense underbrush and rocky areas for stalking prey.

Territory/Home Range: Is solitary, territorial, and persists at low population densities. Territory size in this area is large (50-100 square miles). Marks territorial boundaries with claw marks on trees, deposits of urine and scat.

Occurrence: Rarely seen because it is secretive and crepuscular (active at dawn and dusk). While sightings have increased in recent years, coyotes, bobcats and dogs are sometimes mistaken for them.

Food Habits: Very capable stalk-and-ambush predator. Primary food sources include deer, but will hunt smaller prey, such as rabbits, based on availability.

Life Cycle: Breeds Jan.-April. Gestation period is about 3 months. Litter size 2-3 kits. Female stays with kits two years. Life span 8-10 years.

Human Interaction: Little human contact. Attacks are rare and over-publicized.



Gerald and Buff Consi ©1999 California Academy of Sciences

Bobcat (*Lynx rufus californicus*)

Description: Gray to brown coat, whiskered face, black-tufted ears. Weighs 15-25 lbs., twice as large as a domestic cat. Distinctive black bars on forelegs and black-tipped, stubby tail from which it derives its name.

Habitats: Occurs in virtually all habitat types. Prefers rocky outcrop areas with burrows, tree hollows or caves for dens.

Territory/Home Range: Territorial and largely solitary, although some overlap in home ranges. Marks territorial boundaries using claw marks on trees and deposits of urine and scat.

Occurrence: Widespread, but rarely seen because it is secretive and crepuscular (active at dawn and dusk).

Food Habits: Prefers rabbits and hares, but hunts anything from insects, small rodents, birds, to deer. Prey selection depends on location and habitat, season and abundance. Climbs well and swims if necessary and possesses excellent binocular vision.

Life Cycle: Breeds from winter into spring; gestation period 2 months. Litter size 2-4 kits, raised by female. Life span 10-12 years.

Human Interaction: Avoids human contact if possible. Featured in Native American mythology.



Black-tailed Jackrabbit

(*Lepus californicus*)

Description: Gray color, large ears and hind legs. Ears black tipped on outside. Weighs 3-6 lbs. Is a hare, not a rabbit.

Habitats: Brushland, prairie, meadow communities; commonly feeds in cultivated pastures, lawns. May be seen during day, but is mainly crepuscular (active at dawn and dusk) and nocturnal. Does not use a burrow; rests during day in shallow scrape, called a “form,” dug into soil usually under cover of vegetation.

Territory/Home Range: Solitary; often forages and rests in groups. Relies on acute hearing and speed to evade predators.

Occurrence: Very common, frequently observed.

Food Habits: Herbivore; diet includes sagebrush, grasses, crop plants such as clover, alfalfa. Predators include hawks, eagles, coyotes, foxes, bobcats.

Life Cycle: Breeds year-round in mild climates, 4-5 litters of 1-8 a year. Gestation lasts 45 days. Young are born precocial (with fur and open eyes). Life span 1-5 years.

Human Interaction: In agricultural areas, causes considerable crop damage.



Clayton Worsdell

Cottontail Rabbit

(*Sylvilagus audubonii*)

Description: Has distinctive white tail that can be seen as it runs away. Weighs up to 3.3 lbs. Brush rabbits are also in the park, but are smaller and have a gray rather than white tail.

Habitats: Dense, brushy cover, most commonly in chaparral vegetation. Also oak and conifer habitats.

Territory/Home Range: Uses burrow of other species. Concentrates activities at the edge of brush.

Occurrence: Very common and seen in early morning and dusk.

Food Habits: Mainly eats grass, but will eat many other plants. Many animals prey on cottontails, including hawks, eagles, coyotes and bobcats. Its normal predator escape behavior is to run away in zigzags. Can reach speeds of almost 20 mph.

Life Cycle: Young are born in shallow burrow or above ground, but are helpless when born and do not leave nest until they are three weeks old. Where climate and food supply permit, females produce several litters a year. Life span 2-3 years.

Human Interaction: Causes problems by browsing garden crops and chewing on shrubs and trees.



Brian Dean Bollman

California Ground Squirrel

(*Spermophilus beecheyi*)

Description: Upper parts are mottled, the fur containing mixture of gray, light brown and dusky hairs.

Habitats: Occurs in more open grassy disturbed areas. Often builds burrow complexes near rocky areas.

Territory/Home Range: Burrow complexes often occupied communally for generations. Home range within 75 yards of burrow.

Occurrence: Common in grassland, oak savanna habitats.

Food Habits: Feeds on grasses, plants, seeds, nuts as available. Preyed upon by rattlesnakes. Female squirrels chew on skins shed by rattlesnakes, then lick themselves and pups to disguise their scent. Also preyed upon by eagles, raccoons, foxes, badgers, coyotes and weasels.

Life Cycle: Breeds Feb.-April; litter size 7-8. Lives in a burrow it excavates. Is active year round. If summer is very hot, it may estivate (summer hibernate) for a few days. Life span 4-6 years.

Human Interaction: Becomes tame in areas used by humans; quickly learns to take food left or offered by people. Refrain from offering food to avoid bites.



Fox Squirrel (*Sciurus niger*)

Description: Brown to orange-tinged coat, large bushy tail. Largest tree squirrel (1-2 lbs.) native to North America. Native to eastern U.S.; introduced to California in early 1900s.

Habitats: Thrives in wooded oak habitats; can also live in open areas with some trees.

Territory/Home Range: Non-territorial agile climber. Spends more time on ground than most tree squirrels. Uses agility in trees to escape predators. An impressive jumper, spanning 15 feet in horizontal leaps. Emits alarm calls (clucking/chucking sound) to warn other squirrels of predators or approaching threats. Gregarious, playful, often chasing each other up and down trees.

Occurrence: Most common in wooded areas. Is easily observed because of its diurnal (daylight) activity patterns.

Food Habits: Depends on tree seeds for food; also consumes buds, fruit, grain and insects.

Life Cycle: Two breeding seasons, Dec., June. Large litters (8-12). Builds leaf and stick nests. Life span 2-4 years.

Human Interaction: Thrives in Bay Area suburban environments with adequate trees.

Raccoon

(*Procyon lotor*)

Description: Grayish coat, distinctive black mask around eyes, bushy black-ringed tail. Weighs 12-20 lbs. “Raccoon” was adopted into English from Powhatan Indian term, “Aroughcun,” meaning “[the] one who rubs, scrubs and scratches with its hands.”

Habitats: Prefers wooded areas with trees to provide escape cover from predators. Tree hollows and rock crevices are preferred sleeping and natal dens.

Territory/Home Range: Generally territorial with some overlap of home range (5-10 acres).

Occurrence: Common throughout the park. Generally nocturnal, but often seen in campgrounds in daylight foraging for food scraps. Do not feed raccoons.

Food Habits: One of the most omnivorous animals (41% insects, 33% plants and fruit, 27% vertebrates).

Life Cycle: Breeds Jan.-March, gestation period about 64 days. Litter size 2-5. Young usually separate from mother in the fall. Life span 2-4 years. In urban and suburban areas, auto traffic is one of main sources of mortality.

Human Interaction: Frequent contact due to foraging, but attacks on humans are rare. Appears in Native American mythology usually as a trickster that outsmarts other animals.



Opossum

(*Didelphis marsupialis*)

Description: The only marsupial (pouch for carrying young) in California. The word “opossum” comes from the Algonquian word meaning “white dog.” A highly adaptable, successful colonizer in diverse locations and conditions. The Virginia opossum was introduced into California during the early 1900s, probably as a food source.

Habitats: Throughout the park and common near man-made structures.

Territory/Home Range: Usually solitary and nomadic, staying in one area as long as food and water are easily available. Occupies abandoned burrows; does not dig or build its own. Nocturnal; favors dark, secure areas.

Occurrence: Very common; often observed by park visitors.

Food Habits: Semi-arboreal (tree climbing) opportunistic omnivore with broad diet of carrion, insects, frogs, birds, snakes, small mammals, earthworms and fruit. Robust immune system; partial immunity to rattlesnake venom. Has good hearing and sense of smell, but poor eyesight.

Life Cycle: Gestation period 12-14 days. Young are born often in large litters, at a very early stage, and weaned at 70-125 days. Life span 2-4 years.

Human Interaction: When threatened, will “play possum,” mimicking a sick or dead animal.



Striped Skunk

(*Mephitis mephitis*)

Description: Black body with a white stripe along each side of its body; the two stripes join into a broader white area at the nape.

Its forehead has a narrow white stripe. About the size of a small house cat and weighs 6-8 lbs.

Habitats: Occurs throughout the park.

Active at night, dawn and dusk. At sunrise, it retires to its den, which may be in a ground burrow or beneath a building, boulder, or rock pile.

Territory/Home Range: Territory sizes are somewhat small and males will defend against other males. Most skunks do not travel more than a mile or so in one night’s activity.

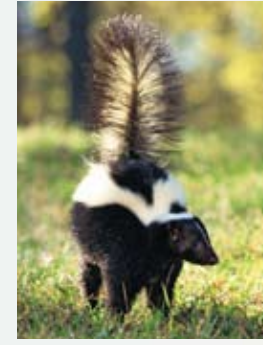
Occurrence: Common throughout the park in a wide variety of habitats.

Food Habits: Feeds on mice, eggs, carrion, insects, grubs and berries.

Life Cycle: Mating occurs Feb.-March with a 42- to 63-day gestation period. Litter size is about 5-6. The young are born blind and follow their mother until late June or July. Life span 3-4 years.

Human Interaction: The presence of a skunk is often first made apparent by its odor. It has well-developed anal scent glands that can emit a highly unpleasant odor when it feels threatened.

Considered beneficial in controlling rodent and insect populations.



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J. Scott Altenbach

Little Brown Bat

(*Myotis lucifugus*)

Description: Body length 2.4-4 inches, wingspan 9-11 inches. Weighs 5-14 grams. Glossy pale tan to dark brown fur. Small, black pointed ears.

Habitats: Woodland and forests near water.

Territory/Home Range: Roosts in large groups in caves, rock crevices, buildings, dead trees. Migrates to hibernation caves and mines.

Occurrence: Occurs throughout the park, in forested, riparian habitats.

Food Habits: Emerges at late dusk, forages over water, around trees and grassy areas. Echolocates to find small flying insects. Can eat more than its body weight each night. Adult can fill its stomach in 15 minutes. If it does not catch any food, it will enter a torpor state similar to hibernation that day, awakening at night to hunt again.

Life Cycle: Mates in autumn before hibernation. In spring, gives birth to one pup, which flies at 3 weeks. Life span to 33 years, although average life span is shorter because 50% die in first year.

Human Interaction: Local bats are not likely to carry rabies, but they have sharp teeth, so do not handle.