



## Animal Bios

Information gathered from Allen Kurta, *Mammals of the Great Lakes Region* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press), 1995.

### Info covered:

- ❖ Diet
- ❖ Habitat
- ❖ Predators
- ❖ Mating, gestation time, birth, early life, maturity/independence
- ❖ Winter preparation and survival

### **Squirrels (Eastern Gray and Fox):**

**Diet:** Feeds on acorns, walnuts hickory nut, etc. In late summer becomes a “scatter hoarder” meaning it buries nuts in shallow holes (1 nut/hole), and feeds on these in winter. In Spring, it eats seeds, buds, berries, insects, etc.

**Habitat:** Wherever deciduous trees are abundant, from forests to residential neighborhoods. Makes nests in trees, leaf nests in branches when possible, but in winter or when raising young, uses trees hollows, (often those made by a woodpecker), for extra warmth and protection.

**Young:** 2 litters/year, 2-4 young/litter. 44 day gestation, first litter in march or april, second litter in July or August. Weaning begins 50-60 days after birth, but young may stay with mother until the next litter is born.

**Predators:** Hawks, owls, bobcats, wild and domestic dogs, weasels, snakes, CARS.

### **Deer:**

**Diet:** Buds, twigs, grasses, herbs, evergreens.

**Habitat:** Winter is spent in a well covered area with up to 50 others. VERY sedated, reserving energy surviving on body fat and local food stores.

**Young:** Fawns are born in May or June after 200 day gestation. Mature does often produce twins. Fawns don’t forage with mother for the first few weeks, instead stays in secluded area and waits for mother to come back and nurse. Weaning is slow, young are usually independent at 4-5 months, when spotted coat is gone.

### **Coyotes:**

**Diet:** Hunts small mammals, alone, with a partner, or family unit, sometimes will cooperate to take down large, weak game. Scavengers.

**Habitat:** Prairies, brush and wood edges, but doesn’t like forest. Moved in after Europeans turned forest into farm and killed off the gray wolf, being more tolerant of humans, it took the gray wolf’s place. Mostly nocturnal.

Young: Coyotes are monogamous. Litter of about 6 pups is born in an underground den after 58-65 day gestation. Eats mother's regurgitated food, at 3<sup>rd</sup> week, and learns how to hunt at 2 months. Most leave den at 6-9 months.

**Rabbits (Eastern Cottontail):**

Diet: Feeds on grasses, dandelion, clover, goldenrod, wild carrot, and plantain in the summer, (also a garden pest). In fall and winter, it switches to the bark twigs and buds or raspberry, apple, red maple, honey locust, staghorn sumac, and other woody species of plants.

Habitat: Rabbits live anywhere with a lot of shrubby underbrush, brush piles, and the like for shelter, and plenty of herbaceous vegetation for food. Doesn't like open grasslands because of the lack of shelter from predators. Winter is hard for the Eastern Cottontail, because the snow makes it stand out, as well as making it hard for it to maneuver quickly to avoid predators.

Young: Mother prepares a nest under shelter before giving birth. Gestation period is about 28 days. Litter size is about 5. Females are sexually mature at 2-3 months, and many adult females produce three litters a year. Average lifespan is less than one year but they can live up to four years in the wild.

Predators: Rabbits have many predators including: coyotes, foxes, domestic dogs, hawks, owls, and many others.

**Muskrat:**

Musk rats spend a considerable amount of time in the water, and their back feet are webbed to aid in swimming.

Diet: Feeds on cattails, rushes and other wetland plants.

Habitat: Build cone-shaped houses out of wetland plants with an underwater entrance, protects from predators and weather. These shelters last only about a year and require constant rebuilding. Muskrats also dig holes in riverbanks for shelter.

Young: 4-8 young are born in spring or summer after a month long gestation period. Babies take their first swim after 2-3 weeks. Adult may have 3 litters per year.

Predators: Humans, cars, raccoons, mink, dogs, foxes, raptors, and snapping turtles.

**Raccoons:**

"Raccoon" comes from an Algonquin word meaning "he who scratches with his hands", referring to the Raccoons ability to use their feet like hands.

Diet: Omnivores, feeding on grasses, insects, fish, crayfish, bird eggs, and garbage.

Habitat: Raccoons are a very adaptable critter that can survive in forests, farmlots, and urban parks. They make shelter in tree hollow abandoned animal burrowed and even abandoned buildings. Nocturnal foragers.

Young: Adult female produce one litter per year of 2-6 young in late spring after a 60-65 day gestation period. Eyes open at 3 weeks, they start taking solid foods at 9 weeks and usually leave their mother's den after 1 year.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

*Winter in the Forest*  
“Keep Your Eyes Peeled!” Log Sheet

Record discoveries at each marked location:

1. Magenta:

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2. Navy:

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3. Blue:

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4. Turquoise:

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5. Red:

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6. Pink:

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7. Yellow:

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8. Orange:

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9. Purple:

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10. Brown:

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## Wild Edible Plants

Scout out these wild edibles and eat them as a raw snack while hiking!

In the maple woodland:

Garlic mustard

Honey locust

Wild asparagus

Wood sorrel

Basswood

In and near the Kids' Garden and Community Gardens pathways:

Lettuce

Chives

Fennel

Swiss chard

Dandelion

White Clover

Raspberry

Strawberry

Lamb's quarters

Rhubarb

Tomato

Pepper

Garlic scapes

Kholrabi

Dill

Plantain

Mulberry

Basil

In the Herb Garden:

Raspberry

Strawberry

Mint

Sage

Oregano

Thyme

Rhubarb

Lavender

Bee balm

Basil

Lemon balm

In the Edible Garden:

Mulberry                      Black caps (or black raspberry)

Apple                              Blackberry

Peach

Pear

Plum

Currant