

WOODCHUCK
MARMOTA MONAX
FAMILY: SCIURIDAE
ORDER: RODENTIA
(GROUND HOG, WHISTLE PIG)


CARE AND REHABILITATION

WRNC's 5th Annual Wildlife Symposium
 North Carolina Zoo
 January 28, 2007
 Glenda Combs
 Wildlife Rehab, Inc.

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LIFE IN THE WILD

Good climbers and swimmers




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LIFE IN THE WILD

DIURNAL (out during the day)

FOUND IN: pastures, meadows, old fields, woods, barns and out buildings.




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LIFE IN THE WILD

Dens

- several feet deep and have 2 or more entrances
- very clean and have separate areas for sleeping, nursing and latrine facilities
- carpeted with leaves (wipe feet before entering)



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 **LIFE IN THE WILD**

DIET

GRASSES
 FORBS
 GARDEN PRODUCE
 APPLES
 CORN
 SOYBEANS

Picture and Sound Courtesy of Hog Haven



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LIFE IN THE WILD


Dens

Winter

- usually built in dry wooded area
- used for hibernation

Summer

- built near grassy area where food is plentiful
- 2-4 feet deep
- when possible, will build underneath barns, sheds and other structures (offers protection from predators)



Picture Courtesy of Hog Haven

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LIFE IN THE WILD

Purpose


- Digging burrows causes better air & water penetration underground producing valuable top soil
- Abandoned dens provide homes for animals such as fox and skunk which kill numerous injurious small rodents and insects

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PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS

INFANTS

- 1.5 OZ @ BIRTH
- 3-4" LONG
- BLIND AND HAIRLESS





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LIFE IN THE WILD

Natural Enemies

bears, wolves, lynx, bobcats, cougars, foxes, dogs and humans


Sound Courtesy of Hog Haven

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PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS

FUR

- brownish black with creamy undercoat
- Soft, dense
- Black/darker nose, feet and tail



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PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS

ADULTS

5 - 10 LBS

1.5 - 2' INCLUDING TAIL (1/4 LENGTH OF BODY)




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PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS

HEAD

Flat head with a pointed snout
 Small round ears
 Black eyes
 Sharp teeth (4 incisors, a gap and 18 grinding teeth)
 Incisors grow throughout their life




Picture Courtesy of Hog Haven

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PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS

TEETH

must provide something hard to gnaw on to keep teeth worn down



A normal woodchuck skull



Skull with abnormal incisors

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MATING AND REPRODUCTION

- Gestation is 31 days
- Birth is April thru June
- 1 litter per year with 2 – 7 babies
- Mother nurses young for ~ 6 weeks



Picture Courtesy of Hog Haven

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PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS


FEET

Hind foot measures 3 – 3 ½ inches in length

Front foot has 4 fingers and a small thumb which is barely visible

All fingers/toes have sharp claws

Short, strong legs



Diagrams show the front and hind feet of the woodchuck and his tracks.

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HIBERNATION

- Move from summer to winter den by late August or early September
- Hibernation begins in late September or early October
- Body temperatures drop to ~ 40 degrees
- Heart beat slows to 4 beats per minute
- Breathing also slows

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MATING AND REPRODUCTION

- Polygamous (males remain care free)
- Young raised by female
- Mate between 1 and 2 years of age
- Mating season is March - May



Picture Courtesy of Hog Haven

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REHABILITATION

FEEDING FORMULA







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REHABILITATION

HOW LONG TO FEED

- begin weaning at 3-4 weeks
- should be weaned by 6-8 weeks

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DIET IN CAPTIVITY

- Rodent blocks or pellets
- Raw vegetables
- Hay
- Apples
- Scrambled eggs
- Strawberries, cantaloupe, and watermelon
- Flowers (Pansies, Nasturtiums and Impatiens)
- Leaves from bean vines
- Garden lettuce

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REHABILITATION

Weaning from formula =
weaning from human contact




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HOUSING

INFANTS

- Cardboard box, small pet carrier, crab box
- Heating pad on low under 1/2 of box/carrier
- Soft, non-raveling bedding



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REHABILITATION

STIMULATION


MUST BE STIMULATED BEFORE OR AFTER EACH FEEDING UNTIL EYES ARE OPENED AND YOU SEE VISUAL SIGNS THAT THEY ARE GOING ON THEIR OWN.

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HOUSING

JUVENILES (4-6 WEEKS)

- Wire/metal cage (will chew out of pet carrier)
- Box for bed/hiding
- Soft, non-raveling bedding
- Hay
- Metal/ceramic food/water containers



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HOUSING

IWRC/NWRA Minimum Standards

<u>Infant</u> (WxLxH)	<u>Nursing/ pre-weened</u> (WxLxH)	<u>Juvenile or Adult Outside</u> (WxLxH)	<u>Initial Injured Adult Inside</u> (WxLxH)
(L) 20 gal	(L) 2x4x3	(1) 6x8x6	(1) 3x3x3

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Picture Courtesy of Hog Haven

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RELEASING HAND-REARED GROUND HOGS


Allow natural instincts & responses to develop

- should fear humans and other animals
 - act defensive when approached
 - eat natural foods only



Picture Courtesy of Hog Haven

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Picture Courtesy of Hog Haven

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RELEASING HAND-REARED GROUND HOGS


Release criteria

- weather
- identification of natural foods
- same species population
- site selection
 - people
 - farms



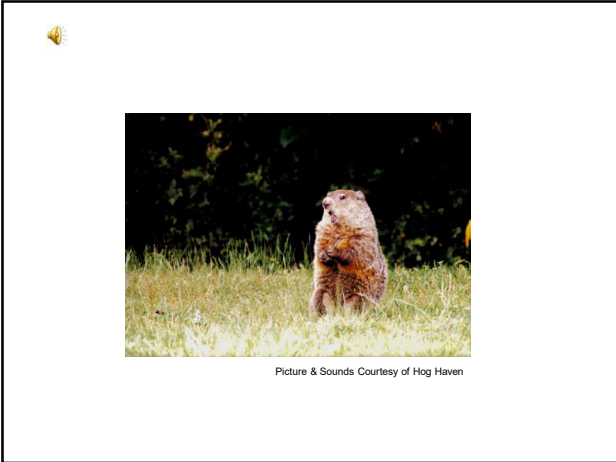
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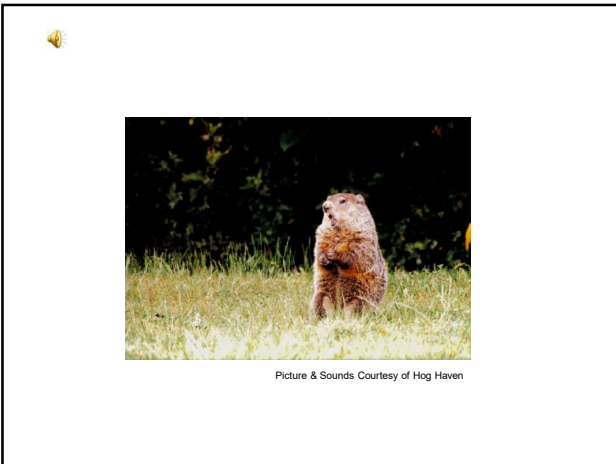


Picture & Sounds Courtesy of Hog Haven

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