

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.

LIFE IN THE WILD

DIURNAL (out during the day)

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





LIFE IN THE WILD

DIET

GRASSES

FORBS

GARDEN PRODUCE

APPLES

CORN

SOYBEANS

Picture and Sound Courtesy of Hog Haven



LIFE IN THE WILD

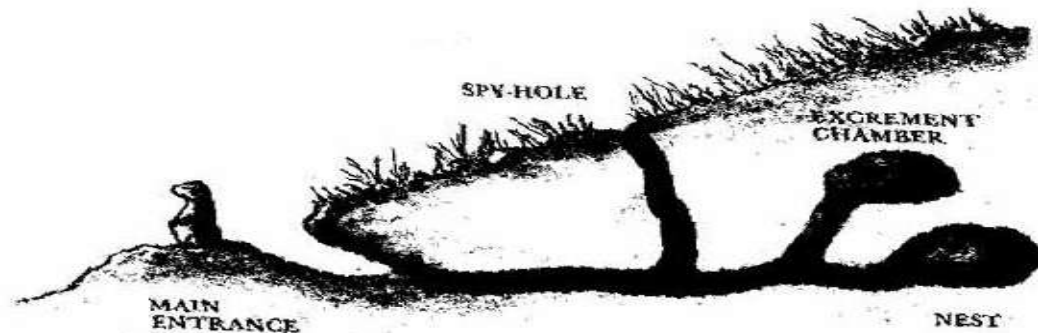
Good climbers and swimmers



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)



LIFE IN THE WILD

Dens

Picture Courtesy of Hog Haven



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)

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



LIFE IN THE WILD

Natural Enemies

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



PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS

ADULTS

5 – 10 LBS

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



PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS

INFANTS

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



PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS

FUR

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



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



PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS

TEETH

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



A normal woodchuck skull



Skull with abnormal incisors

PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS

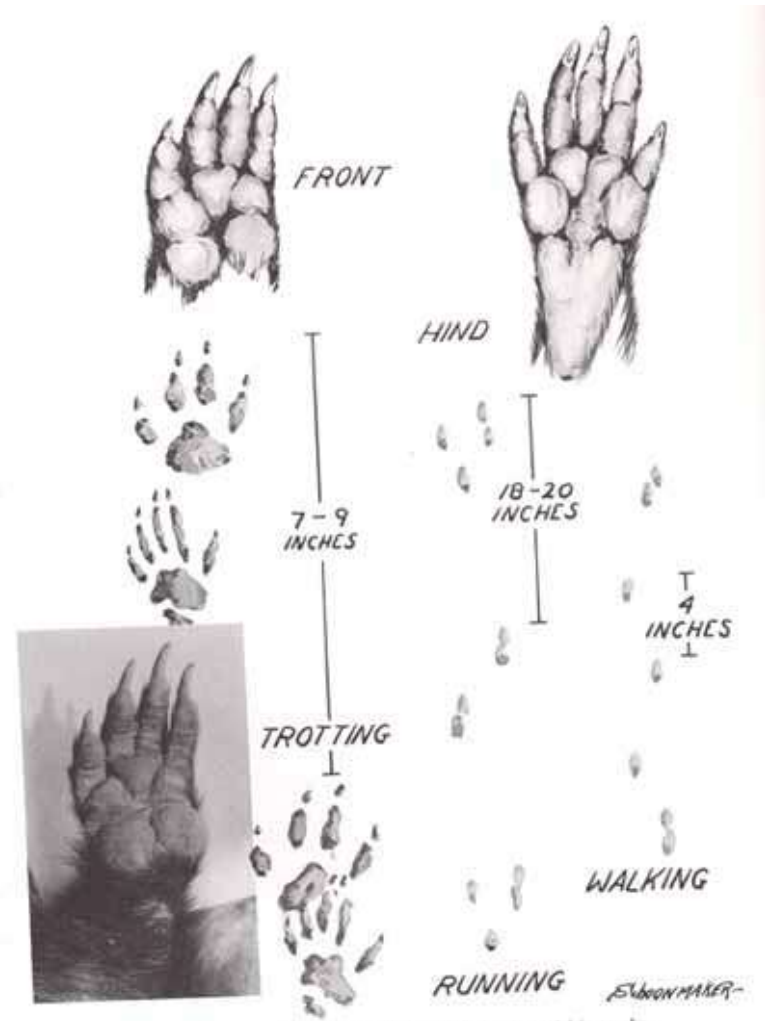
FEET

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



Drawings show the front and hind foot of the woodchuck and his tracks.

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



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

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

REHABILITATION

FEEDING FORMULA



REHABILITATION

HOW LONG TO FEED

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

REHABILITATION

Weaning from
formula =
weaning from
human contact



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.

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

HOUSING

INFANTS

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



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



HOUSING

IWRC/NWRA Minimum Standards

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

RELEASING HAND-READED 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

RELEASING HAND-REARED GROUND HOGS

Release criteria

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



Picture Courtesy of Hog Haven



Picture Courtesy of Hog Haven



Picture Courtesy of Hog Haven



Picture & Sounds Courtesy of Hog Haven



Picture & Sounds Courtesy of Hog Haven



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