

YOU DISCOVER HUNGRY HUNTERS



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Bobcat

A MINI FIELD GUIDE TO MISSOURI'S MEAT-EATING MAMMALS

1

16

Coyote



Total Length: 39 to 54 inches
Weight: 18 to 30 pounds

Menu:
97%
Meat

You're more likely to hear a coyote's nightly howls and yelps than see one during the day. They like to hunt at night.

Rabbits and mice make up most of a coyote's diet. When there's lots of food to eat, coyotes will bury the extra food in a hole and come back for it later.



14



Badger

Babies:

Baby mammals are often born hairless with closed eyes and can't care for themselves. Female mammals make milk for their young.

Habitat: Habitat (*ha-bl-taat*) is a fancy word for where an animal lives. Most mammals need food and water, shelter from predators, and a cozy place to have babies. Thankfully, Missouri offers many kinds of habitat to suit many different mammals.

Feet: Mammals typically have four legs with toes and nails, claws, or hooves. Mammals that dig, such as moles, have strong claws for burrowing. Others mammals, like squirrels, have sharp claws for holding onto tree bark.

Saying Hi: Mammals "talk" using sounds, scent, touch, and movement — like when your dog wags its tail. We can learn a lot by studying the sounds and signals of Missouri's mammals. 3

What Makes an Animal a Mammal?

When animals have things in common, biologists group them together. For example, mammals are similar in many ways: teeth, hair, feet, how they raise babies, and more. Read on to learn what makes an animal a mammal.



Raccoon

Teeth: All of Missouri's adult mammals have teeth. They tell a lot about what a mammal eats, from gnawing on trees to piercing and tearing apart prey.



Beaver

Hair: Mammals are fluffy for a reason. That furry coat keeps mammals warm. Most mammals have whiskers on their faces and a puffy tail that doubles as an extra blanket on cold nights.

2

Black Bear



Total Length: 46 to 78 inches
Weight: 86 to 900 pounds

50% Meat

During winter, bears fall into a deep sleep. Their pulse can drop to eight beats per minute. Learn more about Missouri's biggest meat eater at mdc.mo.gov/node/973.



Only about 300 black bears live in Missouri, so you're lucky to see one. Thanks to conservation efforts, black bear numbers are on the rise.

15

What Makes a Mammal a Carnivore?

A carnivore (*CAR-ni-vor*) is a meat-eating animal. Meat offers carnivores a big boost of energy so they can spend more of their day doing things other than hunting.

Carnivores are grouped together because they eat mostly meat.

Some mammals, such as the coyote, prefer a meat-only diet. Compare the meat meters on the following pages to see which carnivores tip the scales on a meat-only diet.



4

Bobcat



Total Length: 18 to 50 inches
Weight: 8 to 49 pounds

Menu: 99% Meat

The short tail, speckled coat, and pointed ears let you know you're not looking at an ordinary house cat.

Bobcats eat everything from squirrels to wild turkeys, but their preferred meal is rabbits.

About the size of a medium dog, the secretive bobcat is one of the larger wild mammals in the state.



13

Red Fox



Total Length: 12 to 46 inches
Weight: 7 to 15 pounds

Menu:
96%
Meat

Red foxes are doglike with long puffy tails and a reddish coat. They are about the size of a heavy house cat.

What does the fox say? A lot! Foxes have many calls, including long yells, barks followed by a single squall, screeches, and more.

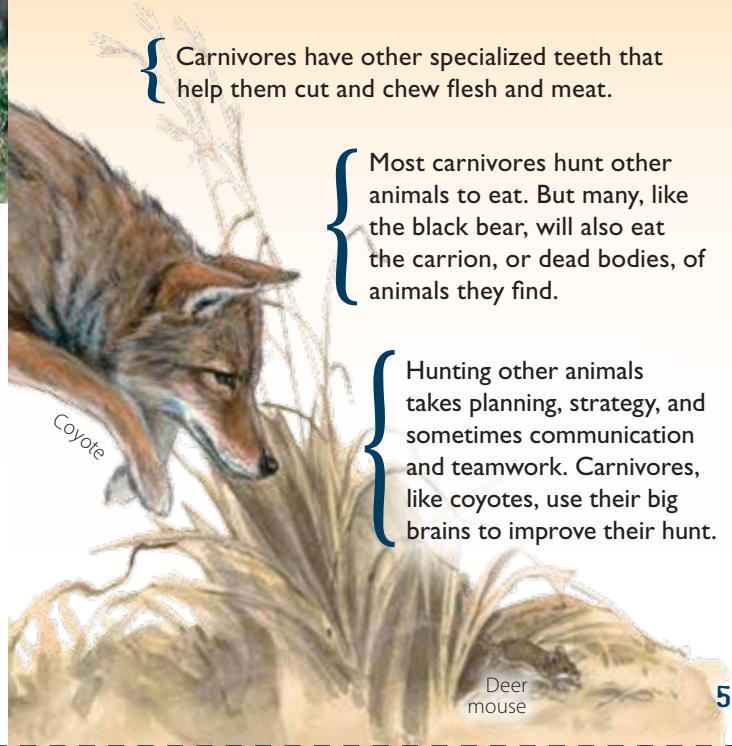


Meat-eating mammals have large, sharp canine teeth. These are used to seize and hold prey. Canines are also used for piercing and tearing meat. You have canine teeth too — they are usually a bit pointy.

Carnivores have other specialized teeth that help them cut and chew flesh and meat.

Most carnivores hunt other animals to eat. But many, like the black bear, will also eat the carrion, or dead bodies, of animals they find.

Hunting other animals takes planning, strategy, and sometimes communication and teamwork. Carnivores, like coyotes, use their big brains to improve their hunt.



Coyote

Deer mouse

Raccoon



Total Length: 21 to 38 inches
Weight: 6 to 25 pounds

Menu:
50%
Meat

This masked bandit is easy to ID with its stocky body and striped tail.



Raccoons do most of their eating and prowling at night. They eat equal parts plants and animals.

Raccoons weigh the most in the fall, when they're plumped up for winter. The record weight of a raccoon was 62 pounds.

Striped Skunk



Total Length: 20 to 30 inches
Weight: 2 to 12 pounds

Menu:
50%
Meat

Striped skunks eat equal amounts of plants and animals. Mice, rats, eggs, and dead carcasses are favorites, along with lots of insects and even bees and wasps. Yeouch!

You know you've been skunked when you sense their scent. Stripy generally gives several warnings before spraying, such as stamping its front feet or clicking its teeth.



Mink



Total Length: 20 to 27 inches
Weight: 1 to 3 pounds

Menu:
88%
Meat



When it snows, a mink likes to slide down hills on its belly, just like a river otter.

A mink, about the size of a small house cat, lives on land like a weasel and in the water like an otter.

Mink prey on critters from the water and the shore, including fish, crayfish, frogs, mice, rabbits, and more.

Gray Fox



Total Length: 31 to 44 inches
Weight: 5 to 15 pounds

Menu:
88%
Meat



The gray fox has grayish fur and a black-tipped tail, and is slightly smaller than the red fox.

Gray foxes have a yapping bark they give four or five times in a row. It's louder and harsher than the bark of the red fox.

River Otter



Total Length: 34 to 53 inches
Weight: 10 to 30 pounds

Menu:
75%
Meat

A river otter's favorite meals are fish and crayfish, but on occasion it eats frogs, salamanders, snails, clams, snakes, turtles, birds, and more.

River otters can remain underwater for 3 to 4 minutes. Their ears and nose close when they go under.



Badger



Total Length: 23 to 35 inches
Weight: 13 to 30 pounds

Menu:
100%
Meat

Badgers are strictly meat eaters, preferring rodents, rabbits, and ground squirrels.

Badgers are excellent diggers thanks to their heavy body, powerful muscles, strong front feet, and long claws.

