



The Monmouth County Park System has two environmental centers dedicated to nature education. Each center has a trained staff of naturalists who answer visitor questions about area wildlife and natural history.

The **Huber Woods Environmental Center**, on Brown's Dock Road in the Locust Section of Middletown, features newly renovated exhibits and activities about wildlife and the Lenape Indians. There's a bird observation area, wildlife displays, and a reptile house. Nest boxes in adjacent fields attract Bluebirds and Tree Swallows.



Specializing in Monmouth County's wetland species, the **Manasquan Reservoir Environmental Center**, on Georgia Tavern Road in Howell, has water-related wildlife displays, hands-on activities and a bird observation area. Featured displays include the Osprey, Great Horned Owl, Great Blue Heron, Virginia Rail, Screech Owls and Bald Eagle.



Mammals

of Monmouth County



Eastern
Chipmunk

There are many species of mammals in Monmouth County, but they can be difficult to observe due to their behavior. Many are active at dawn or dusk (crepuscular) or only active at night (nocturnal). We are most familiar with the species that are active during the day (diurnal). Despite these different habits, all mammals have a highly developed brain, have hair or fur, are warm-blooded, have a four-chambered heart, and produce milk to feed their young.

A Variety of Species

There are mammals that fly, such as the nocturnal bat that feeds on mosquitoes, moths, beetles and wasps captured during flight; and hole-dwelling mammals that carry their babies in a kangaroo-like pouch (marsupials), such as the opossum.



Big Brown Bat



Virginia Opossum

At our coastal parks you may catch a glimpse of a marine mammal such as a seal, porpoise, or whale if you look for them during the right time of year. And there are some mammal species that are so common you may find them almost everywhere you look. One example is the diurnal grey squirrel, who always seems to be busy feeding on nuts and seeds, although they also eat fungi, fruit, and occasionally insects, frogs, and eggs.



Harbor Seal



Eastern Grey Squirrel

Identifying Mammals in the County Parks

Use this guide to observe and identify mammals that are most commonly seen on the trails, meadows, forest, fields and water bodies in the parks (and maybe also in your neighborhood or backyard). Some of the more timid or secretive species can be a challenge to spot, but you can always look for clues they leave behind in the soil or snow, such as tracks or scat/droppings.

White-tailed Deer
Odocoileus virginianus



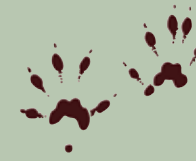
Primarily crepuscular. Herbivore/browser; eats twigs, shrubs, fungi, acorns, grasses and herbs. Look for antlers on males.

Eastern Coyote
Canis latrans



Chiefly nocturnal. Scavenger; eats plants, animals, and carrion.

Mink
Mustela vison



Chiefly nocturnal. Semi-aquatic. Carnivore; feeds on small mammals, birds, eggs, frogs, crayfish, and fish.

Southern Flying Squirrel
Glaucomys volans



Nocturnal. Omnivore; feeds on seeds, nuts, insects, bird eggs, and carrion. (Does not technically fly; rather it "glides" using wing-like flaps of skin.)

Red Fox
Vulpes fulva



Primarily crepuscular. Omnivore; eats insects, small animals, and sometimes fruits. (Similar species is the Gray Fox *Urocyon cinereoargenteus*)

Raccoon
Procyon lotor



Chiefly nocturnal. Omnivore; eats fruits, nuts, insects, frogs, crayfish, eggs. Feeds along streams and near lakes.

Longtail Weasel
Mustela frenata



Chiefly nocturnal. Found near water and can climb trees. Carnivore; feeds on small mammals, birds, and scavenges carrion.

White-footed Mouse
Peromyscus leucopus



Chiefly nocturnal. Omnivore; feeds on seeds, nuts, and insects, and stores food underground.

Groundhog/Woodchuck
Marmota monax



Diurnal. Herbivore; feeds on grasses, plants, and fruits. Hibernates from October-February.

River Otter
Lutra canadensis



Crepuscular. Semi-aquatic, lives along streams and lake borders. Carnivore; eats fish, frogs, crayfish, and other aquatic invertebrates.

Beaver
Castor canadensis



Chiefly nocturnal. Herbivore; feeds on leaves, bark, roots and twigs. Similar appearance to muskrat, but larger with a broad, flat tail.

Eastern Mole
Scalopus aquaticus



Active underground at all hours. Omnivore; feeds on earthworms, slugs, snails, centipedes, larval insects and vegetation.

Eastern Cottontail Rabbit
Sylvilagus floridanus



Crepuscular. Herbivore; feeds on green vegetation, bark, and twigs.

Striped Skunk
Mephitis mephitis



Chiefly nocturnal. Omnivore; feeds on mice, insects, grubs, berries, and carrion. Presence often detected by its odor.

Muskrat
Ondatra zibethica



Crepuscular. Semi-aquatic. Omnivore; feeds on mussels, frogs, crayfish, cattails and aquatic vegetation. Smaller than a beaver, with a thin, long tail.

Norway Rat
Rattus norvegicus



Nocturnal. Omnivore; feeds on grains, fruits, and practically anything edible.