



The Eastern Woodchuck

aka: *Whistlepig* Groundhog Piggie
 Marmota Monax **'Chuck** WUCHAK

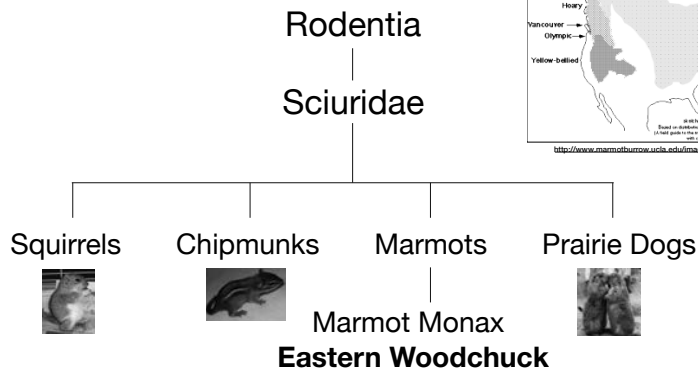
Lynn Oliver, VA Cat II, RVS

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A Very Quick Natural History

The one animal everybody hates until Groundhog Day, then they all happily swarm out to see what he says!

Who's Your Daddy?



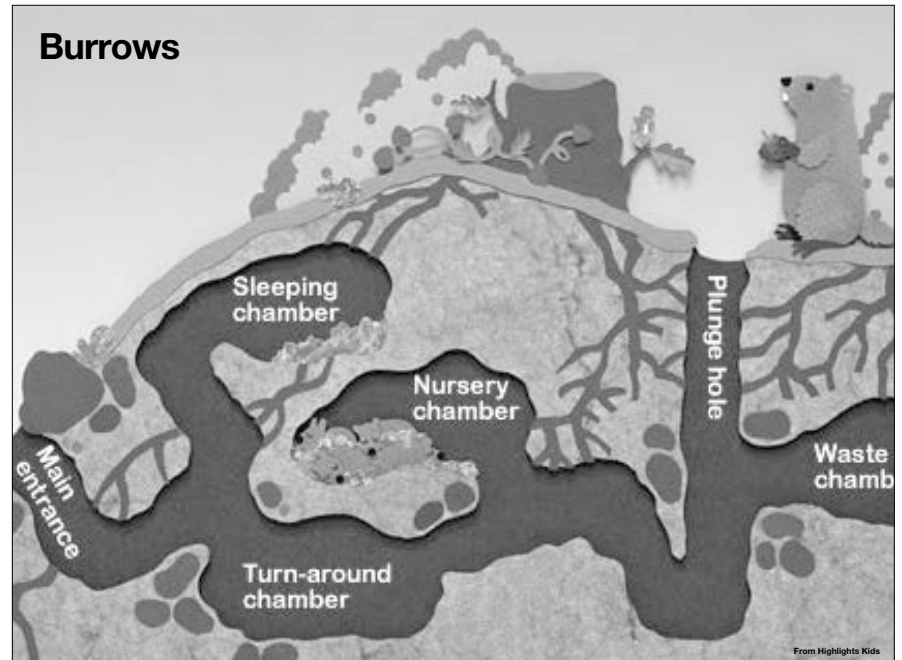
There are 15 types of marmots in the world!

Other New World marmots: Alaska Marmot | Yellow-Bellied Marmot | Hoary Marmot | Olympic Marmot | Vancouver Island Marmot

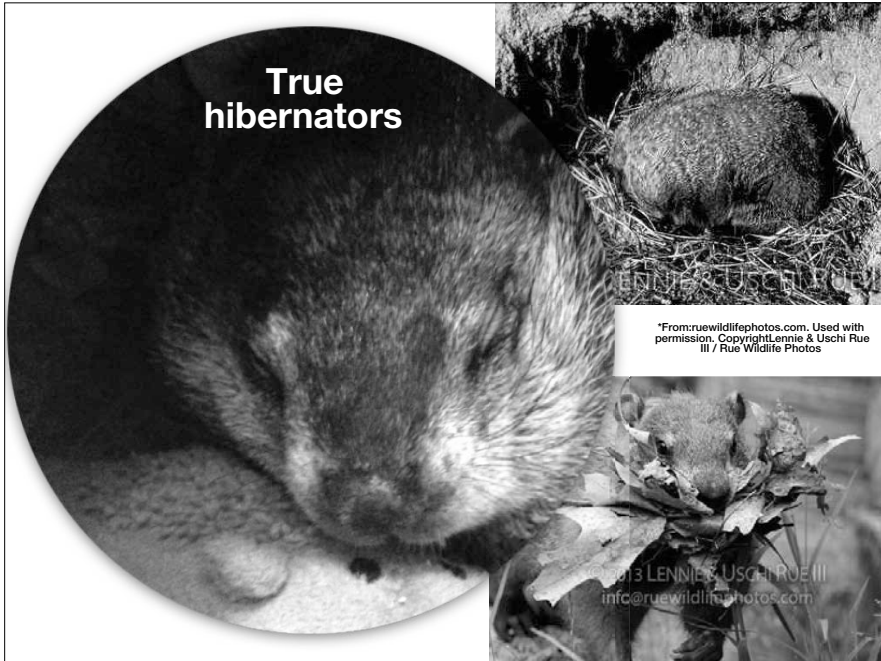


Critically endangered.
 Captive breeding.

Burrows

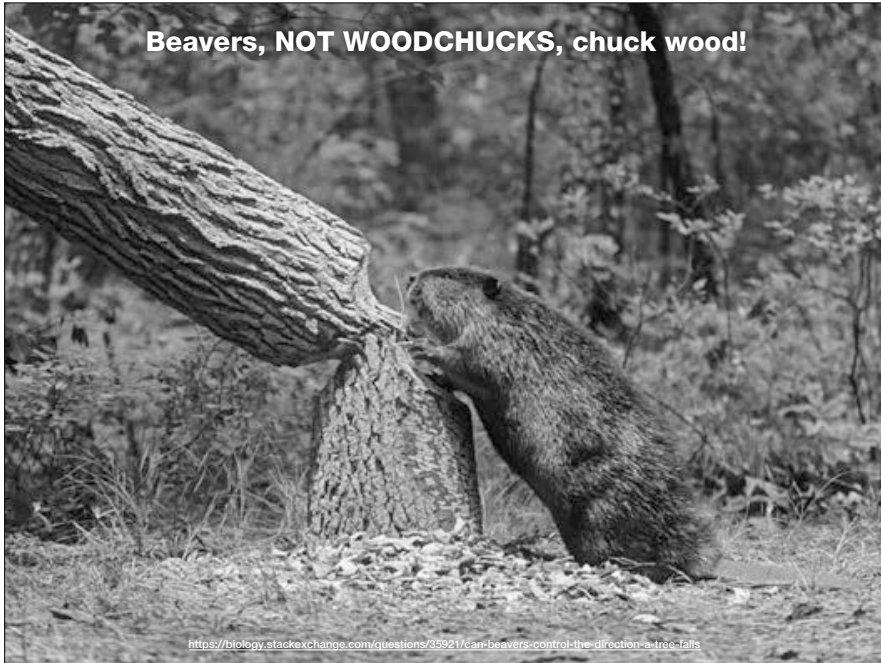


From Highlights Kids



Physical and Social Characteristics

How much wood would a woodchuck chuck, anyway?



Adults are about 13-18" tall/long about 8-15 lbs

Head is broad and flat, with rounded ears

Eyes are placed high up

Skin is THICK, fur is grizzled

Tail is medium compared to body, slightly fluffed

Teeth are rodent's with ever-growing incisors in front of mouth

No neck - all muscle - built like a linebacker's

Body is elongated and stocky

Legs are short, with muscular front legs

Digger's feet

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The teeth

Squirrel

Ghog

Photo courtesy of Rehaber, Kelly Osborn

Photo courtesy of Photo courtesy of Raven Ridge Wildlife Center, Rehaber Betsy Davidheiser-Shank



**Language:
Vocals and Body**

"Why are they called Whistlepigs?"



Teeth clicking



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LxDW6oVpgKQ><https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LxDW6oVpgKQ>

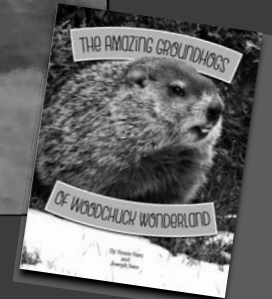
MY box, biotch!



And of COURSE this classic



Contrary to popular beliefs,
evidence shows Dad DOES stick around!



woodchuckwonderland.com

Video courtesy of Woodchuck Wonderland

Contrary to popular beliefs,
evidence shows Dad DOES stick around!



woodchuckwonderland.com

Video courtesy of Woodchuck Wonderland

Fighting



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Like playful puppies



Housing a Woodchuck

*The ultimate free spirits -
and ESCAPISTS!
I'm not kidding.*

Bins



Bins or plastic crates when little



Metal cages for eyes open/more mobile





Click for more

Courtesy of Southwest Virginia Wildlife Center of Roanoke

-0:



Juvie jail

"Someone let us out of jail!"



Original pre-release caging



Newer pre-release cage

Seriously consider wiring off the whole interior roof

Enrichment



Raising Orphans

*They will either love you
or hate you.*

Are they orphans?



**Are they small and out of the burrow without mother?
They are likely orphans.**

**Most often mama's are killed or trapped and removed,
leaving orphans behind.**

Incoming!





Bowl feeding - how it should be



Bowl feeding reality



Birth - Pinkies

25-40 grams

Naked, eyes-closed, no teeth, can vocalize

Colostrum if newly born - I use goat colostrum

If not suckling well, tube feed

See handout for detailed feeding instructions and hints and tips



WIDGET: Eyes open 3-27		
1 Day old	28	2-25-15
4 Days	36	2-28-15
1 1/2 wks	42g	3-6-15
2 1/2 "	78g	3-15-15
3 weeks	104	3-20-15
4 weeks	132	3-24-15
5 weeks	194	3-31-15
6 weeks	262	4-7-15 w/12cc's milk
7 weeks	422	4-14-15
8 weeks	646	4-21-15
9 weeks	926	4-28-15

1 Week Old

About 40–60 grams

Skin becomes pigmented as fur starts to grow

Eyes and ears still closed

See handout for detailed feeding instructions and hints and tips



2 Weeks Old

About 60-80 grams

Gaining steadily; short hair all over

May be scooting/crawling

See handout for detailed feeding instructions and hints and tips



3 Weeks Old

About 80-100 grams

Lower teeth should be emerging about now

Might be toddling about more — watch for climbing out of tub

See handout for detailed feeding instructions and hints and tips



4 Weeks Old

About 100–200 grams

Eyes should be opening and are covered with a thin blue film; upper teeth emerge

Fully furred

See handout for detailed feeding instructions and hints and tips



5 to 6 weeks

200–300 grams

Wild young would be starting to emerge from den around 6 weeks old with mother and start to nibble grasses, clover, dandelion

See handout for detailed feeding instructions and hints and tips



6 to 7 weeks

300–400 grams

Still taking formula from bowls

Keep increasing types of natural foods: all field greens, leaves, dandelions, mushrooms, kale, fruits and veggies (as much as they can eat)

See handout for detailed feeding instructions and hints and tips



8 to 9 weeks

600+ grams

Work to one, then no bowls of formula, so long as growing well

Can move them to outdoor caging:
ESCAPE ARTISTS!
Careful they can't climb out prematurely

See handout for detailed feeding instructions and hints and tips



10 to 14 weeks

Reduce human contact as much as possible

Should be eating everything as natural as possible

Should be hiding, digging, climbing

Some might be acting like they ready to leave: pacing or staring out at the open



14 to 16 weeks



Releasing

*The hardest part is finding appropriate land
with PERMISSION from the owners*

Soft releases



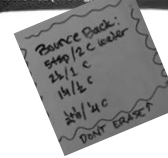
Hard releases (with food support for a week)



Other Stuff I Want You to Know

To know a woodchuck is to love a woodchuck!

Feeding tips



**They LOVE
"Bounce Back"**
[Farm supply store or online]



**I use Fox Valley
Day One 32/40**



Stopped eating?
Add: Bene-Bac powder
[or other probiotic]

Sick or injured adults

My advice: don't handle unless you really know what you're doing!



Disease concerns

Baylisascaris procyonis

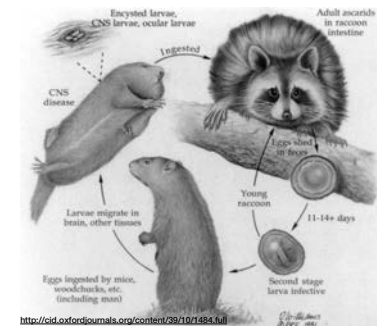
Woodchuck hepatitis virus:
It's not zoonotic!

Metabolic/nutritional issues

Contagious bacterial folliculitis

Malocclusion

Rabies



Scabs seen on babies; spread rapidly through litter. Treated with antibiotics and daily baths of Chlorhexidine. Cleared up in about a week to 10 days.

Rabies

VA Woodchuck Rabies Stats*

2016	2017	2018**
2	1	0

compared to Raccoons:

161 146 188

compared to Skunks:

91 93 71



*From: <http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/environmental-epidemiology/animal-contact/human-health/environmental/animal->

Teeth issues



Normal teeth



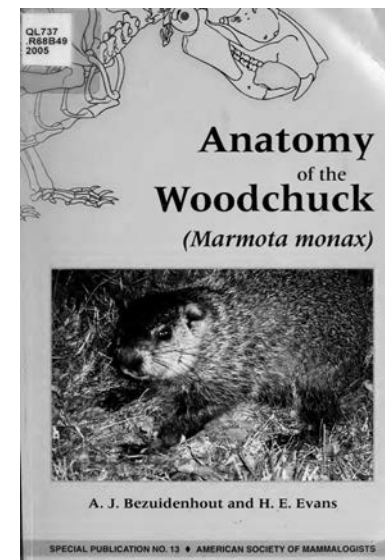
Malocclusion

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Naked moulting



Good e-book to download



<http://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/item/124606#page/3/mode/1up>

Meds

From book:
"Wild Mammal Babies..."
"Avoid cephalosporin medications such as Clindamycin, Cefalexin or Cefadrops. These drugs upset the GI tract causing severe diarrhea. Don't use Streptomycin in woodchucks."

I've used (per vet):
Baytril and Bactrim
with no ill effects.



Discouraging nuisance behaviors

Beach ball tethered in yard or balloons (repeated movement will have them on high alert)

Urine/poop from "predator" around den entrance

Dig up their den entrances as if disturbed by predators

Electric fencing

Taste deterrent on plants (Ropel Liquid or Liquid Fence)

Sometimes learning to live with them is best bet (something less desirable might move in)



THE END!

Questions?

Need my help? I'm happy to help!

Call: 540-465-5315
or message me on

fbook:
lynn.n.oliver
or email:

lynn@valleywildlife.org

**But wait!
There's
more!**



Video posted by Kristi Kirk Trent: <https://www.facebook.com/Kristi.Kirk.Trent/videos/1890022537810726/?list=1117958345%3A10000408993937%3A1577649138>