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U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Iroquois

National Wildlife Refuge

Mammals



White tailed buck
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Introduction



This goose, designed by J.N. "Ding" Darling, has become the symbol of the National Wildlife Refuge System.

Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge encompasses 10,818 acres of swamp woodland, marsh, wet meadows, forests and cultivated fields. While the primary purpose of the refuge is to serve as a resting, feeding, staging and nesting area for waterfowl and other migratory birds, the varied habitats provide homes to a variety of mammals.

The following list, representing 42 species, has been recorded on the refuge or are known to have existed here. Order of listing and scientific names follow Miller and Kellog, List of North American Recent Mammals. Common names are given in Burt and Grossenheider, A Field Guide to the Mammals.



Eastern chipmunk.

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Red fox kit.
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Marsupials

Marsupials are primitive mammals that bear their young prematurely then shelter them in the mother's pouch (the marsupium) until they are fully developed.

Virginia opossum

(Didelphis marsupialis)

The only marsupial found in North America. The size of a house cat, the opossum is found in upland habitats and eats carrion (dead animals) but it also eats frogs, birds, other mammals, insects, snakes and fruit. The opossum "invaded" the New York area in the 1950s.

Moles and Shrews

Moles live most of their lives below the surface of the ground. Evidence of a mole are low ridges in the ground, caused when they tunnel through the earth. Shrews are small mouse-like animals. Insects and worms are favorite foods but shrews will also kill mice that are twice their size.

Masked Shrew

(Sorex cinereus)

Found in moist habitats, heavily vegetated areas, under woodpiles, and in hollow stumps.

Shorttail Shrew

(Blarina brevicauda)

"Blarina" is the most common shrew in the area.

Hairytail Mole

(Parascalops breweri)

Found in drier, sandy knolls scattered throughout the refuge.

Starnose Mole

(Condylura cristata)

So named because fleshy projections around the nose resemble a star. Tunnels in damp areas.

Bats

The only mammals that are capable of true flight. Their "wing" is a membrane of skin extending between the hand bones to the forearm, side of body and hind leg.

Little Brown Myotis

(Myotis lucifugus)

Often referred to as the Little Brown Bat. Most often seen flying over water on summer evenings, in search of insect food. Colonial.

Big Brown Bat

(Eptesicus fuscus)

Dark brown. One of the most common and widely distributed of the bats. Common in buildings in winter, however, some do migrate south.

Red Bat

(Lasiurus borealis)

A brick-red to rusty-red bat with hairs tipped with white. Usually feeds in pairs after deep dusk. Have been seen on the refuge during its migration south.

Based on their range the following species are also believed to be on Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge.

Keen Myotis

(Myotis keeni)

Small-footed Myotis

(Myotis subulatus)

Silver-Haired Bat

(Lasionycteris noctivagans)

Eastern Pipistrelle

(Pipistrellus subflavus)

Hoary Bat

(Lasiurus cinereus)

Hares and Rabbits

Eastern Cottontail

(Sylvilagus floridanus)

Found principally in brushy areas, weedy fields and woodland margins. Eats leaves and flowers in summer and twigs and bark in winter.



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Cottontail rabbit.

Snowshoe Hare

(Lepus americanus)

Also called the Varying Hare and Snowshoe Rabbit. It is white in winter and dark brown in summer. It was probably a former resident of the Oak Orchard Swamp area. Restocked in 1950's. Rarely seen today.

Small to medium-sized mammals with two gnawing teeth above and two below.

Eastern Chipmunk

(Tamias striatus)

Active during the day in open woods, brushy areas and around buildings. It hibernates during the winter. Feeds on seeds, bulbs, fruits, nuts, insects, meat, and eggs. Stores its food underground.

Woodchuck

(Marmota monax)

“Groundhog.” Found in fields or lawns on the refuge. During the day it is often seen near its burrow either feeding on succulent plants or sitting up surveying the landscape for danger. Hibernates during winter. Once abandoned, its burrows become refuges or homes for other mammals.

Eastern Gray Squirrel

(Sciurus carolinensis)

Found in mixed hardwood-conifer forests. Builds conspicuous leaf nests in trees. Feeds on a variety of fungi, seeds, fruits, and nuts. Stores nuts and acorns in the ground, many of which are never recovered and sprout to grow into trees.

Red Squirrel

(Tamiasciurus hudsonicus)

This little tree squirrel is found in all forested areas with the greatest concentration in conifer plantations. Its noisy chattering betrays its presence. Usually has a favorite feeding stump or log where shucks from pine cones or nuts may accumulate in piles.

Southern Flying Squirrel

(Glaucomys volans)

Strictly nocturnal, flying squirrels are seldom seen. Woodlots and forests are home. Eats nuts, seeds, insects and bird eggs. Makes nest in an old woodpecker hole, attics, nesting boxes or builds one of leaves, twigs and bark. Flying squirrels do not fly, they glide.

Northern Flying Squirrel

(Glaucomys sabrinus)

Larger than the Southern Flying Squirrel with whom it may share its habitat although its habits are not well known.

Rodents

Beaver

(*Castor canadensis*)

The largest rodent in North America. Being shy and nocturnal, they are seldom seen, but can build massive log and mud dams and lodges. Also look for felled trees and stumps showing fresh tooth marks. Water areas created by beaver dams provide resting and feeding areas for water fowl and marsh birds.

Deer Mouse

(*Peromyscus maniculatus*)

Found in woods near fields, along hedgerows and outbuildings. Feeds on seeds, nuts, acorns, and insects.

White-footed Mouse

(*Peromyscus leucopus*)

Almost indistinguishable from the deer mouse. Lives in brushy and woody areas. Nests in old bird or squirrel nests, stumps, logs or buildings.

Meadow Vole

(*Microtus pennsylvanicus*)

This small mammal prefers grasslands where it makes narrow runways through matted grass. During winter it often girdles shrubs and small trees below the snowline. In wet areas, it will readily take to water and even dive to avoid capture.

Muskrat

(*Ondatra zibethicus*)

May be seen swimming in marshes, especially at dawn or dusk or on cloudy days. Home is a mound of cattail, grasses and mud. Waterfowl and wading birds use open areas created during construction. Some birds nest on abandoned houses or feeding stations.

Norway Rat

(*Rattus norvegicus*)

Also known as brown rat or house rat. Summers spent in fields and even cattail marshes. Winters bring them into buildings. Burrows along foundations or under rubbish piles. Feeds on anything edible.

House Mouse

(*Mus musculus*)

A small grayish-brown mouse with gray or buff belly. Found near or in buildings, and occasionally in fields.

Meadow Jumping Mouse

(*Zapus hudsonius*)

Lives in openings in drier, grassy areas. Nocturnal, but if seen can be mistaken for a frog.

Woodland Jumping Mouse

(*Napaeozapus insignis*)

Specimens of this beautiful little animal have been observed in the swampy woodlands of the refuge. Nocturnal.

Porcupine

(*Erethizon dorsatum*)

This quill-laden, tree-eating rodent was undoubtedly a former resident of the Oak Orchard Swamp area. Now uncommon on the refuge. One was seen in 1994.

**Carnivores
(meat eaters)**

Members of this order are classified as predators (animals that eat other animals) but will eat nuts, berries, insects and fruits.

Coyote

(*Canus latrans*)

Looks like a medium-sized dog. It is gray or reddish-gray with rusty legs, feet and ears and a whitish throat and belly. Tail is held down between the legs when running. It is a true scavenger, but mostly feeds on small

rodents and rabbits.

Red Fox

(Vulpes fulva)

About the size of a small dog. Carries its tail straight out behind it. Found in woods and sandy knolls on the refuge and, in winter, hunting on ice covered impoundments or marshes. Most often seen at dawn or dusk.

Gray Fox

(Urocyon cinereoargenteus)

Salt-and-pepper coat and long bushy tail. Nocturnal, and formerly rare, the gray fox is more common today, but seldom seen.

Raccoon

(Procyon lotor)

Common, but being nocturnal, is rarely seen. Found throughout marshes, woods and along streams.

Shorttail weasel

(Mustela erminea)

This small brown weasel may dwell in all upland habitats but is seldom seen. In winter, when its coat turns white with black tipped tail it is known as an ermine. Mainly nocturnal.

Longtail weasel

(Mustela frenata)

Also found in upland habitats. Looks very similar to the shorttail weasel except it is larger and does not have white stripe down the inside of hind leg.

Mink

(Mustela vison)

Dark brown and larger than weasel. Occasionally seen traveling along stream banks or dashing across roads or trails. Mostly nocturnal. Feeds on small mammals, birds, eggs, frogs, crayfish, and fish.

Striped Skunk

(Mephitis mephitis)

Found throughout the upland areas of the refuge. Nocturnal and frequently seen along roadsides between sunset



Raccoon with full moon.

© Douglas H. Dornedon

and sunrise. Feeds on mice, eggs, insects, grubs, berries and carrion. Does not hibernate. Makes its den in the ground, under buildings, boulders, wood and rock piles.

River Otter

(Lutra canadensis)

Large weasel-like mammal formerly found along Oak Orchard Creek. Believed to have been extirpated, the last recorded sighting was in 1988.

Bobcat

(Lynx rufus)

Once found in Oak Orchard Swamp area. Except for scattered reports of animals passing through the area, they are not believed to inhabit the refuge.

Hoofed animals

Whitetail Deer

(Odocoileus virginianus)

Largest mammal on the refuge. Commonly seen on the refuge in spring and fall along roadside or darting in front of cars. Inhabits swamps, forests and open brushy areas browsing on twigs, fungi, shrubs, acorns, grasses and herbs.