

BLUE RIDGE PARKWAY MAMMALS CHECKLIST



American Black Bear caught on a wildlife camera.

The Blue Ridge Parkway abounds with a variety of animal and plant life. With a wide diversity of habitats the Southern Appalachians and the Blue Ridge Parkway offer homes to more species of mammals than any other area in eastern North America. About ninety species of mammals have lived in the Southern Appalachians historically, with seventy-one having been found along the parkway.

Most parkway mammals are nocturnal and those that are active during daylight hours are often secretive. Generally it is best to look for animals in the early morning or just before sunset when many animals are most active and most visible.

KEY TO ABBREVIATIONS

The following codes refer to the abundance of an animal found along the parkway and not necessarily to the likelihood of seeing it.

C – COMMON – Species likely to be in suitable habitat.

UC – UNCOMMON – Species not frequently found even in suitable habitat.

R – RARE - Species not likely to be found.

L – LISTED – Any species federally or state listed as Endangered, Threatened, or of Special Concern.

NC – NORTH CAROLINA

VA – VIRGINIA

Information on the abundance of each species comes from wildlife sighting reports by park staff and visitors, and from park research reports. If you see anything unusual while on the parkway please report it at one of our Visitor Centers or to a Park Ranger.

***If you would like to report a wildlife observation please email
BRP_Wildlife@nps.gov***

ORDER DIDELPHIMORPHIA

FAMILY DIDELPHIDAE:

___ **Virginia Opossum** (*Didelphis virginiana*) – (NC-C, VA-C) Habitat: Woodlands and thickets near a water source.

ORDER LAGOMORPHA

FAMILY LEPORIDAE:

___ **Eastern Cottontail** (*Sylvilagus floridanus*) – (NC-C, VA-C) Habitat: Farmlands, natural clearings, forests, and wetlands.

___ **Appalachian Cottontail** (*Sylvilagus obscurus*) – (NC-R, VA-R) Habitat: Dense cover of thickets and higher elevation woods.

ORDER SORICOMORPHA

FAMILY SORICIDAE:

___ **Northern Short-tailed Shrew** (*Blarina brevicauda*) – (NC-C, VA-C) Habitat: Woods and clearings with dense ground cover and well-drained soil.

___ **Least Shrew** (*Cryptotis parva*) – (NC-C, VA-C) Habitat: Brushy fields, wetlands, and woods.

___ **Masked Shrew** (*Sorex cinereus*) – (NC-C, VA-C) Habitat: Moist dense low cover.

___ **Long-tailed Shrew** (*Sorex dispar*) – (NC-L, VA-R) Habitat: Near rocky streams in high elevation forests.

___ **Smoky Shrew** (*Sorex fumeus*) – (NC-C, VA-C) Habitat: Moist forests, bogs, and wetlands.

___ **American Pygmy Shrew** (*Sorex hoyi*) – (NC-R, VA-UC) Habitat: Higher elevation deciduous forests, wetlands, and fields with dense understory.

___ **Southeastern Shrew** (*Sorex longirostris*) – (NC-UC, VA-R) Habitat: Wet to dry habitats with dense ground cover.

___ **Southern Water Shrew** (*Sorex palustris punctulatus*) – (NC-L) Habitat: Along edges of mountain streams.

FAMILY TALPIDAE:

- ___ **Star-nosed Mole** (*Condylura cristata*) – (NC-UC, VA-UC) Habitat: Moist meadows, bogs, and wetlands.
- ___ **Hairy-tailed Mole** (*Parascalops breweri*) – (NC-C, VA-C) Habitat: Sandy loam soils under various forests, meadows, and fields with plant coverage.
- ___ **Eastern Mole** (*Scalopus aquaticus*) – (NC-C, VA-C) Habitat: Moist loamy or sandy soils.

ORDER CHIROPTERA

FAMILY VESPERTILIONIDAE:

- ___ **Rafinesque's Big-eared Bat** (*Corynorhinus rafinesquii rafinesquii*) – (NC-L) Habitat: Roosts and hibernates in caves/mines and trees near water. Roosts in bldgs and bridges.
- ___ **Virginia Big-eared Bat** (*Corynorhinus townsendii virginianus*) – (NC-L) Habitat: Roosts and hibernates in caves, particularly in limestone areas.
- ___ **Big Brown Bat** (*Eptesicus fuscus*) – (NC-C, VA-C) Habitat: Roosts in structures, caves, and tree hollows, particularly pine, oak, beech.
- ___ **Silver-haired Bat** (*Lasionycteris noctivagans*) – (NC-C, VA-C) Habitat: Roosts in deciduous forests behind loose tree bark, particularly willow, maple, and ash.
- ___ **Eastern Red Bat** (*Lasiurus borealis*) – (NC-C, VA-C) Habitat: Roosts among foliage, usually in deciduous trees.
- ___ **Hoary Bat** (*Lasiurus cinereus*) – (NC-UC, VA-UC) Habitat: Roosts solitarily in dense vegetation and in tree cavities at the edge of clearings.
- ___ **Eastern Small-footed Myotis** (*Myotis leibii*) – (NC-L, VA-R) Habitat: Caves during winter; trees, bridges, buildings, or under rocks during warmer months. Hibernates in caves or mines.
- ___ **Little Brown Myotis** (*Myotis lucifugus*) – (NC-R, VA-UC) Habitat: Along streams and lakes. Forms nursery colonies in trees or buildings during summer. Hibernates in caves and mines in winter.
- ___ **Northern Long-eared Myotis** (*Myotis septentrionalis*) – (NC-R, VA-R) Habitat: Roosts in

hollow trees and buildings during warmer months. Hibernates in caves or mines.

- ___ **Indiana Bat** (*Myotis sodalis*) – (NC-L) Habitat: Roosts in hollow trees, under bark, snags, and structures.
- ___ **American Perimyotis** (*Perimyotis subflavus*) – (NC-UC, VA-UC) Habitat: Open woods near water. Hibernates in caves or mines.

ORDER CARNIVORA

FAMILY CANIDAE:

- ___ **Coyote** (*Canis latrans*) – (NC-C, VA-C) Habitat: Agricultural fields or forested regions.
- ___ **Common Gray Fox** (*Urocyon cinereoargenteus*) – (NC-C, VA-C) Habitat: Deciduous forests and brushy woodlands at lower elevations.
- ___ **Red Fox** (*Vulpes vulpes*) – (NC-C, VA-C) Habitat: Mixture of forest and open fields.

FAMILY FELIDAE:

- ___ **Bobcat** (*Lynx rufus*) – (NC-UC, VA-C) Habitat: Woodlands or near agricultural areas if rocky ledges, wetlands, or forested tracts are present.

FAMILY MEPHITIDAE:

- ___ **Striped Skunk** (*Mephitis mephitis*) – (NC-C, VA-C) Habitat: Open woodlands and fields.
- ___ **Eastern Spotted Skunk** (*Spilogale putorius*) – (NC-R, VA-R) Habitat: Covered thickets, woods, riparian hardwood and shrubbery.

FAMILY MUSTELIDAE:

- ___ **Northern River Otter** (*Lontra canadensis*) – (NC-C, VA-UC) Habitat: Streams, lakes, and wetlands with sufficient vegetative cover.
- ___ **Long-tailed Weasel** (*Mustela frenata*) – (NC-R, VA-UC) Habitat: Woodlands, thickets, open areas and farmlands near a water source.
- ___ **Least Weasel** (*Mustela nivalis*) – (NC-UC, VA-R) Habitat: Fields, open woodlands, brushy or rocky areas.

- ___ **American Mink** (*Vison vison*) -- (NC-C, VA-C) Habitat: Forested areas near rivers, streams, lakes, ponds, or wetlands.

FAMILY PROCYONIDAE:

- ___ **Northern Raccoon** (*Procyon lotor*) – (NC-C, VA-C) Habitat: Deciduous or mixed forests, developed areas, and agricultural fields.

FAMILY URSIDAE:

- ___ **American Black Bear** (*Ursus americanus*) – (NC-C, VA-C) Habitat: Heavily forested areas with thick ground vegetation and an abundance of fruits and nuts.

ORDER ARTIODACTYLA

FAMILY CERVIDAE:

- ___ **Elk** (*Cervus elaphus*) – (NC-L, VA-E) Habitat: Mid to high elevation meadows, and grassy balds (Reintroduced to Great Smoky Mountains National Park).
- ___ **White-tailed Deer** (*Odocoileus virginianus*) – (NC-C, VA-C) Habitat: Forested areas and open spaces such as agricultural lands and grasslands.

FAMILY SUIDAE:

- ___ **Feral pig/hog/swine** (*Sus scrofa*) – (NC-UC, VA-UC) Habitat: Diverse forests with heavy brush and some openings. Non-native.

ORDER RODENTIA

FAMILY CASTORIDAE:

- ___ **American Beaver** (*Castor canadensis*) – (NC-C, VA-C) Habitat: Lakes, wetlands, ponds, streams, and rivers.

FAMILY CRICETIDAE:

- ___ **Rock Vole** (*Microtus chrotorrhinus carolinensis*) – (NC-L) Habitat: Rocky areas, forests or fields at higher elevation.

