

# Terrestrial Mammals of the Estero Bay Area



Lisa Andreano

Jeremy Beaulieu

Michael Walgren



## Introduction

---

This mammal guide is the culmination of small mammal trapping and sightings by the California State Parks Resource staff. This inventory reflects an ongoing list of accounts and observations from June 2004 to August 2005.

A complete species list and brief discussion of life histories are outlined, as well as status listings if applicable. Photographs of sensitive species are included. The life history information is a representation of sightings and trap data as well as animals thought to occur, yet never caught. No surveys were conducted on bats, however several species are included here that may potentially forage in our area. Since this is a terrestrial mammal guide, no sea mammals are included. However, within the Estero Bay area there are haulouts of *Phoca vitulina* (harbor seal), occasionally *Zalophus californianus* (California sea lion) and the *Mirounga angustirostris* (northern elephant seal). Other common maritime mammal sightings offshore include *Enhydra lutris nereis* (southern sea otter), *Tursiops truncatus* (bottlenose dolphin), *Phocoena phocoena* (harbor porpoise), *Megaptera novaeangliae* (Humpback Whale), and the *Eshrichtius robustus* (gray whale).

Our small mammal trapping effort has occurred over a three year period. Trap lines were set to coincide with different community types to adequately assess overall diversity on a variety of our properties. Traps were placed roughly 2 meters apart under or near clearings in vegetation cover, ensuring mammals would be caught while foraging for seeds. Sherman live traps were employed for this task, using old fashioned rolled oats as bait. Each trap was set one hour prior to sunset and checked the next day one hour after sunrise. To ensure that recaptures were not biasing the number of individuals caught each day, a small noticeable piece of hair was removed from the right hind quarter of the mammal. Each trap line was set and baited for at least two straight nights to ensure adequate sampling time of each community type.

## Species List and Accounts

---

The following list contains all mammals that may occur along the coast in the Estero bay area from Estero Point to Point Buchon, with subsequent life history information. If a species has been confirmed to be present, the most recent year it was observed is given under “**Documented**”. If suitable habitat exists within the area and the specie’s natural range is known to include Estero Bay but it has not been observed, occurrence is considered “**Expected**”.

The use of scientific and common names follows Burt and Grossenheider (1980), Kays and Wilson (2002), and California Department of Fish and Game species lists (2004). Information contained in the species accounts was largely based upon Burt and Grossenheider (1980), Kays and Wilson (2002), Jameson and Peters (2004), and Ingles (1965). The species accounts are arranged according to taxonomic families. All photos are provided by CDPR staff, unless indicated.

Scientific Name	Common Name	Documented	Expected
<i>Antrozous pallidus</i>	Pallid Bat		X
<i>Canis latrans</i>	Coyote	2003	
<i>Chaetodipus californicus</i>	California Spiny Pocket Mouse	2005	
<i>Didelphis virginianus</i>	Opossum	2005	
<i>Dipodomys heermanni morroensis</i>	Morro Bay Kangaroo Rat		X (Extinct?)
<i>Eptesicus fuscus</i>	Big Brown Bat		X
<i>Felis concolor</i>	Mountain Lion	2005	
<i>Felis familiaris</i>	Domestic Cat	2005	
<i>Lasiurus blossevillii</i>	Western Red Bat		X
<i>Lasiurus cinereus</i>	Hoary Bat		X
<i>Lepus californicus</i>	Black-tailed Jackrabbit	2003	
<i>Lynx rufus</i>	Bobcat	2005	
<i>Mephitis mephitis</i>	Striped Skunk	2005	
<i>Microtus californicus</i>	California Vole	2005	
<i>Mustela frenata</i>	Long-tailed Weasel	2005	
<i>Myotis californicus</i>	California Myotis		X
<i>Myotis ciliolabrum</i>	Small-footed Myotis		X
<i>Myotis evotis</i>	Long-eared Myotis		X
<i>Myotis thysanodes</i>	Fringed Bat		X
<i>Myotis volans</i>	Long-legged or Hairy Bat		X
<i>Myotis yumanensis</i>	Yuma Myotis		X
<i>Neotoma fuscipes</i>	Dusky-footed Woodrat	2005	
<i>Neotoma lepida</i>	Desert Woodrat	2005	
<i>Odocoileus hemionus columbianus</i>	Mule Deer	2004	
<i>Peromyscus boylii</i>	Brush Mouse	2005	
<i>Peromyscus californicus</i>	California Mouse	2005	
<i>Peromyscus maniculatus</i>	Deer Mouse	2005	
<i>Pipistrellus Hesperus</i>	Western Pipistrelle		X
<i>Procyon lotor</i>	Common Raccoon	2005	
<i>Reithrodontomys megalotis</i>	Western Harvest Mouse	2005	
<i>Scapanus latimanus</i>	Broad-footed Mole	2004	
<i>Sciurus griseus</i>	Western Gray Squirrel	2005	
<i>Spermophilus beecheyi</i>	California Ground Squirrel	2005	
<i>Sus scrofa</i>	Wild Boar	2003	
<i>Sylvilagus bachmani</i>	Brush Rabbit	2005	
<i>Tadarida brasiliensis</i>	Brazilian Free-tailed Bat		X
<i>Taxidea taxus</i>	Badger	2004	
<i>Thomomys bottae</i>	Botta's Pocket Gopher	2005	
<i>Urocyon cinereoargenteus</i>	Gray Fox	2005	
<i>Ursus americanus</i>	Black Bear	2005	
<i>Vulpes vulpes necator</i>	Red fox	2005	

Red indicates introduced taxa

## Didelphidae

---

### *Didelphis virginianus*

### Opossum

Location: All areas; prefers woodlands near meadows or arable lands.

Status: Common.

Description: Body fur is gray with long white and gray guard hairs, giving a scruffy appearance. Has a white head with a long pink-tipped snout, and a long, scaly, prehensile tail.

Information: Mostly nocturnal. Breeds at any time, but most mating occurs from January to July. Gestation lasts only 12 days, but young remain in the pouch for two more months. Usually two litters a year of four to ten young. Normally shy; may “play possum,” feigning death, going limp with eyes closed.

## Vespertilionidae

---

### *Antrozous pallidus*

### Pallid Bat

Location: Occurs in most of California; especially common in open, lowland areas. Roosts in rock crevices, buildings, and bridges.

Status: CSC, FSC, High Priority Status as listed by the Western Bat Working Group.

Description: Large bat with buff or sandy-colored fur; hairs are darker at the tips and lighter near the skin. Has long pinkish ears that are clearly separated at the base and are crossed by nine or ten ridges.

Information: Nocturnal. Mating occurs in fall; fertilization is delayed, and birth occurs in late June. Actual gestation period is about nine weeks; usually two, occasionally three young born in maternity colonies of 12 to 125. Crawls on the ground and tree trunks to capture scorpions and other large invertebrates. Often detects insects by passive listening and vision rather than echolocation.



### *Eptesicus fuscus*

### Big Brown Bat

Location: Found virtually in every North American habitat. Roosts in buildings, trees, caves, and bridges.

Description: Common large brownish bat with rather glossy fur. Ears and wing membranes darkly pigmented; broad muzzle, rounded ears, and blunt tragus.

Information: Nocturnal. Mating occurs in August to September; fertilization takes place in April; and a single young is born in June. Females form maternity colonies of 20 to 300. Usually begins flying long before the sky is dark. Feeds on a variety of insects but primarily beetles and caddis flies.

### *Lasiurus blossevillii*

### Western Red Bat

Location: Mostly in wooded habitats, roosting among foliage, in tree holes, or behind bark. Rarely enters buildings.

Status: High Priority Status as listed by the Western Bat Working Group.

Description: A distinctive reddish bat with mottled red and grayish pelage and white patches on the shoulders; males are much brighter than females. The ears are low and rounded and the tragus is short and blunt.

Information: Migrates through our area. Nocturnal. Mating occurs August to September with delayed fertilization until the following spring. Usually three or four young are born in June. Flies early in the evening, foraging at decreasing heights as the sky darkens. Tend to be solitary.

***Lasiurus cinereus***

**Hoary Bat**

Location: Woodlands and forests, where it roosts among foliage or in cracks of bark.

Status: Fairly common.

Description: Large, dark bat with distinctive frosted fur, white wrist markings and a yellowish orange collar. The fur extends across the tail membrane, and the ears are thickened, short, and rounded.

Information: Migrates through our area. Nocturnal. Usually two young (occasionally three or four) young are born in June or July. Begins to forage early in the evening and sometimes flies in the daytime in September. The most widely distributed North American bat.

***Myotis californicus***

**California Myotis**

Location: Throughout California. Roosts in crevices in buildings, caves, trees, etc.

Description: Fairly common tiny bat with short ears and an obviously keeled calcar. Ears and membranes dark with bright tawny-brown dorsal fur and dark gray hair bases. Face not entirely black.

Information: Nocturnal. Mating occurs in the fall, followed by delayed fertilization. A single young is born late May to early July. Flight is slow and highly maneuverable, often less than three meters above the ground, and frequently over or near water. Feeds on a variety of aerial insects.

***Myotis ciliolabrum***

**Small-footed Myotis**

Location: Occupies rocky areas in coniferous forests.

Status: Federal Species of Special Concern.

Description: Dorsally light or golden brown with glossy hair tips. The ears and face are frequently black; ears scarcely extend beyond the tip of the snout when laid forward. The calcar is keeled and the tail projects slightly beyond the interfemoral membrane.

Information: Nocturnal; emerges rather early in the evening. A single young is born in June or July. Usually solitary and doesn't form nursery or other colonies

***Myotis evotis***

**Long-eared Myotis**

Location: Favors coniferous forests, but occurs in riparian scrub and woodlands. Roosts singly or in groups of up to 30 under bark, bridges, and rocks and in buildings, caves, crevices, hollow trees, and mines.

Status: Federal Species of Special Concern.

Description: A pale gold bat, with long ears (reach 5-10 mm beyond nostril when laid forward) that are glossy dark brown to black, and lack of fringe on tail membrane. Has an erratic flight.

Information: Nocturnal. Single young born between May and July. Forages low (one to two meters above ground) in vegetated areas where it gleans insects from the surface of vegetation.

***Myotis thysanodes***

**Fringed Myotis**

Location: Widespread throughout California. Found frequently in coastal forests, but also occurs in a wide range of desert, grassland, and woodland habitats. Roosts in caves, mines, buildings, and crevices.

Status: FSC, High Priority Status as listed by the Western Bat Working Group.

Description: A small-bodied bat with drab yellowish-brown upperparts and paler under parts. Easily distinguished from other *Myotis* bats by long ears and a distinct fringe of hairs along posterior edge of tail membrane.

Information: Nocturnal. Mating occurs in the fall, followed by delayed fertilization. Single young born late June to early July. Females and young are found in maternity colonies up to 200 from April to September. Males are more likely to roost alone. Feeds mostly on beetles but also on moths and arachnids. Forages over open water, over open habitats, and by gleaning from foliage. Flight is slow and maneuverable.



***Myotis volans***



From: [www.batcon.org](http://www.batcon.org)

**Long-legged or Hairy Winged Bat**



From: [www.enature.com](http://www.enature.com)

Location: Found throughout California. Primarily in coniferous forests but also found in oak and riparian woodlands and brushy areas. Roosts in hollow trees, rock crevices, mines, caves, and buildings.

Status: FSC, High Priority Status as listed by the Western Bat Working Group.

Description: Large *Myotis* with longer, denser fur on the underside of the wing between the knee and elbow than other species of *Myotis*. Has keeled calcar and short rounded ears. Color varies from dark brown to reddish buff, with darker ears and membranes.

Information: Nocturnal. A single young is born in June to July with maternity colonies of 200-500 individuals. Emerges early, long before the sky is dark. Feeds primarily on moths but also feeds on other insects. Foraging occurs in open areas and over water.

***Myotis yumanensis***



From: [www.batcon.org](http://www.batcon.org)

**Yuma Myotis**



From: [www.enature.com](http://www.enature.com)

Location: Widespread throughout California in a variety of habitats but never far from water sources. Roosts in buildings, mines, caves, crevices, and bridges.

Status: FSC.

Description: Very similar to Little Brown Myotis, but Yuma Myotis is slightly smaller. Dorsal fur is buffy and belly is whitish, not shiny or burnished; membranes and ears pale brown.

Information: Nocturnal. Mating occurs in the fall. A single young is born from late May to early July. Prior to birth of the young, females segregate into nursery colonies of up to 2,000 individuals. Feeds on a wide variety of small flying insects.

### ***Pipistrellus Hesperus***

### **Western Pipistrelle**

Location: Found from sea level to 3000 meters, favors canyons and cliff faces, but occurs in a wide variety of desert scrub and arid grassland habitats as well.

Status: Common.

Description: Tiny bat with blunt, slightly curved tragus, and small hind foot less than half as long as the tibia. The black face mask contrasts strongly with yellowish gray-brown body color.

Information: Nocturnal. Usually two young are born late in June. Active in the early evening and dawn, it has a slow erratic flight that looks almost like a butterfly. Lives alone or in small colonies.

## **Molossidae**

---

### ***Tadarida brasiliensis***

### **Brazilian Free-tailed Bat**

Location: Occurs in a wide range of habitats. Roosts in buildings, caves, and mines – along the Coast, primarily roosts in buildings.

Description: Common dark brown or grayish above. Ears separated at the base, and the tail is not connected to a membrane along its entire length. The wings are narrow and the flight fast and straight.

Information: Nocturnal. Breeding occurs in late winter, and gestation takes about 100 days. A single young is born from late June to early July. Nursery colonies may number tens of thousands. Out flight often occurs in huge numbers, looking like a plume of smoke leaving a cave. Feeds primarily on small moths but will consume a variety of aerial insects.

## **Leporidae**

---

### ***Sylvilagus bachmani***

### **Brush Rabbit**

Location: Found in chaparral habitats; prefers dense brush.

Occurrence: Common. Photo documented.

Description: Small rabbit with short legs and tail. Ears are slightly pointed and sparsely haired inside. Dark gray on back and sides; pale gray on belly and underside of tail. Whiskers are all black.

Information: Crepuscular. Breeding is limited to the first six months of the year. The gestation period is about 27 days. There are three to six young in a litter, and three or

four litters per season. Thumps ground with hind foot when frightened; may climb low branches to escape.

***Lepus californicus***

**Black-tailed Jackrabbit**

Location: Open prairies and sparsely vegetated dry areas.

Occurrence: Common

Description: A small rabbit with long ears and a black tail. Body mostly a light brown to off white.

Information: Historically documented. Crepuscular. Can be very fast running, up to 30-35 mph, mostly active in the early evenings. Breeds typically from December to September. Sometimes seen foraging on the edges of highways.

---

**Sciuridae**

***Spermophilus beecheyi***

**California Ground Squirrel**

Location: Mainly found in fields, along roadsides, on grazed pastures, and in open oak woodlands.

Occurrence: Common.

Description: A large squirrel, gray-brown and mottled with light flecks. Usually has a dark mantle that is rarely adjoined by faint light lateral stripes. Its tail is long and bushy.

Information: Diurnal. A single litter of three to ten young is born annually; season of birth varies with locality. These animals prefer an open area that gives them a clear view of their surroundings. Where the grass has become tall, it is frequently seen on fence posts or wire fencing. Adult males enter hibernation in late summer and adult females enter later, while young remain active until the fall. Hibernation lasts until early spring. May carry the plague. Has become overpopulated where the most human activity has occurred (i.e. Azure Street, Morro Strand Campground, etc.)

***Sciurus griseus***

**Western Gray Squirrel**

Location: Commonly found in oak and conifer woodlands.

Status: Common

Description: Has a long grey tail with a white streak on the edge. Overall, it is grey, but it's underbelly is all white.

Information: Typically feeds on acorns or conifer seeds. Mostly arboreal, yet can be found foraging on the ground. Northern populations in California are threatened due to increased human activity.

---

**Geomyidae**

***Thomomys bottae***

**Botta's Pocket Gopher**

Location: Prefers light soils but is occasionally found on clay. Burrows extensively in prairies, forests, and meadows, throwing up characteristic fan-shaped heaps of soil.

Occurrence: Common.

Description: Highly variable in both size and color. Color tends to match the soil: dull brown, yellow, buff, or black. Has a large blunt head, curved incisor teeth and fur-lined cheek pouches. Has short legs and the claws on the front feet are long and curved. Has a groove running down the center of incisors.

Information: Breeding takes place from late winter to summer, with a prolonged reproductive season in well irrigated areas. There may be from one to four litters of two to 12 young. Bulbs and roots of plants are bitten off below the ground level and dragged into its tunnels. On serpentine soils it feeds almost exclusively on the corms of small lilies (*Brodiaea* spp.). Sometimes considered a pest of agriculture, but probably do more good than harm by keeping the soil porous.

## **Heteromyidae**

---

### ***Chaetodipus californicus***

### **California Spiny Pocket Mouse**

Location: Found in a variety of habitats from open scrub oak to sagebrush. Primarily found in arid areas with chaparral growth.

Status: Common.

Description: Small jumping rodents with a long tail, relatively long hind limbs, and short forelimbs. They have fur-lined cheek pouches. Grayish or brown above with white on the belly, long dark furry tail with a white stripe on both sides, and a tuft at the end.

Information: Nocturnal. Breeding takes place from April through June; two to five young are in a litter. Able to survive without drinking water by metabolizing water from their food. Spends brief periods in torpor with lowered breathing, heartbeat, and body temperature. Does not appear above ground in winter.

### ***Dipodomys heermanni morroensis***

### **Morro Bay Kangaroo Rat**

Location: Open, sandy areas in the scrub and chaparral

Status: Federally and State Endangered; believed to be extinct

Occurrence: Uncommon

Description: Broad face, five toes on hind foot, false eye spot on head behind ears. Very long tail (longer than body) which can be used like a propeller to aid in escape from predators. The Morro Bay kangaroo rat typically lacks the hip stripe found on the other subspecies in this group.

Information: Once common in this area, this subspecies is now presumed to be extinct. The last known record was in 1980 in the Los Osos area.



Moose Peterson, WRP

## **Muridae**

---

### ***Reithrodontomys megalotis***

### **Western Harvest Mouse**

Location: Found in grasslands and open oak woodlands. May be found in cultivated areas if grass and weeds are present; avoids forests.

Occurrence: Common.

Description: A small, delicate mouse that's generally brownish above and white below. Similar to House Mouse, but with a longer tail (about 50 percent of its total length), and grooved upper incisors.

Information: Trapped throughout the south MSSB. Nocturnal and tend to be more active on moonlit nights. Breeds early spring to late autumn, with reduced activity in midsummer. Gestation 23 to 24 days; three to five young (sometimes up to nine) per

litter. They build nests on or above ground level, from grasses shredded bark and other fibers. These mice frequently use the runways of meadow voles.

***Peromyscus maniculatus***

**Deer Mouse**

Location: In all types of habitat, including forests, brush, grassland, and chaparral.

Occurrence: Common.

Description: One of the smallest deer mice. Brown (adult) or gray (juvenile) above, white below. Ears round, medium-size. Feet white. Tail distinctly bicolored and shorter than body (less than 50 percent of its total length). In most habitats, out numbers all other rodents combined.

Information: Primarily nocturnal. Breeding takes place from April through November or even December; the breeding season is variable, usually during the period that provides the best environment and food for raising young. Several litters per year of two to eight young each; gestation 21–24 days. Agile climber. Feeds on seeds, insects, fungi.

***Peromyscus boylii***

**Brush Mouse**

Location: Found in chaparral and rocky, arid habitats; abundant at times in oaks, junipers, and piñons.

Occurrence: Common.

Description: A moderately large deer mouse. Coat grayish brown sometimes with a rufous stripe on sides; belly white. Tail distinctly bicolored with a tuft of hair extending past the tail tip. Tail slightly longer than head and body (more than 50 percent of its total length).

Information: Primarily nocturnal. Breeding takes place from April to October; litters contain four to six young. Reproduction is dependent on food abundance. Brush Mice are commonly associated with wood rats and have been found in their nests. A skilled climber, the Brush Mouse clambers about on cliffs and in trees and will often run up trees to avoid predators.

***Peromyscus californicus***

**California Mouse**

Location: Found in chaparral and foothill woodland habitats, especially in oaks, buckeyes, bay, and other hardwoods.

Occurrence: Common.

Description: The largest deer mouse in California. Dark brown above; whitish below, often with a buff spot on breast. Tail relatively long (more than 55 percent of its total length) and not distinctly bicolored.

Information: Primarily nocturnal. Up to 6 litters per year of one to four young each; gestation last from 21 to 25 days. Also known as the Parasitic Mouse because it lives in the dens of wood rats. Unlike most mice, this species forms long-term or permanent pair bonds. The female releases a chemical inducer in her urine that causes the male to defend the nest and share in care of the young.

***Neotoma lepida***

**Desert Woodrat**

Location: Found in rocky sagebrush scrub and chaparral habitats; also Cactus deserts and piñon-juniper woodlands.

Status: Common.

Description: Pale buffy-gray above, whitish below; hairs slate colored near skin. Feet white. Tail distinctly bicolored and about  $\frac{3}{4}$  length of body.

Information: Mainly nocturnal, year-round. Breed in fall, winter, or spring; two to four young per litter. Some females may have two litters per year. Signs include sticks and cactus spines piled beneath the cover of small rock ledges or at the base of yuccas. Radiocarbon dating has shown that these houses may persist for thousands of years. This species may also occupy old burrows of ground squirrels or kangaroo rats. The nest is placed underground in a deep, cool chamber.

### *Neotoma fuscipes*

### Dusky-footed Woodrat

Location: Found in hardwood forests and brushlands, from sea level to mountains. Active day and night, year-round.

Occurrence: Common

Description: A large wood rat with a grayish brown dorsum and a pale venter. The feet are brown at the base with the distal half white and it has a faintly bi-colored and scantily haired tail.

Information: This species consumes many different leaves, flowers, nuts, and berries. It favors *Rhamnus californica* and *Toxicodendron diversilobum*. It breeds only in the winter and spring, though during exceptionally wet years it may breed nearly year-round. It typically has more than one and up to five litters per year with one to three young, usually two per litter. They build large houses of twigs, leaves and other debris on the ground or rarely in trees. It is known to rattle its tail during times of duress. The rattle lasts three to four seconds and can be heard by humans from 15 meters.



### *Microtus californicus*

### California Meadow Vole

Location: Found in lowlands and foothills of California up to 1,500 meters. Prefers wet meadows but is also common in irrigated pastures where it can reach high densities.

Occurrence: Common.

Description: Gray to brownish with long grizzled fur and small ears. Faintly bi-colored tail more than twice the length of the hind foot.

Information: May breed throughout the year if fresh green food is abundant; otherwise breeds when grasses and forbs are sprouting. Several litters per year, each of three to eight young; gestation 21 days. Populations are cyclic, building up and crashing at regular intervals, depending on food availability. Females become sexually mature between three and four weeks of age. Makes runways and tunnels along roots and stems. Constructs nests of grasses or shredded bark, usually below or at ground level, often under logs and rocks.

## Talpidae

---

### *Scapanus latimanus*

### Broad-footed Mole

Location: Found in valleys and meadows with light, sandy soils; avoids heavily cultivated areas. Especially numerous on floodplains with high soil moisture and a strong growth of forbs and soil invertebrates.

Status: Fairly common.

Description: Dark gray fur that may have a coppery wash. Has broad forepaws for digging through the soil. Very tiny eyes and a medium length, sparsely haired tail.

Information: A single litter of two to four young is born in late winter. Young reach adult size in two months. Evidence of their digging can be seen in the form of tunnels near the surface, and piles of excavated dirt mounded up above tunnel entrances.

## Canidae

---

### *Canis latrans*

### Coyote

Location: Found in all habitat types, most often found in open plains and scrubby areas. One of the most widespread mammals in North America.

Occurrence: Uncommon.

Description: Gray, sandy, or brown, with a bushy dark-tipped tail held low when running.

Information: Tracks of this animal were seen in 2003. Mating takes place in February; five to ten pups are born about two months later. Eats carrion, insects, rodents, rabbits, turtles, gophers, frogs; will sometimes hunt in small groups to catch larger prey such as deer.

### *Vulpes vulpes necator*

### Red Fox

Location: Normally found in alpine areas of the high mountains of the Sierra Nevada, but also found at lower elevations including farmlands and scrubby hillsides.

Occurrence: Very common.

Description: A well documented species at MSSB with a population estimated around 15. Small and dog-like, generally reddish brown above underparts, and a long white-tipped bushy tail. The feet and the back of the ears are blackish.

Information: A litter of five to ten kits is born in early spring. Has a diet of small mammals, birds, fruit, and insects, often storing food in caches. The male helps the female provide food for the young.



### *Urocyon cinereoargenteus*

### Gray Fox

Location: Found in chaparral covered foothills, cultivated land, and forested areas.

Status: Common.

Description: Back is gray with grizzled fur, underside and base of ears are orange or buff, and throat, chest band, and inside of legs are white.

Information: Mates in late winter with three to five young born in April or May. Generally rather arboreal, foraging in trees, and often taking refuge in trees when pursued. Omnivorous, even eats insects and fungi. Usually dens in rock clefts or hollow trees.

## Procyonidae

---

### *Procyon lotor*

### Raccoon

Location: Found all over; chiefly along streams, marshes, and ponds.



Often in suburbs.

Occurrence: Common.

Description: Generally dark grayish or grayish brown above, paler below. Easily identified by striped tail and black face mask.

Information: Nocturnal and crepuscular. Mates in late winter; a litter of three to six young is born in late spring in a hollow log or tree. Swims and climbs well.

Omnivorous. Raccoons are sociable, and family groups may remain in a unit throughout the winter.

## **Mustelidae**

---

### ***Mustela frenata***

### **Long-tailed weasel**

Location: Varied habitats including forests, marshes, open grasslands and farmlands, usually fairly close to water. Favors open areas, rock piles, and stacks of wood.

Status: Fairly uncommon.

Description: Medium-sized weasel, brown or yellowish brown above, with a brown, black tipped tail and brown feet; white to rusty orange on the underside.

Information: Forages at any hour, and is opportunistic in its choice of prey, feeding mostly on small mammals and small birds. Mating normally takes place in July; implantation occurs the following winter. Four to eight young are born in June, some 225 to 300 days after mating. This species has increasingly become more common across the West for unknown reasons. An individual was seen climbing over a fence into the Estero Bluffs State Park Property

### ***Taxidea taxus***

### **American Badger**

Location: Found primarily in foothills bordering valleys, but also found in farmlands, grasslands, deserts, and open marshy areas.

Occurrence: Documented in 2004

Description: A relatively large carnivore, with a thick-set body and short legs. Long coarse fur is gray above with dark-colored legs and black-and-white face pattern. An efficient digger with very large claws.

Information: Mating takes place in late summer, but implantation is delayed until December or January. One to four young are born in March or April in an extensive burrow system. Red-tailed hawks and coyotes will hover around a foraging badger to snatch prey fleeing from it.

### ***Mephitis mephitis***

### **Striped Skunk**

Location: Found in many habitat types (woodlands, fields, agricultural areas, and neighborhoods), generally near streams.

Occurrence: Common.

Description: A large black skunk with broad white stripes from the back of the head to the rump.

Information: Nocturnal. Mating takes place in late winter or spring; gestation lasts for 60 to 77 days. Four to seven (or more) young are born in May or June in a hollow log or underground chamber. Omnivorous, feeding mostly on insects and their grubs. One of the most common carriers of rabies.

## Felidae

---

### *Felis concolor*

### Mountain Lion

Location: Found throughout most forested and brushy areas.

Status: Common.

Description: A large cat, buff to tawny above, paler below, with a long slender black-tipped tail.

Information: Gestation takes about 90 days; a litter of one to six kits is born in spring. Usually has alternate breeding years. Eats mostly mammals, but also birds, and sometimes insects and even grass; occasionally hunts livestock.

### *Lynx rufous*

### Bobcat

Location: Found in nearly all habitat types.

Status: Common.

Description: A medium-sized cat with thick, soft fur, which is yellowish brown or buff above, flecked with black, and whitish with black spots below. Short stubby tail.

Information: A litter of one to six kits is born in spring or summer after a gestation of about 50 days. If a fertile mating does not occur at the first estrous period, estrus recurs one or more times. This accounts for the extended period over which young are born. Diet includes a wide range of animals up to the size of a deer.

### *Felis familiaris*

### Domestic Cat

Location: Anthropogenic communities.

Occurrence: Common

Description: They vary in size, shape, and color

Information: These domesticated animals commonly jump the fence between the Morro Strand State Beach and the Cloisters development. Most common at Alva Paul Creek. These cats may be feral or house cats, often preying on birds and mice. Long term presence could impact fauna found at MSSB.

## Ursidae

---

### *Ursus americanus*

### Black Bear

Location: Wooded areas such as Riparian corridors, Oakwoodlands, dense maritime chaparral

Occurrence: Uncommon on the coast; common inland in the eastern part of the county.

Description: In central California the Black bears are commonly brown in color. Typically smaller than other bears, they have larger ears, a more rounded back and a paler muzzle. They are the only bear known to exist in central California.

Information: Black bears are opportunistic predators and feed on a variety of food sources such as sap from trees, berries from *Ribes* (currants and gooseberries) and *Ursinus* (wild blackberry) species as well as fish and small mammals. Often their scratch and claw marks can be found on tree trunks as a sign of foraging and marking of their territory. They commonly hibernate through the winter in dens and caves.



CalAcademy

Black bears were once widespread here; in fact the town of Los Osos (Spanish for “the bear”) was named such by the Spanish conquistadors because there was such a healthy and abundant population of black bears in the valley when they first arrived.

## **Suidae**

---

### ***Sus scrofa***

### **Wild Boar**

Location: Diverse habitats; introduced from the Old World.

Status: Common

Description: Typical swine size and shape. The skull contains 44 teeth, the skin coarse and thin. The tusks point upwards, separating it from a Peccary.

Information: This species was not actually seen, yet its rooting behavior was readily observed. The grasslands and some riparian zones were uprooted and trampled and small 4 toed hoof prints were photographed and recorded. Most likely a nomadic group passing through.

## **Cervidae**

---

### ***Odocoileus hemionus columbianus***

### **Mule Deer**

Location: Mainly on woodland edges and brushy places rather than in dense habitats.

Occurrence: Common.

Description: Medium-sized deer, reddish brown or yellowish brown above, underside and inside of legs white; grayer in winter.

Ears are large, rump white, with relatively long tail often tipped black.

Information: Tracks are commonly seen during the fall months when forage quality from the surrounding hills is scarce. In summer eats mainly forbs, herbs, and grasses, in winter mostly browses on shrubs, saplings, acorns, fungi, and lichens. Males attract a harem of females in the fall. Young, usually twins or triplets, are born in early summer and heavily spotted.

