



Eastern Chipmunk

Tamias striatus

Eastern chipmunks are small. They can get as large as 12 inches, including the tail. Eastern chipmunks are characterized by their reddish-brown fur and whitish underbellies. They have five dark brown to black lines on their backs with cream colored markings in between. The tail is dark in color. They have four toes on their front feet and five toes on their back feet.



Eastern chipmunks live in areas of deciduous woods and urban parks from Canada through the eastern United States. They prefer rocky areas with brush or log piles. They use shrubs for cover.



Eastern chipmunks climb trees well, but build extensive burrows underground. They build nests in these burrows and usually have more than one entrance. The burrows are lined with leaves, rocks and sticks helping to camouflage it. The chipmunks will also hide the entrances by removing the dirt (using their cheek pouches) from the entrance holes and moving it to a different site. Chipmunks are solitary animals until mating season and will defend their burrows from others. Females can have two litters a year, with each brood being between 3 and 5 young. They do not hibernate, but will enter a torpor state. Chipmunks have several calls, such as a high speed trill and a low clicking sound.

Chipmunks eat a variety of foods like bird eggs, mushrooms, plants, bulbs and seeds, nuts and more. Predators of chipmunks include hawks, owls, snakes, domestic cats, raccoons, foxes and more.

Ask A Naturalist

Fun facts about eastern chipmunks:

- Chipmunk translates to one who descends trees headlong.
- A group of chipmunks is called a scurry.
- They breathe very fast, taking almost 75 breaths a minute.
- Chipmunks can gather up to 165 acorns in one day.
- They have cheek pouches made of extendable skin. These pouches are used to carry large amounts of food to their burrows to be hoarded for later.

