

Pika (*Ochotona princeps*)



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Identification

- 7–8.4 in. long, 5.3–6.2 ounces (about the size of a guinea pig).
- Tailless, gray to brown with circular ears.

Habitat

- Found on talus slopes and rock falls at nearly all elevations in the park.
- Eat plant foods such as grasses, sedges, aspen, lichen, and conifer twigs.
- Predators include coyotes, martens, and hawks.

Behavior

- Active year-round; darts around on rocks; travels through tunnels under snow.
- Breed in spring; two litters per year.
- Often heard but not seen; makes a distinct shrill whistle call or a short “mew.”
- Scent marks by frequently rubbing cheeks on rocks.
- Late summer it gathers mouthfuls of vegetation to build “haystacks” for winter food; defends haystacks vigorously.
- Haystacks often built in same place year after year; have been known to become three feet in diameter.
- Like rabbits and hares, pika eat their own feces, which allows additional digestion of food.

Pocket Gopher (*Thomomys talpoides*)



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Identification

- 6–10 inches long, 2.6–6.3 ounces.
- Very small eyes and ears; brown or tan smooth fur; short tail; long front claws for burrowing; large external pouches for carrying food.

Habitat

- Only range restriction seems to be topsoil depth, which limits burrowing.
- Preyed upon by owls, badgers, grizzly bears, coyotes, weasels, and other predators.
- Snakes, lizards, ground squirrels, deer mice, and other animals use their burrows.
- In the top 6–8 inches below the surface they forage for forbs, some grasses and underground stems, bulbs and tubers.

Behavior

- Transport food in cheek pouches to underground cache. Grizzly bears sometimes dig up these caches, including an unsuspecting gopher.
- Do not hibernate, but instead burrow into the snow; often fill tunnels with soil forming worm-like cores that remain in the spring after snow melts.
- Breed in May and April; one litter of 5 young per year.
- Burrow systems are elaborate and often bi-level; can be 400–500 feet long.
- Very territorial; only one per burrow.

Red Squirrel (*Tamiasciurus hudsonicus*)



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Identification

- 11–15 inches long, 6.7–7 ounces.
- Brownish-red on its upper half; dark stripe above white ventral side; light eye ring; bushy tail.
- Quick, energetic.
- Loud, long chirp to advertise presence; much more pronounced in the fall.

Habitat

- Spruce, fir, and pine forests; young squirrels found in marginal aspen habitat.
- Eat conifer seeds, terminal buds of conifer