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U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Blackwater

National Wildlife Refuge

Mammals



Red Fox Kit
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Although the mammals of Blackwater are often overlooked in favor of the more abundant and conspicuous bird life, the refuge hosts a wide variety of mammals, from the opossum to the white-tailed deer.



Delmarva Fox Squirrel

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Gray Squirrel

Mammals

A mammal is a warm-blooded animal with hair. Female mammals have mammary glands that produce milk for their young.

Gray Squirrel
(*Sciurus carolinensis*), Common. Gray with buff underfur and a bushy flattened tail. Seen in the refuge woodlands. Prefers nut-producing hardwood trees. A tree-dweller, more so than the fox squirrel.

Delmarva Fox Squirrel
(*Sciurus niger cinereus*), Common. Seen in the woods bordering Wildlife Drive. Light gray fur and larger than the gray squirrel. Spends more time on the ground than the gray squirrel. Feeds in corn and soy bean fields. Currently listed as an endangered species. Forest management programs are oriented towards protecting this squirrel.

Southern Flying Squirrel
(*Glaucomys volans*), Uncommon. A nocturnal small squirrel with a silky gray-brown coat and a fold of skin between front and hind legs.

Rice Rat
(*Oryzomys palustris*), Common. Body and tail gray-brown above and white below. Found throughout the brackish marshes.

White-footed Mouse
(*Peromyscus leucopus*), Common. Body is rich reddish-brown above with a white belly and feet. Abundant in wooded and brushy areas.

Meadow Vole
(*Microtus pennsylvanicus*), Common. A “field mouse” with variable color; long tail and silver-tipped hair on belly. Abundant in the marsh, where it builds its nest in muskrat houses.

Woodland Vole
(*Pitymys pinetorum*), Common.
Commonly called a pine vole.
Reddish-brown fur; buff underside
and a short tail. Likes dry land
habitats.

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Muskrat

Muskrat
(*Ondatra zibethicus*), Common.
Dense dark brown fur, which is
lighter on sides and white on throat.
Long, naked tail that is higher than
it is wide. One of the most abundant
mammals at Blackwater. Their large
dome-shaped houses may be seen
throughout the marsh.

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Nutria

Nutria
(*Myocastor coypus*), Uncommon. An
invasive, aquatic rodent with a brown
body, rounded tail and long orange
front teeth. Often mistaken for a
beaver. The nutria compete with the
native muskrat, waterfowl and other
marsh residents for habitat resources.
They are causing considerable
damage to the wetlands through
their feeding activities. Most nutria
have been removed from the refuge
and efforts are being made to control
nutria in surrounding marsh areas.

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Opossum

Opossum
(*Didelphis virginiana*), Common.
White-gray with a white head and
throat. Seen in wooded areas and
wood margins. Occasionally seen
along roadsides at night. It is the only
mammal with a pouch in the U.S.

Least Shrew
(*Cryptotis parva*), Common. Gray-
brown body with a short tail. Seen in
the marsh or grassy fields.

Masked Shrew
(*Sorex cinereus*), Uncommon.
Resembles a mouse with a long
pointed snout. Has a brown body, a
silver-gray belly and a long brown
tail. Likes moist habitats.

Short-tailed Shrew
(*Blarina brevicauda*), Common. The
largest shrew in North America.
Brown coloring all over and a short
tail. Found in damp woodland soil
habitats.

Starnose Mole
(*Condylura cristata*), Common. Has
black fur; a long hairy tail and twenty
two pink fleshy tentacles on nose.
Lives in damp soil.

Eastern Mole
(*Scalopus aquaticus*), Common.
Short, velvety fur ranges from gray
to brownish-tan. Has no visible eyes
and a very short, naked tail. Found in
cultivated fields.

Little Brown Bat
(*Myotis lucifugus*), Common. Glossy
fur of varying shades of brown and a
hairless wing. Roosts in hollow trees.

Big Brown Bat
(*Eptesicus fuscus*), Uncommon. A
large glossy brown bat with a paler
belly and black wings. Varied habitat.

Eastern Red Bat
(*Lasiurus borealis*), Common.
Bright red to chestnut with white on back, breast and shoulders. Seen in woodlands.

Evening Bat
(*Nycticeius humeralis*), Uncommon.
Reddish brown body, paler below and hairless wings. Woodland habitat.

Eastern Cottontail Rabbit
(*Sylvilagus floridanus*), Common.
A gray-brown rabbit with a white cottony tail. Seen in brushy thickets bordering roads and dikes. Frequently seen during spring and summer.

Black Rat
(*Rattus Rattus*), Uncommon. Brown or gray with a long, scaly sparsely haired tail.

Norway Rat
(*Rattus norvegicus*), Common.
Brown-gray with a scaly tail shorter than the black rat.

House Mouse
(*Mus musculus*), Common. Gray-brown all over and seen around refuge buildings and in wild areas.

Woodchuck
(*Marmota monax*), Common.
Woodchucks or groundhogs are grizzled brown all over with a bushy tail. Seen in fields and wooded areas.



Eastern Cottontail Rabbit

Melissa Zarou/USFWS

Red Fox
(*Vulpes vulpes*), Very Common.
Red with white underparts, chin and throat. Long, bushy tail with a white tip. Inhabits wooded and brushy areas where it feeds on rabbits, rodents, and birds.

Gray fox
(*Urocyon cinereoargenteus*), Uncommon. Grizzled gray with reddish accents and a black tipped tail. Prefers heavily wooded areas.



River Otter

River Otter
(*Lutra canadensis*), Uncommon.
Aquatic with elongated body, broad flattened head and webbed feet. Seen along banks of Wildlife Drive.

Beaver
(*Castor canadensis*), Common. A large rodent with soft, dark brown fur. Has a large, black tail that is horizontally flattened and paddle-shaped. Found in aquatic habitats.

Longtail Weasel
(*Mustela frenata*), Uncommon.
Brown, long-bodied and short legged with a long tail. Common in brushland, fields and marsh.

Mink
(*Mustela vison*), Uncommon.
Lustrous chocolate to black fur; long bushy tail and white spots on chin. May be found in all aquatic habitats.

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Woodchuck

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Striped Skunk
(*Mephitis mephitis*), Common. Black with two broad white stripes on head and shoulders. Common in brushy areas of the refuge.

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Raccoon

Raccoon
(*Procyon lotor*), Very Common. Brown with black and gray below. Black face mask outlined in white and a ringed tail. Seen in wooded areas bordering water. Varied diet.

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Sika Deer

Sika Deer
(*Cervus nippon*), Very Common. Medium sized with many white spots on back and sides and a large white rump patch. Found in the more secluded areas of the refuge.

Mammals that may occur on the refuge:

Northern Long-eared Bat
(*Myotis septentrionalis*)

Silver-haired Bat
(*Lasionycteris noctivagans*)
May be seen during migration
(March- April, October- November).

Eastern Pipistrell
(*Perimyotis subflavus*)

Hoary Bat
(*Lasiurus cinereus*)
May be seen during migration.

Southern Bog Lemming
(*Synaptomys cooperi*)

Meadow Jumping Mouse
(*Zapus hudsonius*)

Coyote
(*Canis latrans*)



White-tailed Deer

White-tailed Deer
(*Odocoileus virginianus*), Very Common. Tan, red-brown or gray with brown tail edged in white. Often seen at dusk in tree-bordered fields.

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Blackwater is one of more than 550 national wildlife refuges administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The National Wildlife Refuge System is a network of lands and waters managed specifically for the protection of wildlife and wildlife habitat, and represents the most comprehensive wildlife management program in the world. Units of the system stretch across the United States from northern Alaska to the Florida Keys and include small islands of the Caribbean and South Pacific. The character of refuges is as diverse as the nation itself.

The Service also manages national fish hatcheries, and provides federal leadership in habitat protection, fish and wildlife research, technical assistance and the conservation and protection of migratory birds, certain marine mammals, and threatened and endangered species.

The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife, plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people.