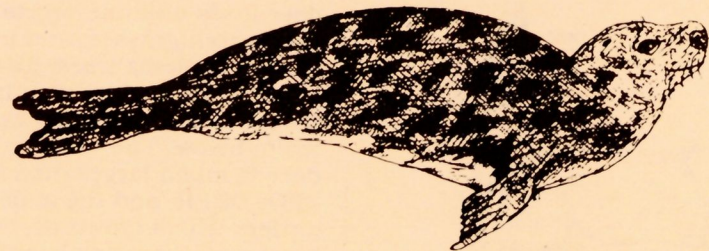


BOTTLENOSE DOLPHIN (*Tursiops truncatus*): often seen in the surf along Assateague's beaches during the summer months. In 1987 a mysterious disease killed many dolphins along the Mid-Atlantic coast. Common.



GRAY SEAL (*Halichoerus grypus*): a male can reach 10 feet in length and weigh 650 pounds; the female is smaller, 7.5 feet in length and weigh to 550 pounds. Fur is black or grayish. Two baby gray seals have been born on Assateague's Maryland beaches (winters of 1987 and 1989); the southernmost known birth of the species. Rare.

HUMANS (*Homo sapiens*): most often seen in summer basking along the beaches and in near-shore waters, but can be found throughout the island anytime of the year. This species appears to have a low tolerance for biting insects since they can be seen flailing wildly about while viewing other mammals. Common migrator (2.5 million annually).



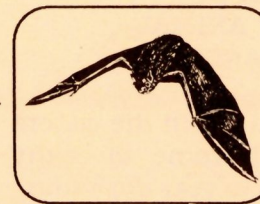
Checklist of other mammals on Assateague Island.

- ___ **LEAST SHREW** (*Cryptotis parva*) Uncommon.
- ___ **SILVER-HAIRED BAT** (*Lasionycteris noctivagans*) Common.
- ___ **RED BAT** (*Lastiurus borealis*) Common.
- ___ **GRAY SQUIRREL** (*Sciurus carolinensis*) Rare.
- ___ **WHITE-FOOTED MOUSE** (*Peromyscus leucopus*) Common.
- ___ **HOUSE MOUSE** (*Mus musculus*) Common.
- ___ **MEADOW VOLE** (*Microtus pennsylvanicus*) Common.
- ___ **RICE RAT** (*Oryzomys palustris*) Common.
- ___ **NORWAY RAT** (*Rattus norvegicus*) Uncommon.
- ___ **MUSKRAT** (*Ondatra zibethica*) Common.
- ___ **COTTONTAIL RABBIT** (*Sylvilagus floridanus*) Common.
- ___ **WILD HORSE** (*Equus caballus*) Common.
- ___ **RACCOON** (*Procyon lotor*) Common.
- ___ **LONGTAIL WEASEL** (*Mustela frenata*) Rare.
- ___ **HARBOR SEAL** (*Phoca vitulina*) Rare.
- ___ **HOODED SEAL** (*Cystophora cristata*) Rare.
- ___ **TRUE BEAKED WHALE** (*Mesoplodon mirus*) Rare.
- ___ **GOOSEBEAK WHALE** (*Ziphius cavirostris*) Rare.
- ___ **PYGMY SPERM WHALE** (*Kogia breviceps*) Rare.
- ___ **SPERM WHALE** (*Physeter catodon*) Rare.
- ___ **SPOTTED DOLPHIN** (*Stenella plagiodon*) Rare.
- ___ **LONGBEAK DOLPHIN** (*Steno bredanensis*) Rare.
- ___ **COMMON DOLPHIN** (*Delphinus delphis*) Common.
- ___ **ATLANTIC WHITE-SIDED DOLPHIN** (*Lagenorhynchus acutus*) Uncommon.
- ___ **ELECTRA DOLPHIN** (*Peponocephala electra*) Rare.
- ___ **ATLANTIC HARBOR PORPOISE** (*Phocoena*) Rare.
- ___ **GRAMPUS WHALE** (*Grampus griseus*) Rare.
- ___ **COMMON BLACKFISH WHALE** (*Globicephala melaena*) Rare.
- ___ **FINBACK WHALE** (*Balaenoptera physalus*) Rare.
- ___ **SEI WHALE** (*Balaenoptera borealis*) Rare.
- ___ **MINKE WHALE** (*Balaenoptera acutorostrata*) Rare.
- ___ **BLUE WHALE** (*Balaenoptera musculus*) Rare.
- ___ **HUMPBACK WHALE** (*Megaptera novaeangliae*) Rare.
- ___ **ATLANTIC RIGHT WHALE** (*Eubalaena glacialis*) Rare.

For more information, refer to the Peterson Field Guide to the Mammals.

(Sketches by Karin Lubeck)

Assateague Island



MAMMALS

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

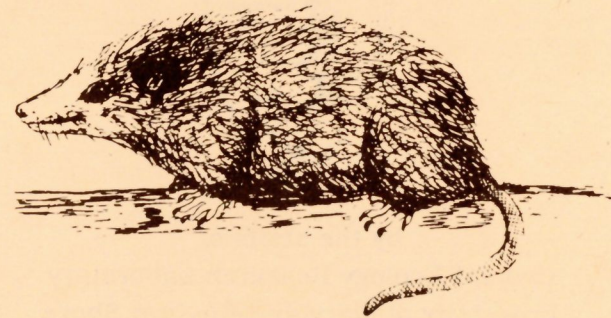


by the staffs of
Coastal Ecology Research Laboratory
University of Maryland Eastern Shore
Assateague Island National Seashore
Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge

Assateague Island is the home of 44 species of mammals. Many of these animals are small, secretive, or nocturnal and therefore often go unnoticed by visitors to the island. Marine mammals such as whales are infrequently found washed up on the island's shores after dying at sea. To see some of Assateague's mammals one can walk quietly and slowly on designated trails through the innerdunes, woodland, and salt marsh in the early morning and late evening. This brochure features some of Assateague's lesser known mammals.

**KEEP THE WILD IN WILDLIFE!
DO NOT FEED OR MOLEST ANY ANIMAL.
ENJOY THEM FROM A DISTANCE.**

The abundance of mammals on Assateague or in the waters immediately offshore is difficult to determine in many instances. Populations can vary from year to year depending upon the severity of weather, availability of food, and animal movements or migration patterns. For this brochure the abundance is listed simply as common, uncommon, or rare. In the absence of specific research on a species, these classifications are based on observations by rangers and the intuition and experience of researchers.



OPOSSUM (*Didelphis marsupialis*): ranges throughout the island, but most commonly found in forested areas. The opossum is the only marsupial (raises young in pouch) found in North America. It feeds on a wide variety of foods such as carrion and fresh fruits and berries. Common.

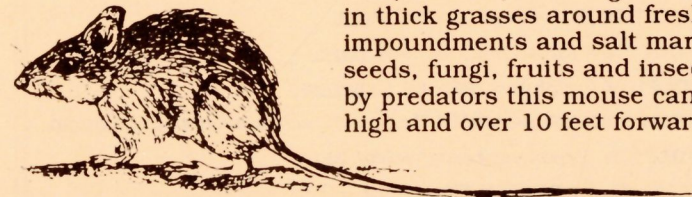


LITTLE BROWN BAT (*Myotis lucifugus*): roosts in hollow trees and buildings. Brown bats feed on insects at dusk and dawn. Common.

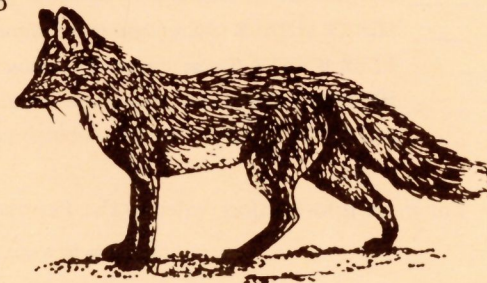
DELMARVA PENINSULA FOX SQUIRREL (*Sciurus niger cinereus*) an endangered species. It inhabits wooded areas on the Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge in Virginia where it feeds on acorns, seeds, and fungi. The Delmarva Peninsula fox squirrel is about 1/3 larger than the gray squirrel with a bushier tail. Uncommon.



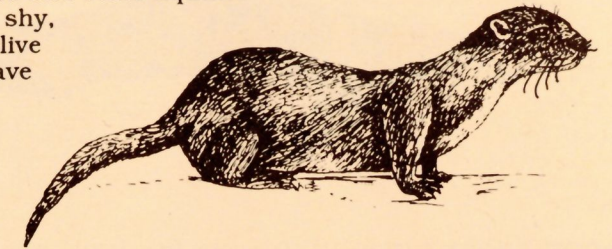
MEADOW JUMPING MOUSE (*Zapus hudsonius*): a medium size mouse with a long tail (5 inches) and large hind feet. It is found in thick grasses around fresh water holes, impoundments and salt marshes. It feeds on seeds, fungi, fruits and insects. When chased by predators this mouse can jump over 2 feet high and over 10 feet forward. Common.



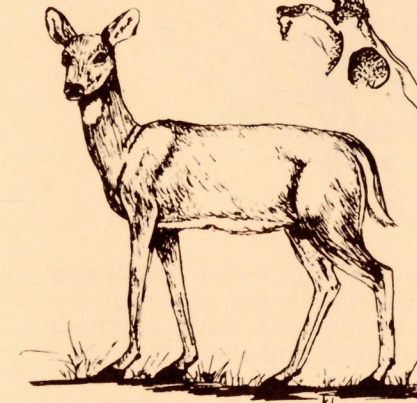
RED FOX (*Vulpes vulpes*): the only species of fox on Assateague. It digs its den into the sides of sand dunes to give birth and raise young. The red fox is probably not native to the Delmarva Peninsula but was brought over from Europe in the 1700s for fox hunting. Red fox eat a wide variety of foods including fruits, berries, insects, rabbits, birds and anything edible that it finds along the shoreline. Common.



RIVER OTTER (*Lutra canadensis*): a member of the weasel family weighing 10-25 pounds and 30 inches in length. River otters eat fish, crabs and other aquatic invertebrates. Otters are shy, illusive mammals which live mostly in the bay, but have been seen in freshwater impoundments and occasionally on the beach. Uncommon.



WHITE-TAILED DEER (*Odocoileus virginianus*): a large, shy mammal infrequently seen on the island. The white-tailed deer feeds on dune vegetation, salt marsh grasses, and in winter, browses trees. Its brown summer coat turns gray in fall. Its tail is brown on top and white below. The white-tailed deer is much larger than the SIKA DEER, and the male has antlers which crown over the head verses angling back as in the Sika. Uncommon.



SIKA DEER (*Cervus nippon*): an Asiatic elk which was released on Assateague in the 1920s. The sika deer feeds primarily on salt marsh grasses but will eat a variety of vegetation. The sika deer is distinguished from the white-tailed deer by its smaller size, white spots (which are retained throughout life), and all white rump with a small tail. Common.

