

Golden-mantled ground squirrel (*Callospermophilus lateralis*)



Taxonomy:

Family Sciuridae. Thirteen subspecies are recognized including *Callospermophilus lateralis trepidus* from the Wasatch region.

Description:

Color grayish-brown above, with two white lateral stripes bordered by black stripes; yellowish-white below. Head, neck and shoulders reddish or buffy. Tail brown above and yellowish below.

Total length: 355-410 mm; Tail: 120-158 mm; Hind foot: 35-46 mm; Ear: 12-24 mm; Weight (early spring): 325-500 g.



Distribution:

Western US and Canada, from Colorado west to northern California, Oregon, southwestern Washington, western British Columbia and eastern Alberta south to New Mexico and northern Arizona. This species is common at mid to high elevations within the Wasatch Range

Ecology and diet:

Golden-mantled ground squirrels occupy a wide variety of habitats, from woodland and forest communities to alpine meadows. They may be more common in areas of natural or human-caused disturbance. They live in rock

outcrops or underground burrow systems. The diet includes fungi, leaves, fruit, flowers, seeds, insects and some small vertebrates. They triple their body weight during the summer, fattening in preparation for long winter hibernation.

Life History:

Reproduction begins after the end of hibernation in March or April. Females have one litter of 5-6 offspring annually. Gestation length is 26-33 days. Young are sexually mature between 12-24 months. Maximum lifespan is 5-7 years.

References: Bartels & Thompson 1993.