

## Cliff chipmunk (*Tamias dorsalis*)



### **Taxonomy:**

Family Sciuridae. Six subspecies are recognized, including *Tamias dorsalis utahensis*, the regional subspecies.

### **Description:**

This medium-sized chipmunk has a smoky gray top, cinnamon colored sides, white underneath and pale grayish-white ears behind which is a bright white patch. A dark stripe runs down the center of the back, from shoulder to base of the tail, with fainter side stripes. Sides of face each have five contrasting brown and white stripes. The bushy tail is gray above and brownish-orange below.

Total length: 204-235 mm; Tail: 82-105 mm; Hind foot: 34-37 mm; Ear: 18-23 mm; Weight: 55-67 g.



### **Distribution:**

Distributed throughout the Rocky Mountain region of the US, Utah and Nevada south through New Mexico and Arizona into more central portions of northern Mexico. Found in rocky habitat at mid-elevations along the Wasatch Front.

### **Ecology and diet:**

Cliff chipmunks live mid-elevation habitats, from sagebrush to piñon-juniper to montane forest plant communities. They are almost always associated with rocks, boulders, or cliffs (from which they get their common name) where they nest and cache food. They predominantly eat seeds and other plant material, and occasionally insects and small

vertebrates. Like other chipmunks they have internal pouches which they use to transport food items.

### **Life History:**

This species has a long reproductive season extending from March to late autumn. Females have one litter of about 5 offspring annually. Gestation length is about 30 days. Young are probably sexually mature at 1 or 2 years.

**References:** Hart 1992.