

Least chipmunk (*Tamias minimus*)



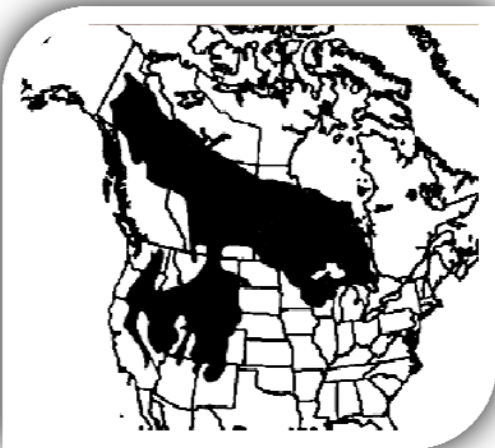
Taxonomy:

Family Sciuridae. Twenty-one subspecies are recognized; the regional subspecies is *Tamias minimus consobrinus*.

Description:

Smallest of the chipmunks, with light cinnamon sides and a whitish belly. There are five dark and four light dorsal stripes on the body (including well-defined dark lower lateral stripes), and two light and two dark stripes on the face.

Total length: 173-203 mm; Tail: 71-113 mm; Hind foot: 28-32 mm; Weight: 30-54 g.



Distribution:

Most widely distributed chipmunk occurring across Canada, from Yukon east to Hudson Bay and western Great Lakes region, and the mountainous western US from the Canadian border south to northern portions of New Mexico and Arizona and from the Sierra Nevada mountains east to the Rocky Mountains. Found in low-elevation shrub communities along the Wasatch Front.

Ecology and diet:

Least chipmunks are generally found in open habitats, and in our region are often associated with sagebrush. They are diurnal, and primarily active on the ground but often climb or perch in trees and shrubs. They construct

burrow systems with several tunnels each that include nesting and food-cache chambers. The diet consists mainly of seeds, but also includes green vegetation, insects, and fungi.

Life History:

Reproduction occurs in spring and early summer. Following a gestation of 28-30 days, females have one litter of 4-6 offspring. Young are sexually mature at 1 or 2 years. Maximum lifespan is 5-6 years.

References: Zeveloff 1988; Bergstrom 1999.