

American Badger (*Taxidea taxus*)



Taxonomy:

Family Mustelidae. There are 4 subspecies including *Taxidea taxus jeffersonii* which occurs in the Wasatch region.

Description:

Distinguished by its squat, short-legged body, lack and white facial markings, and relatively short tail that lacks rings.

Total length: 600-790 mm; Tail: 105-135 mm; Hind foot: 110-136 mm; Ear: 50-55 mm; Weight: 4-12 kg.



Distribution:

North America: From west-central Canada south through the Great Lakes region and central and western US into central Mexico including the Baja peninsula.

Ecology and diet:

Badgers have a broad elevation distribution and are found in a wide variety of habitats ranging from desert to alpine meadows, and are particularly abundant in open habitats. They are specialized predators of burrowing rodents, using their powerful limbs and strong claws to dig for pocket gophers and ground squirrels; the latter often are taken while they are hibernating. However badgers opportunistically

consume other prey including birds, lizards, insects, and other invertebrates. They are solitary and generally active at night. They sleep in underground dens during much of the winter, but are often active on warm days.

Life History:

Mating occurs in the summer or fall, but implantation is delayed until February. Litters of 1-3 young are born in early spring and are weaned by autumn. Some females breed during their first year. Badgers may live for 14 years.

References: Zeweloff 1988; Long 1999.