

Virginia Opossum

Scientific Name: *Didelphis virginiana*

Class: Mammalia

Order: Didelphimorphia

Family: Didelphidae



Opossums have cat sized bodies with the tail usually shorter than the combined length of head and body. The body can be gray, black, reddish, rarely white. The head is whitish with darker body color, ears are black or black with paler tips. Lower legs are black with feet and toes being black and white.

Range

West coast of U.S., Canada to N. Costa Rica, and Great Plains of U.S. to Eastern coast. Opossum can also be found on Mexico's coastline. Home range is 31-96 acres.

Habitat

Grasslands to forest-also farms, towns and cities

Gestation

13 days

Litter

A typical litter is 7 with up to 56 born, and only 1-15 attaching to mammae.

Behavior

In fear, they may "play dead" for up to 4 hours on its side with eyes and mouth open, tongue hanging out, emitting both a green fluid from anus and a putrid odor. This opossum does not hibernate.

Reproduction

Females carry the young for approximately 2 weeks before they are born. The newborn must crawl to a nipple. The nipple swells and the baby will stay on it for approximately 2 months. At about 3 months the babies emerge from the pouch.

Wild Diet

Depends on location and season: fruit, insects, small vertebrates, carrion, garbage