



Mammals of Lava Beds



Badger

Mammals

Lava Beds National Monument has over 50 species of mammals, fourteen of which are bats. Pay close attention, and you may see them while caving, hiking, or driving the monument's roads. This brochure describes and compares a few of the species commonly observed in the monument. If you are lucky enough to see any of these animals, please share the Monument with them, but don't share your lunch!

Squirrels

Belding's Ground Squirrel (*Spermophilus beldingi*)

The Belding's ground squirrel is reddish-brown with a short, slim, black-tipped tail and small ears. Their seven-to-eight month hibernation period makes them one of the longest-hibernating mammals in North America, so you are unlikely to see them early or late in the year. Look for these mammals burrowing in the grasslands at the northern end of the monument and around Petroglyph Point.

California Ground Squirrel (*Spermophilus beecheyi*)

A bushy tail, gray and black coloring, and light gray "shoulder pads," are characteristics of the California ground squirrel. You may see them during the day perched on large rocks and shrubs, or scampering through the brush.

The California ground squirrel has evolved an unusual method for deterring western rattlesnakes, which are among their main predators. When threatened by a rattlesnake, the squirrels raise the temperature of their tails and shake them back and forth vigorously. Rattlesnakes hunt primarily with infrared vision, so this tail signal shows the snake that the squirrel is well aware of its presence and ready to dodge a strike. The snake will likely leave a tail-waving squirrel alone in favor of more vulnerable prey.

Rabbits, Pika, and Hares

Pika (*Ochotona princeps*)

Slightly larger than a hamster, the pika has short, rounded ears and no visible tail. They can be found in the rocky areas of the monument such as the lava fields and the areas around caves. In preparation for winter, pikas make their own hay by collecting summer plants and storing them beneath the rocks to dry.

Unfortunately, a warming climate may be adversely affecting pikas, and it is a rare treat to see one in the park. Over 100 sites in Lava Beds are currently being monitored for pikas, so if you do see one of these elusive creatures during your visit, please inform monument staff.

Mountain Cottontail (*Sylvilagus nuttallii*)

Mountain cottontails are often seen nibbling sagebrush plants along roads and in the campground. They have a color similar to that of pikas, but they tend to be larger with long hind legs, upright ears, and a fluffy white tail.

Black-tailed Jackrabbit (*Lepus californicus*)

Much larger than mountain cottontails are black-tailed jackrabbits which are also found throughout Lava Beds. These rabbits are easily identified by their enormous, upright ears which they use to stay cool during the hot summers. Jackrabbits can also be distinguished from mountain cottontails by the black markings on their ears and the upper side of their tails.



Pika

Deer and Pronghorn

Mule Deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*)

There are many small herds of mule deer that roam the park, foraging on the shrubs and herbaceous plants found throughout the monument. During the summer, males can easily be distinguished from females by their large antlers which they use to fight for mates during the fall breeding season.

Pronghorn (*Antilocapra americana*)

Pronghorns are an unusual sight, but they are sometimes seen in the grasslands at the northern end of the monument. They can be distinguished from mule deer by their smaller size, dark horns, and the distinct white patches on their bellies and throats. Pronghorn are the fastest land mammal in the Western Hemisphere, and have been known to run at speeds up to 62 miles per hour (100 km per hour).

Cats

Bobcat (*Lynx rufus*)

Territorial and largely solitary, bobcats can occasionally be seen along roadsides as they hunt for rabbits in the park. These cats are twice the size of a housecat with excellent climbing skills and sharp hearing. Their coat is gray or brown with black spots, and they have tufted ears and a round, stubby tail which is the bobcat's namesake.

Mountain Lion (*Felis concolor*)

Due to their shy nature, it is rare to see mountain lions at Lava Beds, but a few do call the monument home. With plenty of deer for prey, Lava Beds is a perfect habitat for these wild cats, which are the largest in North America. Their long tail and tawny coat distinguish them from the smaller bobcat. If you see a mountain lion during your visit, try to be as intimidating as possible. Shout, wave your arms, and back away slowly. Convince the lion that you are not prey!



Mountain Lion

Keeping Track

Put your observation skills to the test!

Use the list below to keep track of the mammals you see during your stay at Lava Beds. Stop by the visitor center to share your finds and to get more information about the wildlife found in the monument. The list is formatted as follows:

Order

Family

Common name *Genus species*

Artiodactyla

Antilocapridae (Pronghorn)

Pronghorn *Antilocapra americana*

Cervidae (Deer)

Mule Deer *Odocoileus hemionus*

Carnivora

Canidae (Dogs, Foxes, and Wolves)

- Coyote *Canis latrans*
- Red Fox *Vulpes vulpes*
- Gray Fox *Urocyon cinereoargenteus*
- Wolf *Canis lupis*

Felidae (Cats)

- Mountain Lion *Felis concolor*
- Bobcat *Lynx rufus*

Mustelidae (Weasels and Skunks)

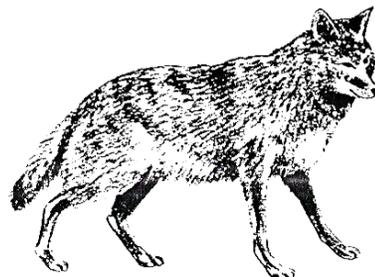
- Long-tailed Weasel *Mustela frenata*
- Mink *Neovison vison*
- Badger *Taxidea taxus*
- Striped Skunk *Mephitis mephitis*
- Spotted Skunk *Spilogale gracili*

Procyonidae (Raccoons)

Raccoon *Procyon lotor*

Ursidae (Bears)

Black Bear *Ursus americanus*



Coyote

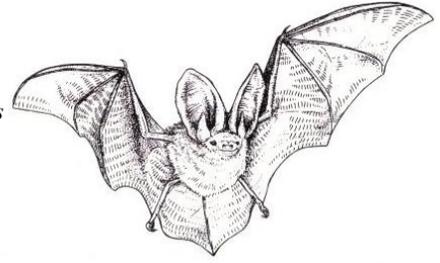
Chiroptera

Molossidae (Free-tailed Bats)

- Brazilian Free-tailed Bat.....*Tadarida brasiliensis*

Vespertilionidae (Plainnose Bats)

- Pallid Bat.....*Antrozous pallidus*
- Townsend's Big-eared Bat.....*Corynorhinus townsendii*
- Big Brown Bat.....*Eptesicus fuscus*
- Silver-haired Bat.....*Lasionycteris noctivagans*
- Hoary Bat.....*Lasiurus cinereus*
- California Myotis.....*Myotis californicus*
- Western Small-footed Myotis.....*Myotis ciliolabrum*
- Long-eared Myotis.....*Myotis evotis*
- Little Brown Myotis.....*Myotis lucifugus*
- Fringed Myotis.....*Myotis thysanodes*
- Long-legged Myotis.....*Myotis volans*
- Yuma Myotis.....*Myotis yumanensis*
- Western Pipistrelle.....*Pipistrellus hesperus*



Townsend's Big-eared Bat

Insectivora

Soricidae (Shrews)

- Trowbridge's Shrew.....*Sorex trowbridgii*

Talpidae (Moles)

- California Mole.....*Scapanus latimanus*

Lagomorpha

Leporidae (Rabbits and Hares)

- Mountain Cottontail.....*Sylvilagus nuttallii*
- Black-tailed Jackrabbit.....*Lepus californicus*

Ochotonidae (Pikas)

- Pika.....*Ochotona princeps*

Rodentia

Cricetidae (New World Rats and Mice)

- Canyon Mouse.....*Peromyscus crinitus*
- Deer Mouse.....*Peromyscus maniculatus*
- Pinyon Mouse.....*Peromyscus truei*
- Western Harvest Mouse.....*Reithrodontomys megalotis*
- Dusky-footed Wood Rat.....*Neotoma fuscipes*
- Bushy-tailed Wood Rat.....*Neotoma cinerea*
- Mountain Vole.....*Microtus montanus*
- Muskrat.....*Ondatra zibethicus*

Erethizontidae (New World Porcupines)

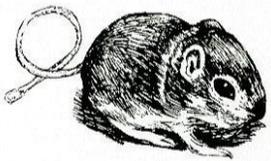
- Porcupine.....*Erethizon dorsatum*

Heteromyidae (Pocket Mice and Kangaroo Rats)

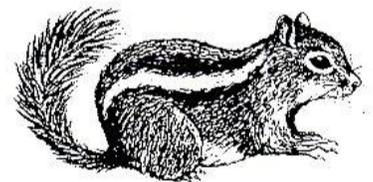
- California Kangaroo Rat.....*Dipodomys californicus*
- Great Basin Pocket Mouse.....*Perognathus parvus*

Sciuridae (Marmots, Squirrels and Chipmunks)

- Least Chipmunk.....*Tamias minimus*
- Yellow Pine Chipmunk.....*Tamias amoenus*
- Yellow-bellied Marmot.....*Marmota flaviventris*
- California Ground Squirrel.....*Spermophilus beecheyi*
- Golden-mantled Ground Squirrel.....*Spermophilus lateralis*
- Belding's Ground Squirrel.....*Spermophilus beldingi*
- Douglas Squirrel.....*Tamiasciurus douglasii*



California Kangaroo Rat



Golden-mantled Ground Squirrel