

Are Babies Out There?

Yes! Just the other day, we had our first baby squirrel come in. However, he was badly injured from the fall he did not make it. Below are a few facts about wildlife babies who could be out there.

Eastern Grey Squirrel

Mating: occurs twice a year; December to February, June to July. Gestation period: 45 days. Babies are born February to April, and September to October. Litter: 2-6 young

At birth the babies are naked, blind and deaf. At 1 week they are haired, at 4 weeks they are fully furred with ears open, although they are completely helpless until their eyes open at 5 weeks. They are weaned at 6-8 weeks and go out foraging with their mom when they are about 3 months old. Independent at 3 to 4 months old.

Diet: buds, fruit, nuts, seeds, cones, insects, vegetables, small birds, eggs, and twigs.

Habitat: wood lots, parks, and trees, areas with seed or nut producing trees. Nest are leaf based in the spring with preference for tree holes in the winter.



Virginia Opossum

Mating: occurs at least once; December to February, May to June, August to September. Gestation: 12 to 13 days. Babies are born January to March, May to June, August to September.

Litter size: 16- 20.

Newborns weigh 1/15 of an ounce and are the size of a grain of rice. Hairless and blind, they make an amazing journey up to their mother's pouch where they must connect to one of her 13 nipples. Babies who don't connect to a nipple don't survive. They have special structures to hold on with and the nipples also swell to fill their mouths. The young have separate breathing and drinking passages, so they do not drown or suffocate. The young stay attached to the nipples for 2 months and or 2" long (excluding their tails.) At this time their mouths are fully open and they start to leave the pouch to ride on mom's back, returning to the pouch to feed. By 3 months they forage for food with their mom. Weaned at 2 1/2 months, independent at 3 1/2 months.

Diet: carrion (dead animals), fruit, vegetables, insects, frogs, eggs, earthworms, cat food, dog food, and garbage.

Habitat: Favours dens on the, ground, farmland and wood lots but adapts to all lifestyles.



Cottontail

Mating: occurs January to September. Gestation period: 28 days. Babies are born February to October. Litter size: 1 to 8.

Babies are born with sparse hairs, eyes closed and are about 4" long. Mom leaves them to snuggle in the fur lined nest, while she goes off the feed. She only returns at night and early morning to feed then to avoid alerting predators to her young Babies eye open by 7 days and they begin to nibble grass. By two weeks they are fully furred with the white mark fading on their forehead and are cautiously leave to be on their own. By 3 weeks they will disperse. Weaned at 3-4 weeks.

Diet: berries, fruits, vegetables, shoots, roots, buds, bark and lush vegetation.

Habitat: neighbourhoods, brushy areas, wood lots and grasslands. Nest are shallow, dinner plate sized, 3-4" depressions, lined with grass then with fur.



Raccoons

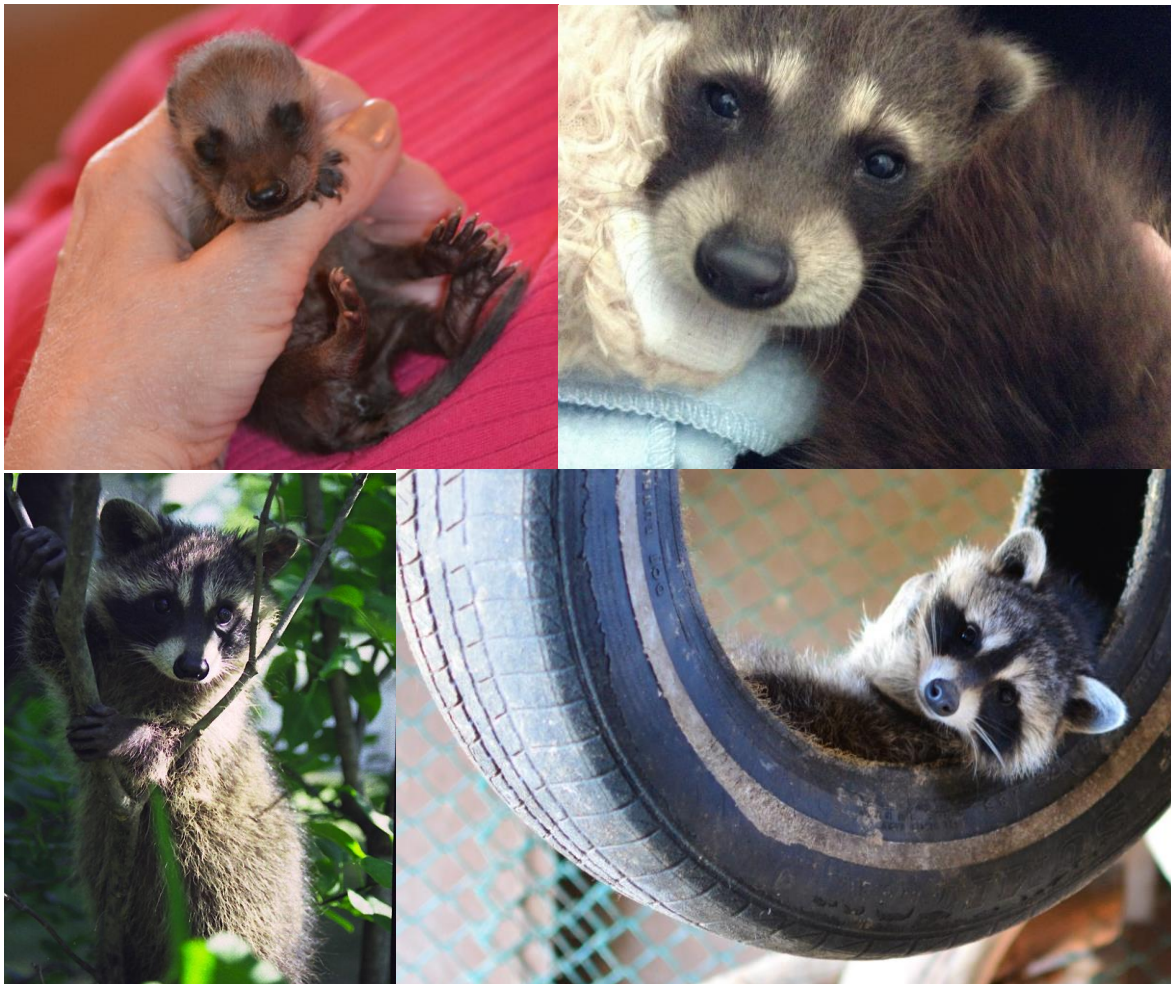
Mating occurs in January and February. Gestation is about 60+ days. Babies are born March and April. Litter size:3-6 kits

At birth the kits have soft brownish-coloured coats and their eyes are closed. Kits eyes open at 3 weeks. Mom only leaves the den to eat; the kits nurse for 6-8 weeks and are fully weaned at 10-16 weeks. After that, mom trains them to climb and hunt and will leave the den at 10 weeks.

Mom and babies should not be separated during these stages as mom stays near her young the whole first year. The babies rely on their mom and do not mature until their second year.

Diet: grubs, insects, crayfish, frogs, small mammals, bird eggs, berries, fruits, vegetables and garbage

Habitat: trees, wood lots, and ravines. They favour dens up and away but easily adapt to many situations like chimneys and attics.



Striped Skunk

Mating: occurs February to March. Gestation 62 to 66 days. Babies are born April to June. Litter size: 3-8

Babies are born blind, toothless, and hairless. Their hair pattern is evident on their skin. Eyes open at 3 weeks and are able to spray scent from their glands. They become active at 6 weeks, leaving the nest to hunt with mom. Weaned at 2 months, independent by fall.

Diet: insects, grubs, small mammals, earthworms, snails, nuts, fruit, bird eggs, vegetation, berries and garbage.

Habitat: fields, fences rows, culverts, under buildings, woodpiles.

