



Muskrat



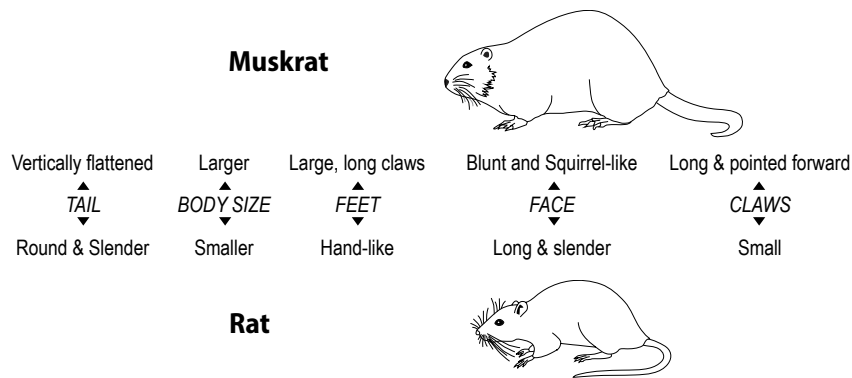
For more information on urban wildlife in Saskatoon visit saskatoon.ca/wildlifemanagement or contact Urban Biological Services at 306-975-3300.



Muskrat Characteristics

Appearance

- Short brown, black or grey fur. Underside can be lighter in colour.
- Long, vertically flattened tail that is as long as the body.
- While swimming, the tail moves side to side to propel the animal and is visible on the surface.
- Tracks often have a distinct tail mark.
- Muskrats can be mistaken for rats.



Behaviour & Habitat

- Live in small family groups consisting of a female, a male and their offspring.
- Create small raised lodges in sloughs, ditches and other places with permanent water. These houses are made of cattails, grasses and mud.
- May also dig holes and tunnels in the banks of streams, rivers and lakes, especially when cattails and bulrushes are not present.
- When frightened while in water, muskrats will dive and remain under water for up to 15 minutes.
- Generally use the same travel routes and do not move far from their den. However, during ice break-up at the end of winter, the juveniles will disperse in search of their own territory.
- Can move up to 30 km in search of mates and unoccupied water bodies. Muskrats found wandering are not a threat and should be left alone.

Diet

- Muskrats are semi-aquatic small mammals. They feed on aquatic vegetation such as cattails and grasses but will occasionally eat fish, mussels and other small animals.

Co-existing with Muskrats

Advice for Residents

- Muskrats are not dangerous but like any wild animal, they should be not be approached.
- Watch your step when traveling around wetlands including park ponds. These rodents burrow into the banks which can create hazards.

If a muskrat is injured, trapped or diseased call Urban Biological Services at 306-975-3300.

