

FIELD GUIDE TO NORTH AMERICAN MAMMALS

Mountain Beaver (*Aplodontia rufa*)

ORDER: Rodentia

FAMILY: Aplodontidae

Conservation Status: *Aplodontia rufa* is near-threatened; two subspecies (*A. rufa nigra* [Point Arena mountain beaver] and *A. rufa phaea* [Point Reyes mountain beaver]) are Vulnerable.

Some scientists think the Mountain Beaver is the world's most primitive living rodent, similar in appearance and behavior to animals that lived 60 million years ago. They have small eyes and ears and luxurious whiskers, and are, like many other burrowing rodents, armed with good senses of smell and touch. They rely much less on sight and hearing. They eat plants, including bark, and are able to feed on species such as rhododendron and stinging nettle, which are toxic or noxious to many other mammals. Mountain Beavers are found in coniferous forest at all elevations. Although their geographic distribution is limited, they are common within their range. They are not closely related to water-dwelling beavers (genus *Castor*), although both are rodents.

Also known as:

Sewellel, Boomer

Length:

Average: 354 mm

Range: 238–470 mm

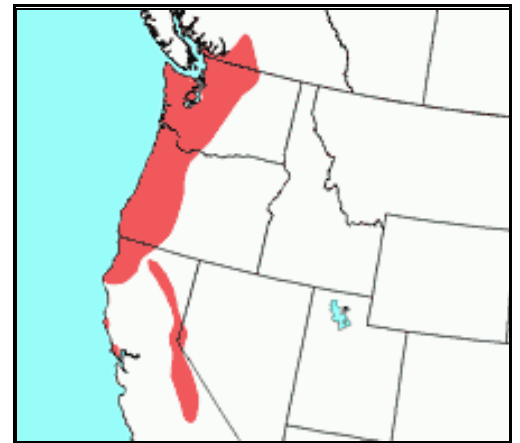
Weight:

Average: 1,065 g

Range: 806–1,325 g



Credit: painting by Todd Zalewski from Kays and Wilson's Mammals of North America, © Princeton University Press (2002)



FIELD NOTES

DATE: _____ LOCATION: _____

