

Friendly Wildlife of the PNW

General Guidelines:

This is specifically for all of the unique and non-life threatening plants and animals that we have here in the PNW. So when you need a break from the other information regarding parasites, spiders, deadly plants and large animals, read up on these critters to brighten your day.

Animals:

The Pacific Northwest is home to an abundance of different types of wildlife. These are just a few of the most common or most adorable.

Possums:



These little guys (left) may look like giant, overly furry rats, and that's exactly what they are pretty much. They live on the west coast, so you won't be seeing them around campus. They're most famous for playing dead when cornered by a predator. This catatonic state is not actually a choice of the opossum, it is completely involuntary.

Badgers:

These adorable little bear like creatures (right) may look cuddly, but they



can be vicious. So best to stay a ways away from them. They burrow and make dens.

Marmots:

Often seen in and around Spokane, and practically everywhere else here in Eastern WA and Idaho, these small rodents (left) are sort of like a mascot for Spokane. Murals depicting marmots can be seen at the intersection of Division and Sprague. The marmots we have are Yellow-bellied marmots. The marmots dig tunnel systems that they call home. Marmots live in 'sprawls' or groups, and the people who study marmots are called "marmotologists".





Muskrats:

These semiaquatic large rodents (right) have a hairless tail and thick dark fur. They are found in and around wetlands including ponds, lakes, streams, and marshy areas.

Bushy Tailed Woodrats:

A cross between a squirrel and a chinchilla (not actually, but it sure does look like that), these rodents are the original packrats. They'll drop whatever they have in favor of a shiny coin or spoon. The woodrat can be easily identified by their long, rounded ears and their long, bushy tails. They pose no threat, other than they might filch something while you're sleeping if you leave it out.



Plants:



Huckleberries:

This delicious purple berry is a staple of Washington culture and desserts. During huckleberry season every Zips will have a huckleberry shake and during off season, you can stop by Alberton's or Huckleberries for jam, fudge, chocolate, and pancake mix, etc. The most sought-after huckleberry is the thin-leaved huckleberry. This species is renowned for its large, sweet, purple

berries, occurring singly on the plant. The peak season for picking huckleberries occurs between mid-August to mid-September. If you decide to go picking huckleberries, just make sure to look out for bears, as this is one of their favorite snacks too!

Resources:

Northwest Trek: <https://www.nwtrek.org/animal-fast-fact-pages/>

Marmots: http://naturemappingfoundation.org/natmap/facts/yellow-bellied_marmot_712.html

Rodents of Washington: http://www.burkemuseum.org/research-and-collections/mammalogy/collections/mamwash/rodentia.php#Mazama_Pocket_Gopher

Huckleberries: http://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/giffordpinchot/passes-permits/forestproducts?cid=fsbdev3_005071