

# Massachusetts Animals – Eastern Chipmunk

## Facts at a Glance

### TYPE OF ANIMAL

Mammal

### SCIENTIFIC NAME

*Tamias striatus*

### FOUND WHERE

Across the eastern U.S. and Canada

### HEIGHT/LENGTH

4 – 11 in. (10.5 – 28 cm)

### WEIGHT

Averages from 1 – 5 oz.  
(28 – 142 g)

### CONSERVATION STATUS

Least Concern



Though chipmunks are the smallest members of the squirrel family, Eastern chipmunks are the largest species of chipmunk. These small, furry, and quite cute animals are identified by their reddish brown fur with white, black, and brown striped markings running down their backs. They have small, stubby legs and bushy tails that can get as long as 5 inches. They can often be seen with their pudgy cheeks stuffed full of seeds and nuts before they dart to the safety of a woody hallow.

## HABITAT

Chipmunks are terrestrial animals that can be found all across the United States. Eastern chipmunks roam across the Eastern half of North America, from the Great plains to Quebec. They can be found just about anywhere there are trees present.

These small mammals prefer to make their homes in underground burrows or nest in logs, trees, or bushes.

## DIET

Chipmunks are omnivores and will eat a variety of foods. They mainly eat vegetation and fungi, such as mushrooms, berries, nuts, seeds, and small grains. However, they will also eat small insects, frogs, bird eggs, and possibly even baby birds.

They store food in nesting holes to last them through the winter.

## LIFE & BEHAVIOUR

Chipmunks spend the bulk of their time foraging for foods, which they stuff in their generous cheek pouches. In the open, they are susceptible to predators like hawks, foxes, coyotes, and snakes. They make a variety of birdlike chirping sounds to communicate threats, mating calls, and family greetings.

These animals are typically seen as cute mammals or pests, but they are beneficial ecosystem players, spreading seedings, aerating soils, and distributing nutrients to root systems.

## FUN FACT

A chipmunk's cheek pouches can expand up to three times the size of their heads in order to store food!  
They store up to 8 lbs of food for the winter months.