

American Badger

(*Taxidea taxus*)



DID YOU KNOW:

Badgers are part of the family *Mustelidae* -- the same family as otters, ferrets, weasels and wolverines. You can always recognize a Badger by the white streak down the middle of her face. They are about 30 inches long (not counting their tails) and weigh 20-30 pounds. Males are usually larger than females. They are generally nocturnal, but are sometimes seen hunting at dawn and dusk.

EATING HABITS:

American Badgers are carnivorous, dining mainly on tunneling rodents like prairie dogs, ground squirrels and mice. Like their African cousins, the Honey Badgers, they enjoy munching on honey comb. They will occasionally eat grains and seeds; sunflower seeds and corn on the cob are treats. They eagerly eat snakes and are considered a prime predator on rattlesnakes.

THE YOUNG:



Badger moms have litters of 3 to 4 young in early spring. At birth, baby Badgers are blind and helpless, with just a thin fur coat. Their eyes open when they are about 4 weeks old. The babies venture out of their grass-lined den once their eyes are open. Mom feeds them solid food even before they are weaned. Mom and babies stay together until the cubs are

about 6 months old.

HABITAT (HOME):

Badgers are 'digging machines.' They prefer to live in dry open grasslands, fields and pastures. A typical den is 10 feet below the surface and may incorporate 30 feet of tunnels. There is always a hollowed out room that serves as a bedroom. A Badger builds multiple burrows and may not use a burrow more than once a month.

DEFENSIVE HABITS:

Adult Badgers are aggressive and quite capable of defending themselves; their teeth and claws are impressive weapons indeed.



UNUSUAL FACTS:

- Badgers and Coyotes have been seen hunting together. The Badgers are good at digging rodents out of their tunnels, but poor at chasing them down. Coyotes run down their prey but aren't good at digging them out of tunnels. Working together makes sense. They have even been observed playing together.
- Badger burrows provide shelter for other species, ranging from Jackrabbits to burrowing owls.
- Although most carnivores stalk their prey in open country, Badgers catch their dinners by digging.
- Male Badgers are called boars, the females are called sows and the babies are called cubs.
- The primary predators of adult Badgers are humans.