

eastern woodrat *Neotoma floridana*

Kingdom: Animalia

Phylum: Chordata

Class: Mammalia

Order: Rodentia

Family: Cricetidae

ILLINOIS STATUS common, native

FEATURES

The eastern woodrat's body is eight to nine inches in length. It has dark gray back fur, white fur on the feet and white belly fur. The hairy tail is dark on the top and light on the lower side. This rat has sparsely haired ears.

BEHAVIORS

The eastern woodrat may be found in the southern tip of Illinois living in timbered, rocky bluffs. It is mainly a vegetarian, eating buds, leaves, seeds, roots, insects and fruits. This nocturnal (active at night) rodent makes large houses (three feet by three feet) out of sticks, rocks and pretty much anything else it can carry. This collecting ability has led to the woodrat being called a "pack rat." Young are born in June and August after mating occurs in spring and summer. The average litter size is three. Young are born helpless but develop rapidly and are sexually mature in about six months.

HABITATS

Aquatic Habitats

none

Woodland Habitats

upland deciduous forests

Prairie and Edge Habitats

none

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