



Opossum

Didelphia virginiana

Description: There are over 60 species of opossum with the Virginia possum or common possum being the one found in the United States. They are the only marsupial to live in the United States or Canada. They can grow to be about 2.5 ft long and weigh up to 13 pounds.



Habitat: They are mostly found in woodland areas and they like to live in trees.

Range: Opossums live from Canada down into Central America.

Life Span: They live an average of 2-3 years.



Natural Diet: They are considered omnivores, eating both plants and animals.

Zoo Diet: At the zoo they get a meat diet similar to cat food and fresh fruits and vegetables.



Behavior: Opossums are nocturnal in nature so they are the most active at night. They are known for "playing possum" which is a decoy to try and trick predators that they are dead.

Reproduction: Female opossums will give birth to up to 20 tiny babies which will immediately crawl into her pouch. Only about half of these babies live and most don't even make it to the pouch. Once in the pouch they will further develop and grow, coming in and out of the pouch. When the babies are big enough they will start to hunt on their own but will remain with their mothers for about a year.

Conservation Status: Least concern