

**The Mammals of
Minnesota (no. 7); A
Scientific and Popular
Account of Their
Features and Habits, With
23 Figures and 8 Plates**

Clarence Luther Herrick

writes under date of May 18th, 1885: "They are not numerous enough yet to do a great deal of damage to crops, but if a pair takes up its abode near small chickens or turkeys, they soon thin them out. When not frightened into their holes they generally plug them up with dirt, but always leave them open when out." This latter habit has not been noticed by any other observer, and is not shared in by the striped gopher; in fact it may be that this habit is one result of their more exposed habitat.

Genus ARCTOMYS, (LiNN.) Schreber.

"Skull with the dorsal outline nearly straight; frontal region flat or depressed; postorbitals triangular at base, with a long decurved point; zygomatic arches moderately expanded, not widening and diverging posteriorly; grinding teeth rather small, the transverse and antero-posterior diameters about equal, and the molar series very nearly parallel; occipital and interparietal crests well developed; anteorbital foramina sub-triangular, widest below, but not thrown outward.

"Size large; body thick-set, broad, depressed; cheek-pouches small; tail rather short, bushy not flattened; ears small; nail of pollex broad, flat, or wanting; pelage consisting of long coarse hairs and thick under fur. Coloration generally yellowish gray or brownish, without either distinct spots or stripes." The woodchucks are magnified *Spermophiles* with some of the characters intensified, but seem to be an older and more synthetic type – perhaps the most central living group of the *Sciuridae*.

Three closely allied species are recognized from America, *A. monax* from the eastern United States north to Hudson's Bay, *A. flaviventer*, from the Rockies, *A. pruinosus*, from Alaska and northwestern America. The last is very close to the Old World form *A. marmota*, which is at home in the Alps, Pyrenees and Carpathians. A small species, *A. bobac*, occurs in Siberia and Russia.

Arctomys monax (LiNN) Schreber.

WOODCHUCK.

Length, 13.50 – 15.50; tail to end of vertebra 4.50; to end of hairs, 6.75; hind foot, 3.00; fore foot 2.30; nose to eye 1.50.

Color, a mixture of gray, fulvous and brown, below brown to rufous. Top of head, feet and tail dark brown to black; sides of head and throat yellowish, chin and nose gray. Below, especially about the fore legs, with much rusty red. Bars rounded, rather large. Tail short, bushy, terete. Colors vary greatly, with noticeable tendency to melanism. A patch of white marks the lower lip and a more or less distinct bar of gray crosses the muzzle. There is a curious callosity just above the short upper incisors. The sole has six callosities, the palm five. There are two pairs of pectoral and one of inguinal teats separated by an interval of five inches.

The woodchuck may be somewhat widely distributed in Minnesota but the only localities at which it has been encountered are upon the tributaries of the St. Louis and the shores of lake Superior. Here it does not appear to attain the size of the eastern specimens and perhaps is more brightly colored, though observations are lacking to support this statement. The habits are exactly those of the *Spermophiles* including the curiosity which makes them an easy prey to the trapper.

An adult Ohio female measures as follows: Length, 14.50; tail to end of hairs, 9.50; forefoot, 2.50; hind foot, 3.00; nose to eye, 1.80; nose to ear, 3.70; height of ear, 1.00; width of muzzle, 1.15; distance between eyes, 1.90.