

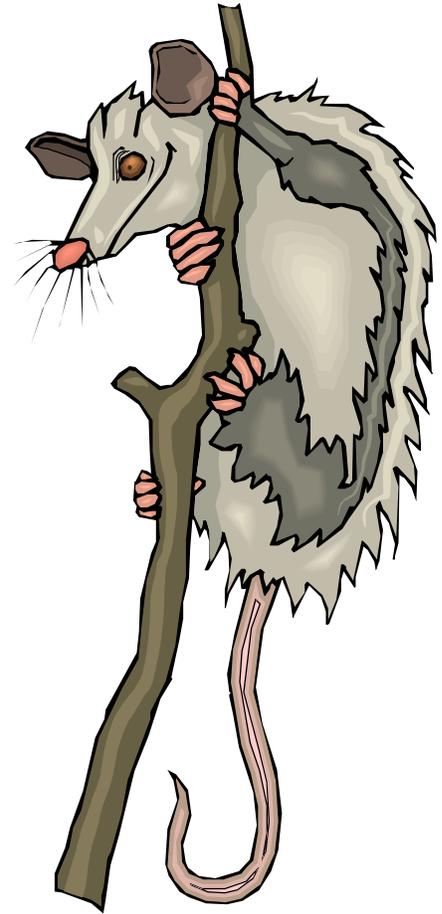
# Opossum Facts

The opossum is North America's only known marsupial (that is, the female has a pouch in which she carries her young). The opossum has gray to black fur, black eyes and ears, pink feet, a pink pointed nose, and a long scaly, rat-like tail. It grows to the size of a cat, weighing 4-15 pounds.

Opossums prefer to live in wooded areas, but they will live any place where they can find food, water and shelter. This includes areas under houses and decks, and in sheds, garages, woodpiles and chimneys.

The opossum's usual diet is helpful to humans because it includes insects, snails, slugs, rodents and fallen berries. However, opossums will also eat garbage, birdseed, pet food, and food from your garden.

The opossum comes out at night. It is shy, slow moving and when frightened will hiss and growl, showing its sharp front teeth. It may also fall into a temporary, shock-like state – “playing ‘possum.”



## Tips to keep opossums away from your property:

- ❖ Use metal or heavy plastic trash containers with tight fitting lids.
- ❖ If you feed your pets outside, feed them during the day and bring bowls inside at night.
- ❖ Clean up spilled seed around birdfeeders, and bring inside in evenings.
- ❖ Cut back trees branches that overhang near roofs.
- ❖ Lock pet doors at night.
- ❖ Cover vents and chimneys with heavy-duty screening.
  
- ❖ As with any wild animal, **do not approach or corner an opossum.** Remember, “playing ‘possum” is only temporary and the animal will awaken.
  
- ❖ Do not give opossums a place to stay. Seal any openings on your property, especially around decks and outbuildings like sheds and garages. Report vacant, unsealed properties to the Department of Licenses and Inspections at 215-686-2463.

Opossums are almost never rabid. However, if you see an opossum or any other animal that is injured, sick or agitated, or if you want more information about urban wildlife, call the Animal Management Program:

**215-685-9009**