The Nebraska tallgrass prairie region comprises the eastern quarter of the state. The key to this landscape is the thick, rich soil that enables deep-rooting prairie plants to survive. Grasses and forbs dominate this grassland region, with few trees, except along water corridors.

This area receives 25 - 36 inches of rain annually. Much of the historic grasslands have been converted, leaving only about 2 percent of unmodified tallgrass prairie habitat. This area incorporates many wetlands, including the saline wetlands, north of Lincoln. This range has a diversity of birds, plants, mammals, reptiles and insects that call it home.

### Mammal Viewing Tips

Mammals can be difficult to see due to their secretive nature.

1. **Stay quiet and calm.**
2. **Be discreet** — wear muted clothing and limit fragrances.
3. **Look for signs** — tracks and scat can tell you if a mammal is in the area, even when you don’t see them.
4. **Use binoculars** to get a closer look. Always keep a respectful distance from wildlife.
5. **Be patient.**
6. **Go to where the habitat is** — visit state parks and other public lands.
7. **Do your homework** — learn what species of mammals live in the area.

#### Tracks

- **Raccoon**
  - Length: f 2 - 2.3 in., h 2.5 - 3 in.
  - Width: f 2 - 2.3 in., h 2 - 3 in.
  - Stride: 5 - 11 in. (walking)
- **Eastern Cottontail**
  - Length: f 1 - 1.5 in., h 3 - 3.5 in.
  - Width: f 0.8 - 1.3 in., h 1 - 1.5 in.
  - Stride: 6 - 36 in. (hopping)
- **Coyote**
  - Length: 2 - 3.2 in.
  - Width: 1.4 - 2.4 in.
  - Stride: 8 - 16 in. (walking)
- **Bobcat**
  - Length: 1.8 - 2.5 in.
  - Width: 1.8 - 2.5 in.
  - Stride: 8 - 16 in. (walking)
- **White-tailed Deer**
  - Length: 2 - 3.4 in.
  - Width: 1.6 - 2.5 in.
  - Stride: 10 - 22 in. (walking)
Plains Pocket Mouse
Perognathus flavescens
Size: L: 4.33 - 5.52 in., W: 7 - 16 g.
Description: Small rodent with fur-lined cheek pouches. Back fur is buffy/brown, light on belly, with buffy/yellow lateral line dividing the colors.
Diet: Seeds and grains
Habitat: Open areas with sandy soil
Viewing: Year-round, common east

Big Brown Bat
Eptesicus fuscus
Size: L: 4.3 - 5.1 in., W: 17 - 23 g.
Description: Tan-brown body, black and hairless face, wings, and tail. Females are larger than males.
Diet: Insects
Habitat: Rural to urban
Viewing: Year-round (hibernating November - April), statewide

Franklin’s Ground Squirrel
Spermophilus franklinii
Size: L: 13.9 - 16.0 in., W: 0.75 - 3.0 lbs.
Description: Elongated body with gray/brown fur, short rounded ears, and a bushy tail.
Diet: Plants, seeds and fruit
Habitat: Tallgrass prairie
Viewing: Year-round, statewide

Eastern Fox Squirrel
Sciurus niger
Size: L: 18.0 - 27.5 in., W: 1.5 - 2.7 lbs.
Description: Fur is gray on back and buffy red on belly, bushy tail, sharp climbing claws and small ears.
Diet: Plants, seeds, insects, birds and eggs
Habitat: Rural to urban
Viewing: Year-round, statewide but limited by treed habitats

American Mink
Mustela vison
Size: L: 12 - 18 in., W: 0.88 - 3.5 lbs.
Description: Long, narrow body with flat head and pointed snout. Small eyes and rounded ears.
Diet: Small animals
Habitat: Riparian woodlands and wetlands
Viewing: Year-round, statewide

Eastern Cottontail
Sylvilagus floridanus
Size: L: 15.6 - 18.8 in., W: 1.8 - 3.4 lbs.
Description: Buff-brown fur, some black/gray hair tips, rufous patch on back of neck and white. Large eyes, long ears, powerful hind legs and short puffy brown and white tail.
Diet: Plants
Habitat: Rural to urban
Viewing: Year-round, statewide

Long-tailed Weasel
Mustela frenata
Description: Long, narrow body. Fur is brown with buffy belly in the summer. Turns white in the winter.
Diet: Small animals
Habitat: Open fields and woodlands near water
Viewing: Year-round, statewide

Raccoon
Procyon lotor
Size: L: 24 - 38 in., W: 7.6 - 20.0 lbs.
Description: Stout gray-brown with black mask and rings on bushy tail. Pointed face, dexterous front paws to feel and grasp food.
Diet: Small animals, fruit, garbage
Habitat: Rural to urban
Viewing: Year-round, statewide

White-tailed Deer
Sylvilagus floridanus
Size: L: 63 - 86.6 in., W: 115 - 300 lbs.
Description: Red-brown fur, white under throat, body and tail. Long legs, short tail. Males have antlers.
Diet: Plants
Habitat: Fields, woods, farmlands
Viewing: Year-round, statewide

Red Fox
Vulpus vulpus
Size: L: 18 - 35.4 in., W: 6.5 - 24 lbs.
Description: Fur light to deep red/brown, triangle face and ears, dark nose, eyes, and legs/feet. Bushy tail often with a white tip.
Diet: Small mammals, insects, seeds and fruit
Habitat: Rural to urban
Viewing: Year-round, statewide

Coyote
Canis latrans
Description: Gray-brown fur above, whiter below. Triangular ears, black nose and bushy tail.
Diet: Various animals and some plants
Habitat: Various, rural to urban
Viewing: Year-round, statewide

Bobcat
Lynx rufus
Description: Varied brown fur with darker speckle/spotting, tufted ears, large paws, and short, bobbed tail.
Diet: Animals, mainly small prey
Habitat: Various, forest to fields
Viewing: Year-round, statewide

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