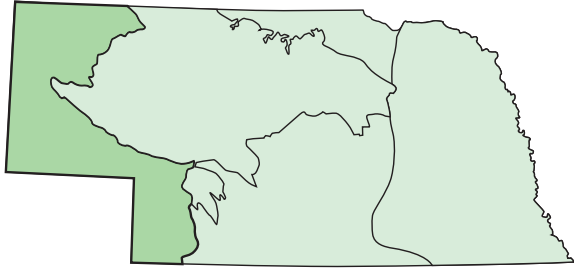


# Shortgrass Prairie Region



The shortgrass prairie region includes the southwestern corner and Panhandle of Nebraska. This area is made up of short- to mixedgrass prairie and the Pine Ridge. The shortgrass prairie is the driest and warmest of the Great Plains grasslands.

This region receives an average of 12 - 17 inches of rainfall annually and consists of buffalo grass and blue grama. The Pine Ridge is found in northwestern Nebraska and is dominated by ponderosa pine. More than 300 species of migratory and resident birds can be found in the shortgrass prairie region, as well as a variety of mammals, plants and other species.



# 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.



# Mammals of the Nebraska Shortgrass Prairie

## Tracks



### American Badger

Length: 2.5 - 3 in.  
Width: 2.3 - 2.8 in.  
Stride: 6 - 12 in.



### Coyote

Length: 2 - 3.2 in.  
Width: 1.4 - 2.4 in.  
Stride: 8 - 16 in. (walking)



### Mountain Lion

Length: 3 - 4.25 in.  
Width: 3 - 5 in.  
Stride: 25 - 45 in.



### Bobcat

Length: 1.8 - 2.5 in.  
Width: 1.8 - 2.5 in.  
Stride: 8 - 16 in. (walking)



### Pronghorn Antelope

Length: 2.75 - 3.3 in.  
Width: 2.5 in.  
Stride: 8 - 9 in. (walking)

PRINTS NOT TO SCALE



## Identification Guide

**NEBRASKA**  
— GAME PARKS —

[OutdoorNebraska.org](http://OutdoorNebraska.org)



### Coyote

*Canis latrans*

**Size:** L: 48 - 53 in., W: 15 - 46 lbs.

**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



### American Badger

*Taxidea taxus*

**Size:** L: 20 - 35 in., W: 9 - 27 lbs.

**Description:** Long brown-black fur with white cheeks and white stripe from nose to back of neck.

**Diet:** Animals, mainly small prey

**Habitat:** Open areas, prairies

**Viewing:** Year-round, statewide



### Fringed Myotis

*Myotis thysanodes*

**Size:** L: 2.5 in., W: 5 - 9 g.

**Description:** Small brown bat with fringe of hairs that protrude from the end of tail. Ears are 16 - 20 mm.

**Diet:** Insects

**Habitat:** Ponderosa pine, caves, mines and old buildings

**Viewing:** Summer, Panhandle



### Swift Fox

*Vulpes velox*

**Size:** L: 27 - 32 in., W: 3 - 7 lbs.

**Description:** Color varies seasonally, gray-red tan. Pointed snout and ears, bushy black-tipped tail.

**Diet:** Various animals and some plants

**Habitat:** Shortgrass prairie

**Viewing:** Year-round, Panhandle



### Black-tailed Jackrabbit

*Lepus californicus*

**Size:** L: 18 - 24 in., W: 4 - 8 lbs.

**Description:** Peppered brown fur with black stripe down back, long legs and black-tipped ears.

**Diet:** Plants

**Habitat:** Open prairie to shrubland

**Viewing:** Year-round, statewide



### Bighorn Sheep

*Ovis canadensis*

**Size:** L: 60 - 72 in., W: 140 - 300 lbs.

**Description:** Light to dark gray-brown, white rump, horns with males much larger and curved.

**Diet:** Grass and woody plants

**Habitat:** Fields and rocky slopes

**Viewing:** Year-round, Panhandle



### Bobcat

*Lynx rufus*

**Size:** L: 30 - 48 in., W: 11 - 30 lbs.

**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



### Black-tailed Prairie Dog

*Cynomys ludovicianus*

**Size:** L: 14 - 17 in., W: 1.5 - 3 lbs.

**Description:** Tan fur with stout body, short ears, long front claws, and short black-tipped tail.

**Diet:** Grass

**Habitat:** Open areas, rural, urban

**Viewing:** Year-round, west to central



### Mule Deer

*Odocoileus hemionus*

**Size:** L: 54 - 84 in., W: 130 - 280 lbs.

**Description:** Dark to light brown-gray, white tail with black tip and oversized ears. Males have antlers.

**Diet:** Grasses and forbes

**Habitat:** Various, rural to urban

**Viewing:** Year-round, west



### Mountain Lion

*Puma concolor*

**Size:** L: 48 - 53 in., W: 60 - 160 lbs.

**Description:** Large with long tail and rounded ears. Uniformly brown with lighter underside.

**Diet:** Mid to large animals

**Habitat:** Various, rocky, wooded

**Viewing:** Year-round, Pine Ridge



### Ord's Kangaroo Rat

*Dipodomys ordii*

**Size:** L: 8 - 14 in., W: 55 - 96 g.

**Description:** Tan back with white below. Long tail, hairy on the end and large flat hind feet.

**Diet:** Grain and occasional insects

**Habitat:** Prairie and open fields

**Viewing:** Year-round, west



### Pronghorn Antelope

*Antilocapra americana*

**Size:** L: 51.6 - 59 in., W: 90 - 120 lbs.

**Description:** Red-tan with white belly, rump, and neck. Long legs, short tail, black nose and horns.

**Diet:** Sagebrush, grass

**Habitat:** Shortgrass prairie

**Viewing:** Year-round, Panhandle