

keemishatunvêech— Small Wild Animals of Karuk Country

Name: _____

©2016 Karuk Tribe

All rights are reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced without the express written permission of the Karuk Tribe. This booklet was produced by the Karuk Tribe, 64236

Second Avenue, PO Box 1016, Happy Camp CA 96039, 530-493-1600 Website:

www.karuk.us

Layout and design: Lisa Hillman

Keemishatunvêech

Small Wild Animals

of Karuk Country

Síit—House Mouse

Mur—Mole

Mun'apmanxánnahich— Shrew

Áxpu'um—Vole

Achnáat—Woodrat

Áxruuh— Gray Squirrel

Áxthaay—Ground Squirrel



síit

The **house mouse** is a small mammal belonging to the order of rodents, and have a pointed nose, small rounded ears, a long scaly tail and a high breeding rate.

House mice have an adult body length (nose to base of tail) up to 10 cm and tails between 5–10 cm. They weigh around 20 g, and vary in color from light to dark brown.

They have high-pitched squeak and thrive under a variety of conditions; they are found in and around homes as well as in open fields and at the edge of forests.

The Karuk word for the house mouse is found in the noun, thief (síitvaan), and in the verb, to steal (síitva), as they are known to invade houses for food and for shelter.

Scientific Classification

Kingdom: Animalia

Phylum: _____

Class: _____

Order: Rodentia

Family: Muridae

Genus: *Mus*

Species: *M. musculus*



múr - Moles are small mammals adapted to a subterranean lifestyle. They have cylindrical bodies, velvety fur, very small ears and eyes, short back feet, and short, powerful forearms with large paws adapted for digging.

Scientific Classification

Kingdom: Animalia

Phylum: _____

Class: Mammalia

Order: _____

Family: Talpidae

Genus: *Scapanus*

Species: *S. latimanus*

This mole can be distinguished by its dark brown to silvery fur, and 40-44 unevenly spaced teeth. Adults range from 14 to 18 cm in total length on average, with males slightly larger than females. Moles living in more humid environments tend to be larger than those from southern, drier areas. Mole skins are highly prized by the Karuk People for their use in making tobacco pouches.

mun'apmanxánnahich - the **shrew** looks like a long-nosed mouse, but is not a rodent and is more closely related to moles: their sharp, spike-like teeth are not the gnawing front teeth of rodents.

One of the smallest mammals, it is less than 10 cm long and weighs up to 8 g. It has a long pointed snout, small eyes, long tail, and a reddish-brown coat with a white belly. Because of its poor eye-

sight, it hunts by smell and touch. Shrews make their homes in burrows or under flat stones or fallen logs close to a source of water.

The hide of shrews are also used to make Karuk tobacco pouches.

Scientific Classification

Kingdom: _____

Phylum: Chordata

Class: Mammalia

Order: Eulipotyphia

Family: Soricidae

Genus: _____

Species: *S. vagrans*





áxpuum—A **vole** is a small rodent that looks like a mouse but has a stouter body, a shorter, hairy tail, a slightly rounder head, and smaller ears and eyes. The western red-backed vole lives mainly in coniferous forests. It is chestnut brown, about 13 cm long, and weighs roughly 10 g and likes to feed on the funghi associated with the Douglas fir tree.

Scientific Classification

Kingdom: Animalia

Phylum: Chordata

Class: Mammalia

Order: _____

Family: Cricetidae

Genus: _____

Species: *M. californicus*

The western red-backed vole lives largely underground in an extensive system of burrows.



achnáat - The dusky-footed **woodrat** is a nocturnal rodent, sometimes

Scientific Classification

Kingdom: Animalia

Phylum: _____

Class: _____

Order: Rodentia

Family: Cricetidae

Genus: *Neotoma*

Species: *N. fuscipes*

called a packrat. It looks like the common rat, but has larger ears and eyes, softer coats, and furred tails. It builds a large den for its nest and up to several chambers to store leaves and nuts—packing bay leaves around the edges of their nest to control levels of fleas. They are an important food source for birds and perform important ecological functions in TEK forest management.

Áxruuh— the **gray squirrel** is said to be shy, and give a chirping call when disturbed. It is one of the largest tree squirrels and can weigh up to 1 kg and length up to 60 cm. They build their nests , called dreys, in trees.

Gray squirrels are forest dwellers, and they prefer to travel distances from tree to tree. They feed mainly on seeds and nuts, particularly pine seeds and acorns, though they will also take berries, fungus and insects.

These squirrels are a food source for Karuk People.

Scientific Classification

Kingdom: Animalia

Phylum: Chordata

Class: _____

Order: Rodentia

Family: Sciuridae

Genus: *Sciurus*

Species: _____





Scientific Classification

Kingdom: Animalia

Phylum: Chordata

Class: _____

Order: Rodentia

Family: Sciuridae

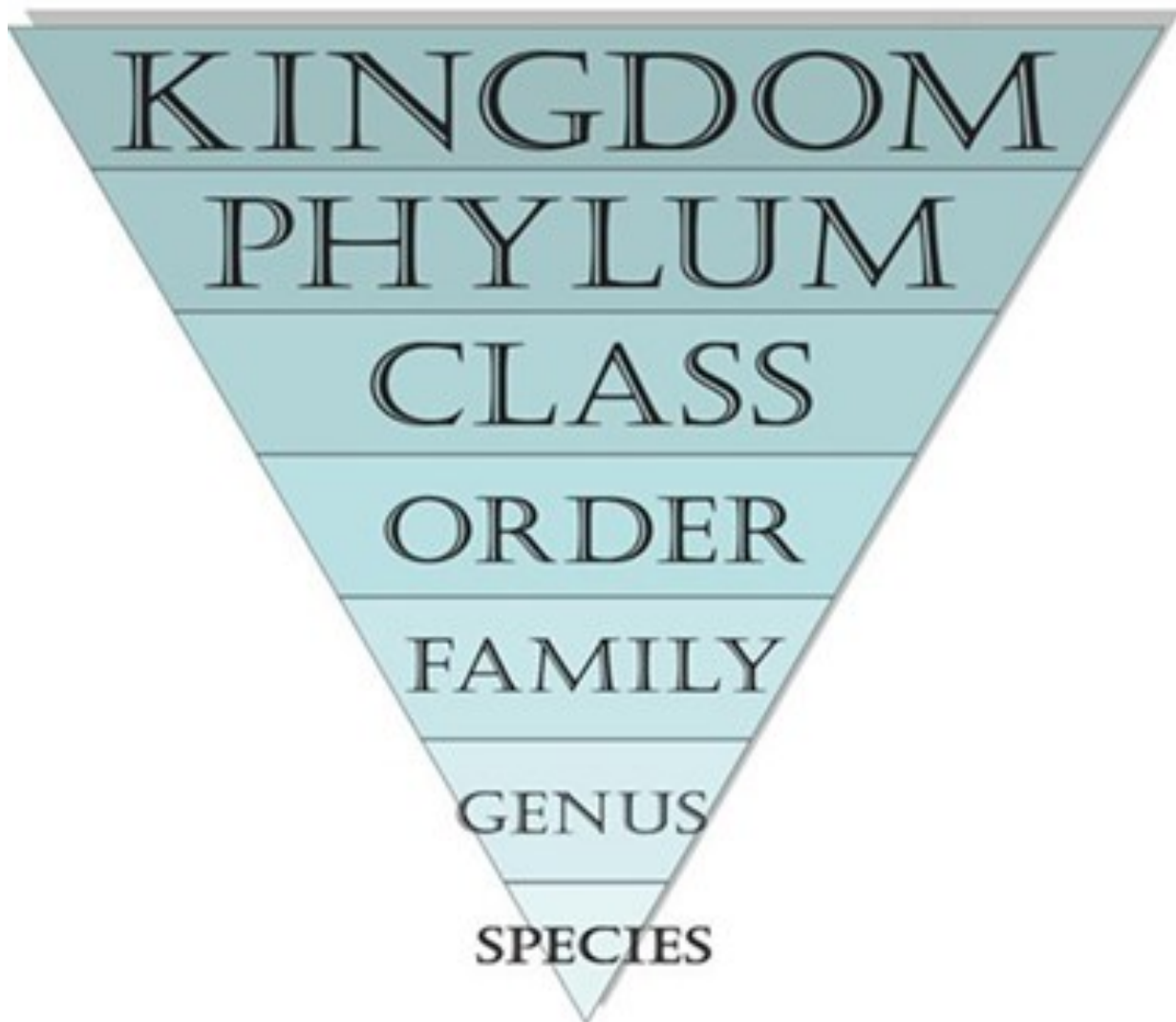
Genus: *Otospermophilus*

Species: _____

áxthaay—The **ground squirrel** has a mottled coat of gray and light brown colors with a lighter underside. The fur around the eyes is whitish, while that around the ears is black. Head and body are about 30 cm and the tail 15 cm long .

Ground squirrels live in burrows, sometimes with others but with a separate entrance. They like to eat seeds, but also eat insects such as crickets and grasshoppers as well as various fruits. They are not eaten by Karuk People.

Western Scientific Classification



While the main goal of this workbook is to practice western scientific taxonomy, it is important to recognize that systems of classification have existed since prehistoric times. The Karuk identify at least a half dozen squirrel species native to the Mid-Klamath region, and even these species have different names, depending on their age, use, size and the time of year: For example, **achnatxâat** is a flying squirrel, **axchaytunvêech** are little ground-squirrels, **axcháy'anamahach** is a young ground-squirrel, **maháxthaay** is a golden-mantled ground squirrel, **pataha'ámvaan** is a nickname for ground squirrel, **tachúchaan** another name for ground squirrel, and **víninikich** is the name for the pine squirrel.



**This project is supported by the USDA-
Agriculture and Food Research Initiative
of the National Institute for Food and Agri-
culture Grant #2012-68004-20018.**



United States
Department of
Agriculture

National Institute
of Food and
Agriculture