

## Student Handout #1: Common Mammals of South Carolina Interactive CD

Answer the following questions about each species of mammal featured on this CD.

### Virginia Opossum: *Didelphis virginiana*

1. Is the sagittal crest of the opossum large? What can be inferred from this?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. What is meant by “playing possum,” and how does the opossum use it for defense?

### Eastern Mole

1. In what direction are the eye orbits facing? What can be inferred from this?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. For what are the forelimbs of the mole adapted?

### Short-tailed Shrew

1. Is the snout elongated? What can be inferred from this?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. What unique ability does the shrew possess that allows them to subdue their prey easily?

### **Little Brown Bat: *Myotis lucifugus***

1. What inference can be made about the pointed cusps on the bat's premolars and molars?
2. What are some health hazards that bats pose to people?

### **Eastern Cottontail**

1. What is the bony webbing on the cottontail's skull called? What can be inferred from this?
2. Why is the cottontail called a cottontail?

### **Eastern Gray Squirrel: *Sciurus carolinensis***

1. Is the jaw joint in line with the teeth of the lower jaw? What can be inferred from this?
2. Describe the gray squirrel's optimal habitat.

**Beaver: *Castor canadensis***

1. What adaptation of the beaver helps it to nip or cut plants underwater?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. What is the beaver's conservation history and what is its present status?

**Deer Mouse: *Peromyscus maniculatus***

1. What do the deer mouse's large incisors allow it to do?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. Why is it important to control deer mouse numbers in populated areas?

**Muskrat: *Ondatra zibethicus***

1. What is unique about the cheek teeth of the muskrat?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. What is tularemia?

**Bobcat: *Lynx rufus***

1. What does the bobcat's diet mainly consist of?
2. In what direction are the eye orbits facing? What can be inferred from this?

**Gray Fox: *Urocyon cinereoargenteus***

1. Why would a gray fox prefer a forested habitat?
2. How can the gray fox be distinguished from the red fox using only its skull for identification?

**Raccoon: *Procyon lotor***

1. How long is the raccoon gestation (pregnancy) period?
2. What is carnassial dentition, and how does the raccoon use it?

**Mink: *Mustela vison***

1. Is the jaw joint in line with the teeth of the lower jaw? What can be inferred from this?
2. What health hazards do mink pose to humans?

**Striped Skunk: *Mephitis mephitis***

1. Do the teeth indicate that this animal is a carnivore, herbivore, omnivore, or insectivore? Explain your answer.
2. How does a skunk spray their noxious chemical?