

RODENTS (*Nagetiere*)

The Brown Rat



Appearance (*Aussehen*)

Brown rats have fur except on their nose, tail and ears. The color of the fur ranges (*reichen*) from gray to brown. Male (*männliche*) rats are called bucks and females (*Weibchen*) are called does.

Size (*Größe*)

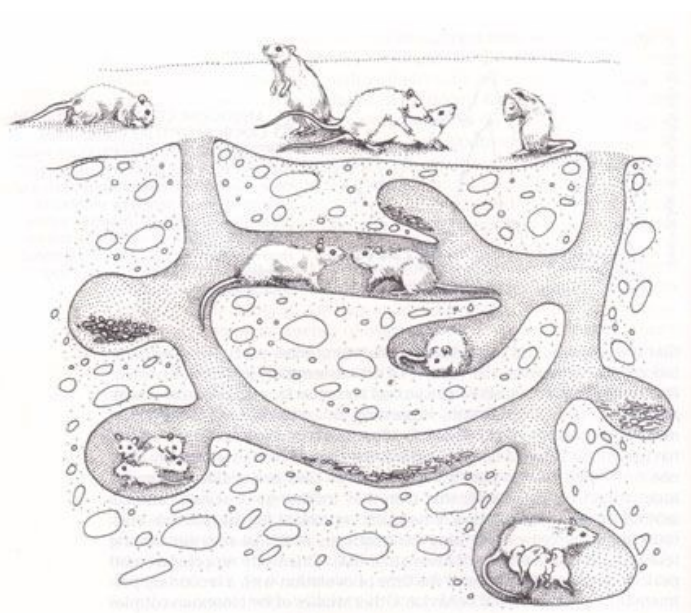
On average (*im Durchschnitt*) rats are 40 centimeters long from tail to nose. They weigh (*wiegen*) 200 to 500 grams. Male rats are usually larger than female rats.

Native Habitat (*Lebensraum*)

Brown rats live in many places. They live in forests and open fields. They also live in cities in sewers (*Kanäle*) and buildings. Brown rats build big burrows (*Gang, Bau*) with rooms. In these rooms they store food and build their nests.



A rat in a sewer.



burrows

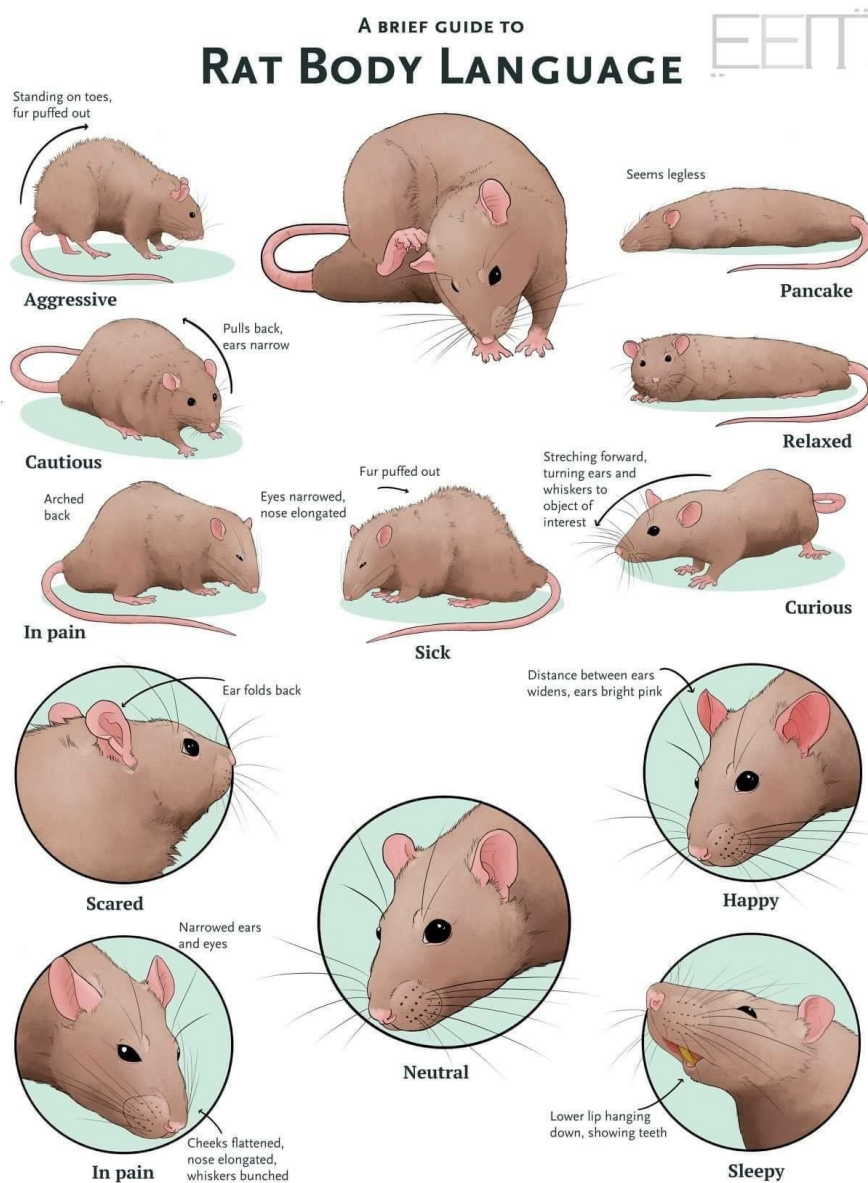
Diet (Nahrung)

Brown rats eat almost (*fast*) anything. Because rats are not picky (*wählerisch*) eaters they can live in many different places. In cities rats eat food that people throw away. Sometimes rats are also pests (*Plagen*). When rats eat food from cupboards or fields, they are pests. In nature, rats eat many different plants. Sometimes rats even hunt fish, chicken and other rodents.



Social Structure (Sozialleben)

Brown rats communicate (*kommunizieren, reden*) in many different ways. They make sounds but also use body language (*Körpersprache*) to talk. Normally, rats live in large groups. A group of rats has clear hierarchies (*Rangordnung*). Bigger rats have more power than smaller rats. Usually, the boss of a group of rats is a male.



Reproduction and Development (*Fortpflanzung und Entwicklung*)

Female rats can have babies when they are four months old. Male rats can be fathers when they are three months old. Female rats are pregnant (*schwanger*) between 22 and 24 days. Rats have around (*ungefähr*) eight children. Rat children are called pups. Pups open their eyes after two weeks. Pups drink milk from their mother for three to four weeks. Then rats leave the nest. A female rat can have children seven times (*sieben Male*) a year.



A mother rat with her pups.

Sleep habits (*Schlafgewohnheiten*)

Brown rats are most active at dusk (*Dämmerung*) and during the night.

Lifespan (*Lebensspanne*)

When humans have brown rats as pets they live up to (*bis zu*) four years. In the wild, their lifespan is around two years.

Squirrels



Appearance

Squirrels have many different colors. In North America, there are many gray squirrels. In Europe, there are more red and black squirrels. In other parts of the world there are flying squirrels. Flying squirrels have loose folds of skin (*lockere Hautfalten*). The loose folds of skin are like wings. With these wings flying squirrels can glide (*gleiten*) from tree to tree. The most famous body part of a squirrel is its bushy tail. The tail helps a squirrel to balance. Because of the tail squirrels are good at climbing, running and jumping. Males are called boars and females are called sows.



Flying squirrel

Size

There are many different species (*Arten*) of squirrels. Different species of squirrels are of different size. Red and gray squirrels are most common (*am häufigsten*). They are between 20 and 30 centimeters long.

Native Habitat

Squirrels live in trees and especially in forests. Some squirrels even live in small towns and big cities. They build dens (*Höhle, Schlupfwinkel*) in branches or the hollows of trees. Squirrels put plants and other things in their dens. This helps to keep the dens warm.



Diet

Squirrels are omnivores (*Allesfresser*). This means they eat plants and meat. They collect nuts and eat mushrooms (*Pilze*). They also eat worms, insects and even young snakes.

Social Structure

They live in groups. Female squirrels are very social. Mothers and daughters keep contact (*Kontakt halten*) throughout their whole lives.

Reproduction and Development

Squirrels can have babies when they are around one year old. Usually, they have two litters (*Würfe*) a year.



A squirrel cares for its baby.



*Many babies are called a **litter**.*

Life Span and Predators/Enemies (*Feinde*)

There are some predators (*Raubtiere*) that like to hunt squirrels. Because these enemies hunt squirrels, squirrels are usually between one and two years old. But they can live longer. Males can live up to seven years. Females can live up to eleven years. In captivity (*Gefangenschaft*) some squirrels even live up to twenty years.

Raptors (*Raubvögel*) are the biggest enemies of squirrels. Raptors such as owls and hawks hunt squirrels. Other enemies that like to eat squirrels are foxes, wild cats, snakes and coyotes.



Owls are raptors and hunt squirrels.

Beavers



Appearance

The beaver is dark brown. It has a tail that looks like a paddle. The tail is very thick. When the beaver dives (*tauchen*) into the water the tail makes a loud splash (*Platschen*). A beaver can make sounds (*Geräusche*) with the tail. It can communicate and warn with its tail.

Beavers are great swimmers. They can stay underwater for fifteen minutes. Beavers also have large front teeth. Their front teeth (like the teeth of all rodents) always grow. With their teeth beavers fell large trees. Beavers have thick fur. The fur is oily and waterproof (*wasserdicht*). Females and males don't have special names. Baby beavers are called kits. All beavers have a gland (*Drüse*) close to their tail. With the gland they produce a liquid (*Flüssigkeit*) that smells. Beavers use the smelly liquid to mark their territory (*Territorium, Gebiet*). Beavers normally sleep during the day. They are active at night. This means they are nocturnal (*nachtaktiv*).



A beaver fells a tree.

Size

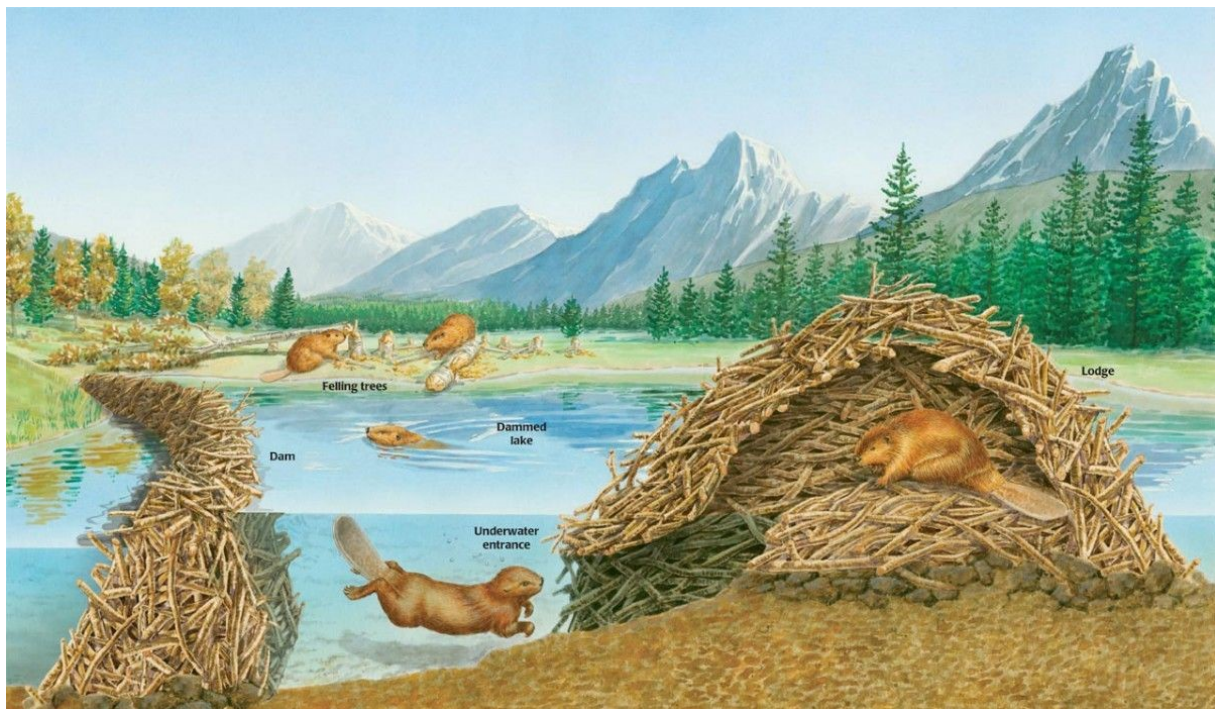
An average beaver can be one meter long. It weighs between 20 and 40 kilos. A really big beaver can weigh almost (*fast*) as much as you!

Habitat

Beavers like to live near lakes, ponds (*Teiche*) and streams (*Bäche, Flüsse*). They also like to live close to trees. Beavers fell trees and build dams. This helps them to make ponds and streams. Beavers can change places very much. The home of a beaver is called a lodge. Beavers build lodges with branches, mud (*Schlamm*) and twigs (*Zweige*). Lodges have a number of doors that are underwater. Beavers raise (*aufziehen*) their young in lodges. During winter they also store food in lodges.



Beaver lodge in a lake



Diet

They are herbivores (*Pflanzenfresser*). This means that they mainly eat plants and tree bark (*Rinde*).

Social Structure

Beavers live in families. A beaver family is called a colony. A male and a female beaver live together for their whole life.

Reproduction

Beavers mate (*sich paaren*) one time a year. They have between three and four kits. Mother, father and children live together. When a beaver is two years old it leaves its family.



Three kits

Life Span

The average lifespan of beavers is twelve years. Some beavers even live 24 years. The life of young beavers is dangerous. They have enemies like wolves, foxes and lynxes (*Luchse*).