

WANTED



Nutria Sightings

Nutria (*Myocastor coypus*) are large, invasive rodents native to South America. They have recently been found in Skagit County. Nutria have a high reproductive rate and can quickly overpopulate an area and displace native wildlife. Their foraging and burrowing behaviors destroy wetland habitat, undermine dikes and levees, and damage agricultural crops.

Description: Nutria are yellowish brown to dark brown and have conspicuous white whiskers. They have large yellow-orange to orange-red front teeth. The slightly haired tail is 13-16 inches long and round, as opposed to the horizontally flattened tail of beavers and the vertically flattened tail of muskrats. Nutria weigh on average 12-15 pounds but may exceed 20 pounds. Nutria are about 2-feet long, not including the tail, with a highly-arched back and large head. Nutria are often confused with the much smaller muskrat, which weighs about 2-3 pounds and has a body length of 10-14 inches with an 8-10 inch long tail.

Habitat: Nutria are semi-aquatic, meaning they are found in or near water. They occur in or adjacent to lakes, marshes, rivers, sloughs, slow-moving streams, drainage canals, and temporarily flooded fields. They prefer freshwater but can occur in both brackish and saltwater marshlands. They live in networks of burrows dug into banks, and in dense vegetation. They feed almost exclusively on plants.



Nutria have large orange teeth.



Nutria (top) have round, thinly haired tails. Muskrat tails (bottom) are vertically flattened with virtually no hair.



Nutria scat (left) is usually dark brown & up to 2" in length. Muskrat scat is lighter brown and nearly half as long.

**To report a sighting, call and leave a message on the nutria hotline:
(360) 466-4345 ext. 266**

Photos courtesy of USDA/APHIS



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