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| |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | Muskrat  * Kingdom: Animal * Phylum: Chordata * Class: Mammalia * Order: Rodentia * Family: Cricetidae * Genus: Ondatra * Species: *zibethicus* |  | |  | | | General Information:  Muskrats have been observed in the study area on several occasions but they are extremely shy and difficult to photograph. The image above right was capture by waiting patiently at site [6](http://docs.google.com/arroyo/site6.html) while the muskrat was foraging along the bank. The dense foliage around site six prevented the muskrat from being aware of our presence. When it swam into an open area I was able to capture the image. The very second that the shutter of the camera clicked, the muskrat dove straight down to the bottom of the pool slapping it's tail on the surface of the water as it did so. It reminded us of how beaver slap their tails to warn other beaver of potential danger. Muskrats swim quite well using their tail and their semi webbed hind feet for propulsion. They can stay submerged for up to 15 minutes before returning to the surface for air. Muskrats are omnivorous feeding primarily on reeds and grasses but will eat fresh water [mussels](http://docs.google.com/invert/clam.html), fish, [frogs](http://docs.google.com/bullfrog.html), and [crayfish](http://docs.google.com/arthro/crawdad.html) if the opportunity presents itself. *The image below left was acquired from* [*Wikipedia*](http://www.wikipedia.org)*.* | | |  | | |  |  |  |  | | --- | | Copyright © 2008 Amador Valley High. All Rights Reserved. Reproduction in whole or in part in any form or medium without express written permission of Amador Valley is prohibited. | |