

Woodrat Nest

Dusky-footed woodrats are named for their soot-gray feet with coats ranging from cinnamon to gray. They have long whiskers, large round ears, and are approximately 16 inches long with the tail making up half their length.

Woodrats build large nests of sticks. These terrestrial nests are passed from mother to daughter. Woodrat nests may get as tall as 5' and be up to seventy years old, with the typical woodrat living only 1-3 years. The nests have different rooms for storing food and raising offspring. In late summer when the acorns are ripe, woodrats build a tree nest in addition to the ground nest. Woodrats line their nests with shredded California bay leaves, which release a natural repellent of ticks and fleas.

The nocturnal woodrat forages for leaves, berries, and acorns from

the coast live oak, manzanita, toyon, poison oak, and madrone. Their diet is comprised of over 60 species of trees and shrubs, with their favorite being the acorns and leaves of the coast live oak. Their foraging and storage activities are credited for wide dispersion of seeds and fungal spores.

Over time, other creatures such as mice, newts, snakes, frogs, toads, beetles, and spiders may inhabit unused areas of the nest. Owls, bobcats, coyote, foxes, and mountain lions along with other predatory animals are especially fond of woodrats. Other animals take advantage of their storage skills by raiding the nests for food.

Woodrats, an indicator species, are among the first to suffer when their habitats are degraded. Woodrats need deep shade provided by madrones, mature oaks, and bay trees. They are especially vulnerable to the loss of mature trees.



GREAT HORNED OWL

MADRONE TREE

BOBCAT

CHORUS FROG

HARVEST MOUSE

NURSERY

ENTRANCE TUNNEL

CALIFORNIA BAY

LIVE OAK

MADRONE

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NEWT

FOOD STORAGE

TOYON

DARKLING BEETLE

WESTERN TOAD

WOODRAT



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