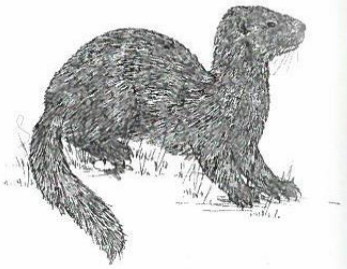
Mink have an **arch-backed walk or a bounding lope**. Expert swimmers and divers, their **webbed hind feet** help propel them through the water, enabling them to quickly overtake aquatic prey. They are both **nocturnal and crepuscular**, meaning active both at night and dusk and dawn. **Their senses of hearing and sight are superb**. Male adult mink average **two feet in length**, including their eight-inch tail. Their bodies resemble that of the weasel: short legs, long, bushy tail, long neck and body with a short head. Adult males weigh up to 2 pounds; females are lighter and smaller.



Mink are rarely found far from water. Their **preferred habitat** is brushy or rocky cover along the banks of streams, rivers, ponds and lakes. They construct their dens in rockpiles or under tree stumps or in logs. Other times they will just take over a muskrat house. The **dens** can be as deep as three feet underground with several entrances, each near water. Their nesting room within the burrow is often lined with dried leaves, grasses and feathers. Mink share the mustelid habit of softening this chamber with the fur of their prey.

Mink are solitary animals, except during breeding season when a single family may use more than one den. **Breeding season** occurs during late winter and their annual litter is born in April or May. Four to nine kits are born blind and naked, weighing less than an ounce each. They quickly develop a fine coat of white hair which is replaced in a few weeks with darker, reddish-brown pelage. Both adults help raise the kits by bringing prey into the nest.

When the kits need to be moved, the adults carry them by the scruff of their neck on land, but **in water the kits get to ride on the backs of their parents**. By eight weeks of age, the kits are beginning to practice hunting skills by pouncing and stalking along with the adults.

A Simple Review of Mink

They are slinky and cute, but if you were a muskrat you wouldn't think so. That's because a mink is a rather **ferocious predator** and their favorite dinner is muskrat! Like all weasels, they kill their prey with a swift bite to the head.

You might know someone who has a mink coat. A mink coat can be very expensive because mink fur is considered among the silkiest and softest of all mammals. Their dark brownish, red fur is very glossy. Today, wearing a coat made of animal fur isn't as popular as it once was.

Mink need very clean water along forested land in order to be healthy. They den near water, raise their young near water and eat whatever they can catch in the water.

When mink travel, they either walk with a very arched back or make bounding leaps over the ground. It may not seem like that's an easy way to travel, especially with such short legs, but they can easily bound for miles at a time. Mink can be about two feet long, including a long tail.

A mink den somewhere near water is used for shelter and raising their kits. Mink also use their den as a kind of refrigerator, keeping the carcasses of their uneaten prey in their underground burrows to save for a later meal. Some mink dens may have dead ducks and muskrats in them. In the chamber where the kits are located, the den is softened with a lining of fur from the mink's prey.