

Marmot

Scientific Classification	
Kingdom	Animalia
Phylum	Chordata
Class	Mammalia
Order	Rodentia
Family	Sciuridae
Sub-Family	Xerinae
Tribe	Marmotini
Genus	Marmota
	Marmota marmota Blumenbach, 1779

armots are large squirrels in the genus *Marmota*, of which there are 15 species. Those most often referred to as marmots tend to live in mountainous areas, such as the Alps, northern Apennines, Eurasian steppes, Carpathians, Tatras, and Pyrenees in Europe and northwestern Asia; the Rocky Mountains, Black Hills, Cascades, Pacific Ranges, and Sierra Nevada in North America; and the Deosai Plateau in Pakistan and Ladakh in India. The groundhog, however, is also sometimes called a marmot, while the similarly sized, but more social, prairie dog is not classified in the genus *Marmota* but in the related genus *Cynomys*. Marmots typically live in burrows (often within rockpiles, particularly in the case of the yellow-bellied marmot), and hibernate there through the winter. Most marmots are highly social and use loud whistles to communicate with one another, especially when alarmed.

Marmots mainly eat greens and many types of grasses, berries, lichens, mosses, roots, and flowers

History and etymology

Marmots have been known since antiquity. Research by the French ethnologist Michel Peissel claimed the story of "gold-digging ants" reported by the Ancient Greek historian Herodotus, who lived in the 5th century BC, was founded on the golden Himalayan marmot of the Deosai Plateau and the habit of local tribes such as the Minaro to collect the gold dust excavated from their burrows. The etymology of the term "marmot" is uncertain. It may have arisen from the Gallo-Romance prefix marm-, meaning to mumble or murmur (an example of onomatopoeia). Another possible origin is post-classical Latin, *mus montanus*, meaning "mountain mouse". Beginning in 2010, Alaska celebrates February 2 as "Marmot Day", a holiday intended to observe the prevalence of marmots in that state and take the place of Groundhog Day

