

River Bend Naturalists Notebook

Presented by: RIVER BEND NATURE CENTER, Faribault, MN 55021

CHIPMUNKS

There are two different chipmunks found in Minnesota, the Eastern and the Least Chipmunks. Each has five dark brown stripes on the back and sides, which are separated by four light stripes.



-Milbert

The Eastern Chipmunk, *Tamias striatus* (shown in the drawing), is the larger of the two with a pattern of stripes like that of the Least Chipmunk. Its body stripes however do not extend to the base of the tail, and the rump is a solid brownish or reddish yellow. The stripes extend only indistinctly onto the face. The belly is almost white, with well developed internal cheek pouches. It prefers the brush lands and mixed hardwoods where supplies of nuts and berries are present. It is found in all but the southeastern counties of Minnesota, and is common at the River Bend Nature Center.

The Least Chipmunk, *Eutamias minimus*, only half the weight of the Eastern Chipmunk, does not have a

reddish rump, and the stripes on the face are more strongly marked than the Eastern. The body stripes extend to the base of the tail. The sides of the body are tawny, often becoming bright rufous on the shoulders. It also has large internal cheek pouches. The Least Chipmunk is the northern most of the two Minnesota chipmunks, preferring the northern coniferous forest region. It is a hibernating mammal.

-text by Orwin A. Rustad