

American Pika (*Ochotona princeps*)



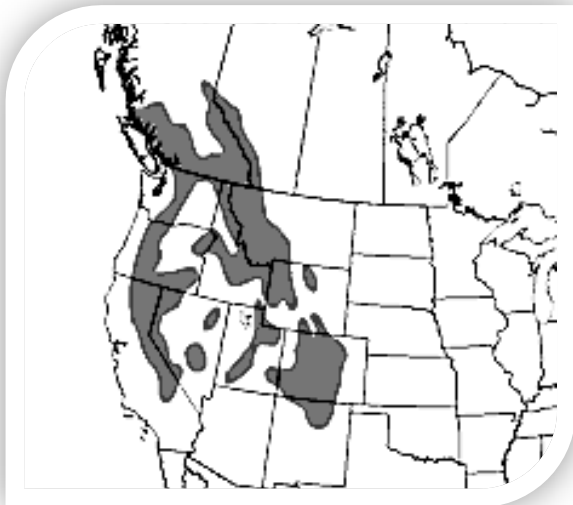
Taxonomy:

Family Ochotonidae. Also called Rocky Mountain pika, southern pika, rock rabbit, piping hare, hay-maker, mouse-hare, whistling hare, cony. There are 36 subspecies, including *Ochotona princeps wasatchensis*.

Description:

Short-legged, apparently tailless, with moderately large, round ears. Coloration ranges from tan to light brown and gray.

Total length: 162-216 mm; No visible tail; Weight: 121-176 g.



Distribution:

Distributed discontinuously in mountain areas throughout western North America. Near the southern limits of its distributional range, American pikas are generally found at elevations higher than 2,500 meters, although populations live at lower elevations in the northern part of its range. Found at high elevations in the Wasatch and Uintah mountains.

Ecology and Diet:

Pikas are non-hibernating, diurnal animals that live on talus, in rock outcrops, old lava fields, or very rocky hillsides, generally at high elevations. They are generalist herbivores and in the late summer harvest plants that are sun-dried and

stored as “hay” as winter food. Animals maintain individual territories, usually living next to an individual of the opposite sex.

Life History:

Females breed when they are a year old, and have a litter of three after a 30-day gestation period. The young are independent about a month after birth and have to find new, or unoccupied territory to colonize and generally avoid other adults.

Reference: Smith 1999.