

## SCIENCE in the Park



# American mink

***Neovison vison***

**Family: Mustelidae**

Carnivore /Predator

Native to Virginia

A member of the weasel family and cousin to the river otter, weasels, and badgers, the American mink is rarely seen within the James River Park System. The mink dwells in forested areas near bodies of water and hunts fish, small rodents, amphibians, crustaceans, and insects. Like other members of the weasel family, the mink is most active at night and spends most of its time in the water searching for prey. The mink is an excellent swimmer and can dive as deep as sixteen feet.

## Fun Facts

- There are two types of minks: the American mink and the European mink. The former has been introduced into Europe and South America and is treated as an invasive species.
- Mink oil is often used in medical products, cosmetics, and to treat, preserve, and waterproof leather.
- Mink fur is highly prized and there are many established mink fur farms throughout the world.
- Similar to a skunk, the mink will spray intruders with a foul smelling liquid but, unlike the skunk, it cannot aim it's spray.
- When a mink is happy, it will make a purring sound similar to that of a cat.