



## Coypu (*Myocastor coypus*)

**Originated in South America. The species was introduced in France in the 1800s initially for research purposes, later for the fur industry.**

### Description

- A semi-aquatic rodent that can weigh up to 10 kilograms adult weight (6 kg on average)
- The fur is brown with guard hairs and a waterproof undercoat
- A massive body approximately 50 to 60 centimetres long
- The tail is cylindrical, approximately 40 cm long, with little hair
- The front paws have strong claws
- The rear feet are palmed
- Nostrils have valves to seal out water
- Orange-coloured incisors are always visible
- Females have 8 to 10 teats (two dorsolateral rows)
- Life expectancy is approximately 4 years in the natural environment

### Ecology and reproduction

- The species can adapt to diverse habitats, including marshes, rivers, drainage ditches, ponds and lakes, dikes, reed ponds
- The animals dig burrows for protection against the weather and to bear young
- They are active primarily at dusk and during the night
- Gregarious tendencies, but also territorial
- Almost exclusively herbivorous, the species feeds on all types of aquatic and terrestrial plants depending on availability, which means the animals can adapt to a wide range of environments
- Prolific species with up to three litters per year and up to six young per litter

### Documentation

- Sarat E. (coord.) 2012. Vertébrés exotiques envahissants du bassin de la Loire (hors poissons) : connaissances et expériences de gestion. Office national de la chasse et de la faune sauvage, Plan Loire Grandeur Nature, 128 pp.
- Léger F. 2009. Les mammifères aquatiques exotiques envahissants – Formation Onema sur les espèces exotiques envahissantes en milieu aquatique, 25/05/2009 – 29/05/2009, Fouencamps, FRA, 209 pp. (Communication orale).
- Nepveu C. 2002. Les espèces animales et végétales susceptibles de proliférer dans les milieux aquatiques et subaquatiques - Fiches espèces animales (Les espèces exotiques). Agence de l'eau Artois-Picardie. 98 pp.

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#### Classification

Order	Rodents
Family	<i>Myocastoridae</i>
Genus	<i>Myocastor</i>
Species	<i>M. coypus</i> (Molina, 1792)

