

Nutria

Regno: fauna

Mammals

 [nutria.jpg](#) [1]

Nutria (or Coypu) - *Myocastor coypus*

Large rodent originally from South America, the Nutria was imported to Europe to breed for the fur trade; subsequently it has spread over the territory after deliberate and/or accidental release of some individuals.

The adults grow to a length of 90 cm and weigh up to 8 kg; their body is covered with thick brown fur, but their colour varies a lot and even albinos are not uncommon. The cylindrical tail is almost naked and as long as the body.

The feet, especially the larger hind feet, are webbed to help swimming. Its frequents both fresh and brackish water wetlands where there is a thick vegetation round the banks, and locally can reach numerous populations.

It is mainly active at night but in winter it is more easily seen during the day. Very quick on land, it can swim underwater and stay several minutes in apnoea.

It builds platforms out of plants, sometimes on the water surface, where it rests and rears its young. It also digs deep dens, accessible from the water, in the river or lake banks.

It breeds all through the year but its favourite time is spring to summer. The female gives birth to an average of 5 young which she suckles for about 7 weeks; afterwards she can mate again and complete another pregnancy. Females can begin to be sexually mature already when they are only 3-7 months old.

The Nutria feeds mainly on wild and cultivated plants, but also on carrion, fish, aquatic invertebrates eggs and fledglings.

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Links:

[1] <http://www.zoneumidetoscane.it/sites/default/files/nutria.jpg>