

# Outdoor Recreation

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# Outdoor Education

## Learning About New Mexico's Wildlife Badger

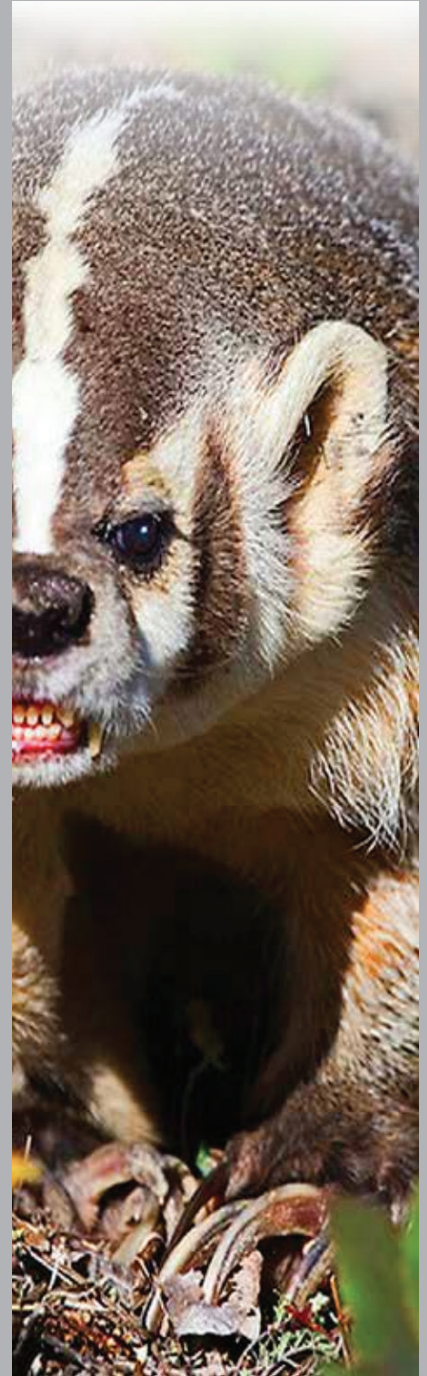
### **Badger (*Taxidea taxus*)**

Badgers are short-legged carnivores with stout, fat bodies and sharp claws. Sometimes mistakenly considered a rodent, the badger is a member of the weasel family which includes otters, skunks and wolverines. An elongated head with small ears and a stripe from nose to tail, combined with a triangular patch ('badges') and distinct white stripe on each cheek make badgers easy to identify.

The lower jaw of the badger is articulated and hinged deep into the skull. This enables them to clench and hold with fierce tenacity, but also limits jaw movement to hinging open and shut or sliding forward and back.

The badger lives in open grasslands and meadows near the edge of woodlands where alluvial soil (deposits of sediment found in floodplains) is easy to dig and where prey such as mice, squirrels and groundhogs are more available.

Coyotes have been observed accompanying badgers while hunting. It is uncertain whether this is a 'hunting partnership' or simply coyotes waiting to catch an escaped rodent. However, studies do demonstrate that coyotes consume more rodents and travel less when following a hunting badger.



New Mexico Department of Game and Fish

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