

Name: _____

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The Vancouver Island Marmot

One of the rarest animals on Earth is a Canadian creature that makes its home underground in British Columbia. This creature is called the Vancouver Island Marmot and lives only in the high mountains of Vancouver Island, British Columbia and **nowhere else** in the world. At last count, there were only a hundred Vancouver Island Marmots left. It is in danger of extinction!

Marmots are rodent members of the squirrel family. In Canada, there are three other marmot species; the woodchuck, the yellow-bellied marmot, and hoary marmot. You can easily recognize the Vancouver Island Marmot by its chocolate brown fur and white patches. They even have a unique call. A grown marmot is about the size of a small dog or large housecat. Marmots are known for building huge maze-like underground tunnels. During the winter, marmots hibernate, while in the summer they munch on flowers and grasses.



The Vancouver Island Marmots are endangered because in the last few decades, clear-cut logging has taken away their home. However, there is a plan to help save the Vancouver Island Marmot. Scientists are catching the Vancouver Island Marmot and breeding them in safe surroundings. The scientists hope to release 400-600 marmots back into their natural habitat. The scientists also plan to continue monitoring and researching the Vancouver Island Marmot population.



In 2010, with the Olympics in Vancouver, there were three official Olympic mascots. As time progressed, a fourth character appeared and became quite popular. “Mukmuk,” that fourth character, was a Vancouver Island Marmot. With the popularity of the Olympics many children have come to know Mukmuk and have learned about the struggles of the Vancouver Island Marmot.

1. Where is the only place on Earth where you can find a Vancouver Island Marmot?

2. About how many of this type of marmot are left in the wild?

3. How can you tell a Vancouver Island marmot from other marmots?

4. Why are these marmots endangered?

5. What are some different ways that marmots use soil in their lives?

6. Why do you think it is a good idea to make Mukmuk a character for people to learn about?

