

## FUN FACTS ABOUT GROUNDHOGS



- The typical groundhog is 20 inches long and usually weighs about 12 to 15 pounds. Punxsutawney Phil (seen below), the “official” groundhog for Groundhog Day, weighs about 20 pounds and is 22 inches long (that’s one big shadow he can cast come February 2<sup>nd</sup> if



- Groundhogs have coarse grayish fur tipped with brown or sometimes dull red. Their ears, tail, and legs are short (yet, they are surprisingly quick). And, they have exceptionally strong jaws.
- A groundhog's diet consists of no meat, just lots of greens, tree bark, fruits, and vegetables and very little water. They get most of their liquids from the dew on leaves.
- When alarmed, a groundhog can whistle. They also whistle in the spring when they begin courting.
- Insects – and even germs – do not bother with the groundhogs. They are resistant to the plagues that at times wipe out large numbers of wild animals. Their cleanliness is noted as being one reason for this.
- Groundhogs are one of the few animals that really hibernate. Hibernation is not just a deep sleep. It is actually a deep coma, where the body temperature drops to a few degrees above freezing, the heart barely beats, the blood scarcely flows, and breathing nearly stops.
- Young groundhogs are usually born in mid-April or May, and by July they are able to venture out on their own. The size of the litter is 1 to 9 babies, which are called *kits* or *cubs*.