

Pine Marten

English Name: European Pine Marten

Scientific Name: *Martes martes*

Irish Name: Cat crainn

The Irish name for Pine Marten is Cat Crainn (tree cat) and this describes it well. It has short legs, a long body and a long bushy tail. Like a cat, it has claws that can retract. Because of this, it is sure-footed and can move quickly through the branches.

The Pine Marten hunts for small mammals such as rodents (e.g. rats and mice) rabbits, frogs and birds and if near the coast it will also eat fish. It eats lots of other types of food too, such as forest fruit, nuts, mushrooms and insects, even taking hens and ducks from farms!

Pine Martens are shy creatures, rarely seen or heard, and are mostly active at night. They live in woodland areas, mainly in the west and south of Ireland. Pine martens live on their own and each adult has its own territory, which it marks with scent glands.

Pine martens generally live for 5 to 6 years in the wild but have been known to live for up to 17 years in captivity.



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Pine Marten were once found all over Ireland but its population declined in the last few centuries as the forests began to disappear.

Meet the Family!

A Pine Marten's young is known as a "kit" and it generally has one litter per year. These are usually born in late March or April, with one to five kits per litter. Born blind, the helpless kits will stay in the den for 6-8 weeks but are ready to leave home by the end of the summer.



FACT FILE

Colour: Its coat is rich chestnut brown and has a creamy throat and underside.

Length: 55-80 cm.

Diet: Rodents, rabbits, frogs, birds, farm chickens, fruit, nuts, mushrooms and berries.

Habitat: Woodland areas.

Relatives of the Pine Marten

Besides the European Pine Marten, there are several other martens, such as the American Pine Marten, the Japanese Marten and the Beech Marten.

Marten's belong to the mustelid family, a group of carnivorous (meat-eating) animals that have short legs and long bodies. Other animals in this family include the otter, badger, mink and stoat.



Badger



Otter