



Animal Life Span Data

Life spans vary enormously from species to species. In the wild, animals are subject to attack by predators and competitors, difficulty in finding and competing for food, and adverse environmental conditions such as harsh winters. Older or otherwise weaker animals often do not survive. Under laboratory or zoo conditions, animals have food provided and are protected from other animals of the same or different species as well as from environmental conditions. Zoo animals receive some medical care and typically live much longer than wild animals. The *average* life span of wild animals is therefore shorter than for zoo animals while the *maximum* recorded life spans while usually higher for zoo animals are sometimes higher for wild animals.

The following table lists *maximum recorded* life spans (in years) for some animals.

Species	Age
Laxmann's shrew <i>Sorex caecutiens</i>	2
Human <i>Homo sapiens</i>	122
Highland desert mouse <i>Eligmodontia typus</i>	0.8
Marsupial mouse <i>Antechinus</i> (various, male)	0.9
Asian elephant <i>Elephas maximus</i>	80
Little Brown Bat <i>Myotis lucifugus</i>	30
Eastern gray squirrel <i>Sciurus carolinensis</i>	23.5
House canary <i>Serinus canarius</i>	22
American robin <i>Turdus migratorius</i>	12.8
American Crow <i>Corvus brachyrhynchos</i>	14.6
African gray parrot <i>Psittacus erithacus</i>	73
Red-breasted parrot <i>Poicephalus rufiventris</i>	33.4
White-winged crossbill <i>Loxia leucoptera</i>	4
American white pelican <i>Pelecanus erythrorhynchos</i>	54
Brown pelican <i>Pelecanus occidentalis</i>	31
Beluga sturgeon <i>Huso huso</i>	118
Lake sturgeon <i>Acipenser fulvescens</i>	152
Rockfish <i>Sebastes aleutianus</i>	140
Pygmy Gobi <i>Eviota sigillata</i>	0.2
Pacific ocean perch <i>Sebastes alutus</i>	26
Pink salmon <i>Oncorhynchus gorbuscha</i>	3
Sockeye salmon <i>Oncorhynchus nerka</i>	8
Halibut <i>Hippoglossus vulgaris</i>	90
Aldabra tortoise <i>Geochelone gigantea</i>	152
Wood turtle <i>Clemmys insculpta</i>	60
Eastern box turtle <i>Terrapene carolina carolina</i>	75
Coahuilan box turtle <i>Terrapene coahuila</i>	9.4

One point of this table was to illustrate that very similar species sometimes have dramatically different life spans. Notice the 760:1 range in fish life spans.

Some fish and reptiles have extremely long maximum life spans. Humans have the greatest authenticated maximum life span (122 years) of any mammal. However, some researchers think that a bowhead whale killed in Alaska by Eskimos was 211 years old.

This table seriously underestimates the maximum age potential for longer-lived animals relative to humans. This is because humans have greater medical support and because life spans of humans are much better monitored. We have measured the life spans of at least several hundred million people. If we measured several hundred million rockfish what would be their maximum age? Most of the people lived under conditions where they could survive even though seriously weakened by age. What would be the maximum age of rockfish if similarly protected and medically supported?

The several species of marsupial mouse are interesting examples of programmed death in mammals. The males are semelparous and die following mating. Some theorists, following traditional evolutionary mechanics theory, contend that these animals are designed to expend all of their life energy in mating and that this results in an individual competitive reproductive benefit that outweighs the evolutionary disadvantage of programmed death. Others believe programmed death has evolutionary benefits of its own.

Life span observations are critical to development of [theories of biological aging](#) including human aging.

www.programmed-aging.org
Sponsored by Azinet LLC © 2009