



meadow vole

Microtus pennsylvanicus

Kingdom: Animalia
Division/Phylum: Chordata - vertebrates
Class: Mammalia
Order: Rodentia
Family: Muridae

FEATURES

The meadow vole has a black body with red hairs scattered throughout. The belly hair is black with white tips. The feet are black. The tail is heavily furred and shorter than the head-body length (three and one-half to five inches) although still relatively long for a vole. Its ears are rounded and almost hidden in the hair.

BEHAVIORS

The meadow vole lives in moist areas with grasses or sedges, marshes, along streams, in wet fields, along lake shores and in gardens. This vole feeds on grasses and other green plants, bulbs, grains and seeds. It is active during the day or night. This vole uses underground burrows and above ground runways through vegetation for travel routes. Mating occurs in the spring and fall. Females less than one month old may breed and produce offspring about three weeks later. The average litter size is four or five. Young are born helpless in a nest of dry grass. They develop quickly and are ready to live on their own in about two weeks. Mortality of young voles is very high.

HABITATS

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> bottomland forests | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> rivers & streams |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> lakes, ponds & reservoirs | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> swamps |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lake Michigan | <input type="checkbox"/> temp water supplies |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> marshes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> wet prairies & fens |
| <input type="checkbox"/> peatlands | |

ILLINOIS STATUS

- | | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> common | <input type="checkbox"/> endangered | <input type="checkbox"/> threatened |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> native | <input type="checkbox"/> exotic | |

ILLINOIS RANGE

northern 1/2

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Illinois Department of Natural Resources. 1999.
Biodiversity of Illinois, Volume I: Aquatic Habitats CD-ROM.