



northern short-tailed shrew

Blarina brevicauda

Kingdom: Animalia
Division/Phylum: Chordata - vertebrates
Class: Mammalia
Order: Insectivora
Family: Soricidae

FEATURES

The northern short-tailed shrew is between four and five inches in length, including the tail. It has a gray body with light hair on the belly and a short, furred tail. There are no external ears. The eyes are tiny and black.

BEHAVIORS

The northern short-tailed shrew lives in forests and grasslands. This shrew is extremely active and requires lots of food. Its diet includes insects, worms, birds, roots, nuts and fruits. The northern short-tailed shrew is active day and night throughout the year. It makes "runs" above ground or tunnels underground. The northern short-tailed shrew is not a good climber but can swim. The senses of touch, smell and hearing are extremely sensitive, while its vision is poor. Secretions from glands are used to mark territories. During periods of low temperatures, the shrew's body temperature, metabolism and activity rates drop. It is believed that this shrew breeds from March through October. The gestation period is about three weeks. Young are born pink and helpless. They are placed in a nest of leaves and grasses.

HABITATS

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

statewide

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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