



masked shrew

Sorex cinereus

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

FEATURES

An adult masked shrew is between three and one-half and four and one-half inches in length, including the tail. It has a pointed nose, tan feet and a gray-brown body with the belly, underside of the tail and sides a lighter color. The tail is two-colored -- light below and dark above.

BEHAVIORS

The masked shrew may be found in Illinois in the northern one-third of the state, in the southeastern part near the Wabash River and in the southwestern section near the junction of the Mississippi and Ohio rivers. This tiny animal lives in damp places with good ground cover, like sedge meadows, wet prairies, drainage ditches, peatlands, bottomland forests, swamps and fencerows. A masked shrew feeds on insects and other invertebrates. It has a high metabolic rate and eats more than its own body weight in food in a day. The masked shrew is nocturnal. Breeding occurs in late March or early April. The gestation period is about 18 days. Litter size ranges from four to eight.

HABITATS

- bottomland forests
- coniferous forest
- southern Illinois lowlands
- upland deciduous forest

ILLINOIS STATUS

- common
- endangered
- threatened
- native
- exotic

ILLINOIS RANGE

Permanent resident: northern 1/3 + southeast border + extreme southwest border

Summer resident:

Migrant:

Winter resident:

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Illinois Department of Natural Resources. 1999.
Biodiversity of Illinois, Volume 2: Woodland Habitats CD-ROM.