



northern short-tailed shrew

Blarina brevicauda

Kingdom: Animalia
Division/Phylum: Chordata
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 may be found statewide in Illinois. This mammal lives in forests and grasslands. 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 under ground. The northern short-tailed shrew is not a good climber but can swim. The senses of touch, smell and hearing are extremely sensitive, since 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 will all 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

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

ILLINOIS STATUS

- common
- endangered
- threatened
- native
- exotic

ILLINOIS RANGE

Permanent resident: statewide

Summer resident:

Migrant:

Winter resident:

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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