



golden mouse

Ochrotomys nuttalli

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

FEATURES

The golden mouse is a medium-sized mouse (head-body length three and one-fourth to three and three-fourths inches) with a red or golden body. The cream belly has golden tints. Its tail is the same length or slightly longer than the head-body length. The feet are white.

BEHAVIORS

The golden mouse may be found in the southern one-fourth of Illinois. It lives in honeysuckle and greenbrier thickets in association with conifers, sumac or cane. This mouse eats acorns and seeds of bedstraw, blackberries, grapes and poison ivy as well as other seeds. It climbs well on small branches and vines and can swim. The tail is used for balance and to wrap around vines or branches. The golden mouse lives in colonies. It is active at night. The nest is built above ground such as in a tree or vine. The nest is used for resting and to raise the young and may contain several mice. The nest is lined with fur, grasses, bark and other plant material and covered with leaves, grasses and stems. During the day the entrance/exit to the nest is kept covered. Feeding platforms may also be utilized by this mouse. It is believed that the golden mouse mates twice per year, once in early spring and once in early fall. The average

litter size is two or three. Young are helpless at birth but develop rapidly and are able to live on their own at three weeks of age.

HABITATS

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

ILLINOIS STATUS

- common
- endangered
- threatened
- native
- exotic

ILLINOIS RANGE

Permanent resident: southern 1/4

Summer resident:

Migrant:

Winter resident:

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Illinois Department of Natural Resources. 1999.

Biodiversity of Illinois, Volume 2: Woodland Habitats CD-ROM.