

# long-tailed weasel

## *Neogale frenata*

Kingdom: Animalia  
Phylum: Chordata  
Class: Mammalia  
Order: Carnivora  
Family: Mustelidae

### ILLINOIS STATUS

common, native

### FEATURES

The long-tailed weasel has a head-body length of about eight to 10 inches. Its black-tipped tail is three to six inches long. The body fur is red-brown with orange or white belly fur. Some long-tailed weasels become white in the winter except for their black tail tip.

### BEHAVIORS

The long-tailed weasel may be found statewide in Illinois. This carnivore lives in brushy areas, open woods, grasslands, roadsides and near farm buildings. The long-tailed weasel eats birds, lizards, small mammals and snakes. It climbs trees readily. Active at night, it uses the burrows of other small mammals, crevices or brush piles to hide in during the day. Mating occurs in summer. After mating, the fertilized eggs undergo a period of time in which they do not implant in the uterus or develop much. Therefore, the gestation period is very long, nearly nine months. Young are born in April. A litter may contain up to nine young. Young are helpless at birth, and their eyes do not open for over a month. Males attain sexual maturity in their first year, but females do not mature until their second year.



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adult

### ILLINOIS RANGE



Permanent



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adult

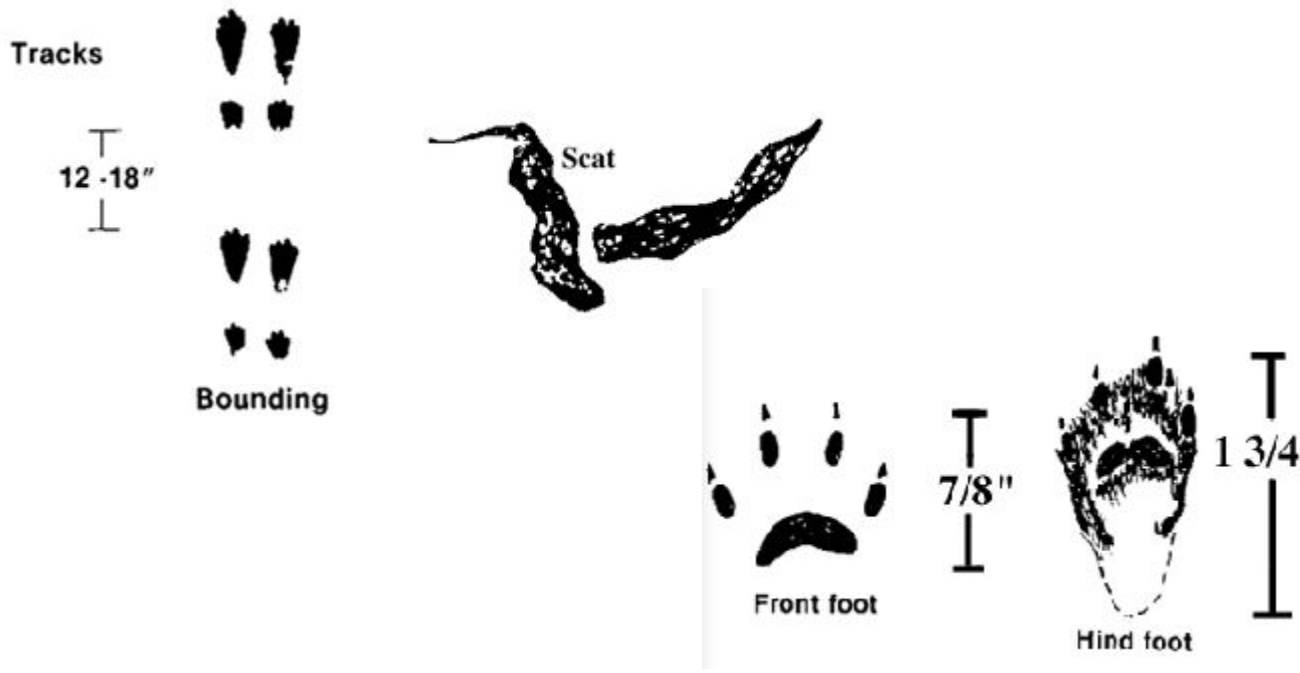


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## **Aquatic Habitats**

marshes; peatlands; wet prairies and fens

## **Woodland Habitats**

coniferous forests; upland deciduous forests

## **Prairie and Edge Habitats**

black soil prairie; dolomite prairie; edge; gravel prairie; hill prairie; sand prairie; shrub prairie