

North American least shrew *Cryptotis parva*

Kingdom: Animalia

Division/Phylum: Chordata

Class: Mammalia

Order: Soricomorpha

Family: Soricidae

ILLINOIS STATUS common, native

FEATURES

The North American least shrew is two and one-half to three and one-half inches long, including the tail. It has short, gray-cinnamon body fur with lighter fur on the belly. The tail is short, about the length of one-third of its head and body combined.

BEHAVIORS

The North American least shrew may be found statewide in Illinois. It lives in grassy or weedy fields where it eats insects, spiders and earthworms. This mammal uses a shallow underground burrow system. It may build a nest in the burrow or under debris or weeds on the ground. Young are born in the spring and fall. The gestation period is about three weeks, and the average number of young per litter is five. Young least shrews grow to adult size by one month after birth.

HABITATS

Aquatic Habitats

wet prairies and fens

Woodland Habitats

none

Prairie and Edge Habitats

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

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