

western harvest mouse *Reithrodontomys megalotis*

Kingdom: Animalia

Division/Phylum: Chordata

Class: Mammalia

Order: Rodentia

Family: Cricetidae

ILLINOIS STATUS common, native

FEATURES

The western harvest mouse has a small (two and three-fourths to three inches) body with red back fur. The belly hairs are gray with a white tip. This mouse has grooved upper incisors. The tail is shorter than the head-body length. The tail is dark on the top, light on the bottom and has very little hair.

BEHAVIORS

The western harvest mouse may be found in the northern one-half of Illinois. It lives in grassy or marshy areas with some taller weeds and brush. It may be more common in areas that are regularly burned. The western harvest mouse eats insects, spiders and grass seeds. It is nocturnal. Mating occurs from March through September. Young are born in a nest made of grasses that is built in other grasses. Litter size is about four. Young are born hairless and with the eyes and ears closed. A young female becomes mature at four months of age.

HABITATS

Aquatic Habitats

marshes; peatlands; wet prairies and fens

Woodland Habitats

none

Prairie and Edge Habitats

black soil prairie; edge; shrub prairie

© Illinois Department of Natural Resources. 2017. Biodiversity of Illinois.