

Long-tailed vole (*Microtus longicaudus*)



Taxonomy:

Family Cricetidae. Fourteen subspecies are recognized, including *Microtus longicaudus latus*, the regional subspecies.

Description:

Small-thick bodied vole with a long, bi-colored tail that is about 1/3 total length. Fur is dull gray or brownish-gray interspersed with long, black-tipped hairs.

Total length: 155-202 mm; Tail: 49-81 mm; Hind foot: 21-24mm; Weight:36-59 g.



Distribution:

Western US and Canada, from southern Alaska southward to northern California, Nevada, Arizona and west of the Rocky Mountains. Common at mid to high elevations along the Wasatch Front.

Ecology and diet:

Long-tailed voles occur in a broad range of habitats, including dry grassland, riparian zones, sub-alpine meadows, and alpine tundra above timberline. They primarily eat green plant material but also consume fruits and seeds.

Unlike montane voles, they do not ordinarily construct obvious surface runways. They are active year-round. Although active mainly at night, they often are seen during the daytime in areas of heavy grass cover.

Life History:

Reproduction occurs between May and October. Females have an average of two litters of 2-6 offspring annually. Average lifespan is less than one year.

References: Smolen 1999