

Montane vole (*Microtus montanus*)



Taxonomy:

Family Cricetidae. Fifteen subspecies are recognized, including *Microtus montanus micropus* found regionally.

Description:

Color brown above, often with a buffy or gray wash and a mixture of black-tipped hairs. Sides are paler, and underparts grayish-white. Tail is less than 1/3 the total length and faintly bicolored.

Total length: 140-220 mm; Tail: 24-69 mm;
Hind foot: 14-27 mm; Weight: 37-85 g.



Distribution:

From the Rocky Mountains west to the eastern Cascade and Sierra Nevada ranges, and from south British Columbia, Canada to northern New Mexico. Common in moist habitats from valley bottoms to high elevations along the Wasatch Front.

Ecology and diet:

Montane voles occur in a wide range of habitats, from low elevation marshes to alpine meadows, but are closely associated with wet areas dominated by grasses or sedges. They are active in all seasons and although they are primarily nocturnal are often seen moving along surface runways which they construct

through grassy vegetation. They nest either in sub-surface burrows, or, where the soil is very wet, in surface nests of vegetation. Diet consists mainly of grasses, sedges, and rushes.

Life History:

Reproduction occurs in the spring after snowmelt (April-May) through September. Gestation length is about 21 days and young are sexually mature within 2 months. Females have two to three litters of 5-6 offspring each during a reproductive season. Average lifespan is approximately 6-9 months.

References: Sera & Early 2003.