

Meadow Vole (*Microtus pennsylvanicus*)



Taxonomy:

Family Cricetidae. There are 28 recognized subspecies, including *Microtus pennsylvanicus pullatus* which occurs locally.

Description:

Generally a dull brown dorsally and gray ventrally. In the winter, they have a thicker, finer winter pelage and a sparse, coarse coat in the summer. Juvenile individuals have a darker coloration than adults. They have a short tail and compressed muzzle.

Total length: 140-195 mm; Length of tail: 33-64 mm; Weight: 33-65 g



Distribution:

Widely distributed in the eastern and north-central US north through most of Canada and into Alaska. Limited distribution in the intermountain region, and found locally at scattered locations in the valleys along the Wasatch Front.

Ecology and Diet:

Meadow voles live in grassy fields and meadows, preferably ones that are wetter rather than drier. They can be active 24 hours a day, and throughout the year. They are primarily herbivorous; they eat most grass species, as well as sedges and herbaceous plants. They will occasionally eat insects and animal remains.

Life History:

The meadow vole is known to be the most prolific mammal on earth. They can breed about a month after being born; there is a 3 week gestation period and the young are weaned after 2 weeks of being born. Litter size usually ranges anywhere from 3 to ten pups.

Reference: Tamarin 1999.