

small mammal facts



Bank Vole



Smallest vole in the UK. Prominent ears and chestnut-brown coat. Distinguished from mice by their shorter, blunt, almost hamster-like noses.

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Harvest Mouse



Their hearing is acute and they will react sharply; they can hear rustling sounds up to 7m away.

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House Mouse



A common mouse with ears and tail that have little hair. They are typically aggressive to one another and will often fight.

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Field Vole



A common vole with a tail shorter than the bank vole and fur covered ears.

Bank Vole *Myodes glareolus*

Colour: Reddish-brown fur above, creamy-grey fur below.

Features: Rounded snout, less prominent eyes than mice and ears covered with fur; more sleek appearance than field vole, and rather longer, bi coloured (black above, white below) tail.

Size: Head and body 8—12cm, tail 3.5—5cm

Weight: 20-35g

Eats: Berries and seeds, leaves of herbs, shrubs and some snails & insects

Where it's found: Throughout mainland Britain, very widespread

Fun fact: Disappears so fast that it is rarely seen – just movement in the corner of your eye!

Harvest Mouse *Micromys minutus*

Colour: Reddish-brown fur with white under parts

Features: Blunt nose, small eyes, small hairy ears and also much smaller; prehensile tail the same length as the head and body; build nests of woven grass, about the size of a cricket ball, well above ground.

Size: 5-7cm. Slightly larger than pygmy shrew.

Weight: 4-6 g

Eats: Mixture of seeds, berries and insects

Where it's found: Found from central Yorkshire southwards in grassland and arable land.

Fun fact: Tennis balls from Wimbledon have been recycled to create artificial nests for harvest mice!

House Mouse *Mus musculus*

Colour: Many variations, often grey in colour, but can be white to grey to light brown to black, lighter under parts.

Features: Large ears, pointed snout and a long tail. The voice is a high-pitched squeak.

Size: Grows to 15cm from nose to tip of tail.

Weight: 12-22g

Eats: Almost anything

Where it's found: Anywhere people live

Fun fact: They can jump vertically up to 45 cm

Field Vole *Microtus agrestis*

Colour: Grey-brown fur above, creamy-grey fur below,

Features: Rounded snout, less prominent eyes than mice and ears are furry.

Size: 90-115mm

Weight: 20-40g.

Eats: Grass

Where it's found: Wherever Grass is available, long grassland or in the early stages of forestry plantations but also in woodland, hedgerows, dunes, or moorland.

Fun fact: As they travel, field voles leave a trail of scent to warn off other voles

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Common Shrew



Common shrews are widespread in Britain. They have dense velvety fur with a long pointed nose like all shrews.

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Wood Mouse



Essentially nocturnal with good night vision to avoid predators!

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Yellow Necked Mouse



The yellow band on the neck is a reasonably reliable distinction from the similar wood mouse. These mice are largely nocturnal and are expert climbers.

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Pygmy Shrew



Very small mammal with pointed snout and poor eyesight. It hunts by smell and touch. It is smaller than some of our insects, and is sometimes be found sleeping in the burrows of some beetles.

Common Shrew *Sorex araneus*

Colour: Tricoloured, dark brown on the back, pale brown at the sides and whitish underneath

Features: Dense velvety fur, with a long pointed nose, tiny eyes, small ears and red teeth.

Size: Head to tail 7cm - 8cm. Tail up to 5cm

Weight: 5-14g

Eats: Mainly insects but also earthworms, small slugs and snails especially in damp areas.

Where it's found: Throughout mainland Britain, most commonly found in hedgerows, scrubland, grassland and deciduous woodland. Active by day and night, always on the move.

Fun fact: Darker winter fur on hind quarters looks like trousers.

Wood Mouse *Apodemus sylvaticus*

Colour: Sandy brown fur (darker towards the spine) with a white/grey underside, Juveniles are greyer overall.

Features: Small rodent with protruding eyes, large ears, long tail.

Size: Approx 8cm - 9cm from nose to base of tail. The tail is as long as the body

Weight: 13-27g

Eats: Seeds, green plants, fruits and animal foods. They tend to leave the flesh of fruit and eat only the pips.

Where it's found: central Yorkshire southwards in grassland and arable land.

Fun fact: Their movements are fast, and sometimes they jump, looking like tiny kangaroos.

Yellow Necked Mouse *Apodemus flavicollis*

Colour: Fur is brown on the back and white on the underside, with a complete band of yellow fur across the neck area making it distinct from a wood mouse.

Features: Large ears, protruding eyes and long tail.

Size: Head to tail approx 9.5-12cm; Tail 8- 12cm.

Weight: 14-45g

Eats: tree seed, fruits, some green plants and invertebrates – similar to wood mouse

Where it's found: Found in south and east England.

Fun fact: Avoids predators such as weasels and owls by impressive leaps to safety or by shedding the skin on its tail

Pygmy Shrew *Sorex minutus*

Colour: Fur is greyish brown with a dirty white tummy.

Features: velvet like fur, dark brown in colour and a pink snout with long whiskers all around it.

Size: 4-6cm; tail 3-4.5cm

Weight: 2.4 - 6.1g. May decrease up to 28% in winter

Eats: Feeds mainly on insects, spider and woodlice, needs regular meals and eating up to 125% of their body weight in food daily. Unlike common shrews, they rarely eat earthworms.

Where it's found: Widespread through Britain and Ireland, More common in moorland than common shrews. Seen all year round, active by day and night, largely above ground.

Fun fact: Its average weight is 4g, about the same as a 1p coin.

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Largest of Britain's shrews it is highly territorial & likes watercress beds!

Water Shrew

Water Shrew *Neomys fodiens*

Colour: Velvety and jet black on the upper surface of the body, usually greyish white/ yellowish underneath. White hairs on ears and white hairs around eyes.

Features: Long pointed snout, small ears, tiny eyes, distinctive stiff white hairs on the margins of the feet, and underside of the tail forming a keel.

Size: 67-96mm, tail 45-77mm

Weight: 12-18g

Eats: Freshwater shrimps, water skaters and caddis larvae which they obtain by diving and hunting underwater.

Where it's found: Throughout mainland Britain. It is semi-aquatic and found close to water.

Fun fact: Has venomous saliva, even humans can feel the effects of a bite!