

deer mouse *Peromyscus maniculatus*

Kingdom: Animalia

Division/Phylum: Chordata

Class: Mammalia

Order: Rodentia

Family: Cricetidae

ILLINOIS STATUS common, native

FEATURES

The deer mouse's body is about three to four inches long. Its back has brown fur with a dark stripe down the middle. The belly and feet have white fur. Its ears are dark brown with white edges. The tail has dark hairs on the top and white ones on the underside. The tail is about as long as the head-body length. This mouse has small back feet. The eyes are large.

BEHAVIORS

The deer mouse may be found statewide in Illinois. It lives in grasslands, prairies, pastures, barren fields and stubble fields. This rodent is an omnivore that eats insects and the seeds of native and farm plants like corn, soybeans and wheat. It constructs a shallow burrow system or may use the burrows of other small mammals. Family groups are often found in burrows. Breeding occurs year round, and young are born throughout the year. Because this mouse has a short life span, a female rarely gives birth to more than two litters. Litter size ranges from one to nine with an average of about five. Young are born helpless but are ready to live on their own in about four weeks.

HABITATS

Aquatic Habitats

none

Woodland Habitats

none

Prairie and Edge Habitats

black soil prairie; dolomite prairie; edge; gravel prairie; hill prairie; sand prairie; shrub prairie

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