

Vagrant shrew (*Sorex vagrans*)



Taxonomy:

Family Soricidae. Also called wandering shrew. Formerly grouped with the closely related montane shrew (*Sorex monticolus*). Four subspecies are recognized including *Sorex vagrans vagrans* from the region.

Description:

Brownish-gray above, slightly paler below. A small pigmented median tine is present on the first incisor.

Total length: (90-115 mm); Tail: (33-48 mm); Hind foot: 12-14 mm; Weight: 4-8 g.



Distribution:

Southern British Columbia south to central California, and from the Pacific coast eastward to western Montana, Idaho, and western Utah. Common in wet areas at lower elevations along the Wasatch Front.

Ecology and diet:

Vagrant shrews are most abundant in moist habitat, such as wet montane forest, wet meadows, marshes, and along stream margins. Their food consists of insects and other invertebrates, and they forage during both night and day. They are sometimes seen during the day, particularly in moist forest and meadows. Vagrant shrews also use echolocation for orientation.

Life History:

Up to three litters of 1 to 9 young may be produced each year during the warmer months. Development is rapid, and young are weaned after 3-4 weeks. Over wintering populations consist of young animals that enter reproductive condition in the spring. Maximum longevity is 16 months.

References: Findley 1999.