



Short-Tailed Weasel (Ermine)

Mustela erminea



The ermine is also known as the short-tailed weasel. Despite its small size, it is a ferocious carnivore. It has two color phases. In the winter months the short-tailed weasel is white so that it can blend into its snowy environment. During the summer the ermine is brown in color. The tip of the ermine's tail is always black. The ermine builds dens under rocks, stumps, and foundations of old buildings. It uses several dens, all of which are in close range of good hunting. The ermine is an excellent hunter of mice. This species is very aggressive, and it has been known to stand up to large species such as bears and bobcats.



SPECIES QUICK FACTS

SIZE

An adult ermine is typically between seven and 10 inches in length.

WEIGHT

Ermines average between two and six ounces in weight.

FOOD HABITS

Ermines are carnivores. They eat foods such as insects, small rodents, and birds. They sometimes even take chipmunks and red squirrels.

HABITAT

Ermines are found in open forests, farmlands, and brushy areas.

GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION

The ermine is found throughout most of the northern regions of the United States northward into Canada.

FUN FACT

Like some other members of the weasel family, the ermine kills its prey with a piercing bite to the back of the neck.