



Weasel

Mustela nivalis

Quick facts

Order Carnivora

Conservation status

GB *Least concern*



England *Least concern*

Scotland *Least concern*

Wales *Least concern*

Global *Least concern*

GB trend *Unknown*

Size Males 19.4 - 21.7 cm;
females 17.3 - 18.3 cm. Tail:
males 4.2 - 5.2 cm; females 3.4
- 4.3 cm

Weight Males 106-131g,
females 55-69g

Life span Less than 2 years



**Mammal
SOCIETY**

The weasel has reddish-brown fur with a cream underside all year round. Unlike the stoat, the line between these colours is undulating, and the tail does not have a black tip. Widespread in Britain, but absent from Ireland and most islands.

Habitat

Urban and gardens, rivers and wetland, coniferous and deciduous woodland, grassland, mixed woodland, arable land.

Behaviour

Uses nests of prey as dens. Often has several dens and resting places throughout territory. Territory size depends on distribution and density of prey; males have larger territories and extend them in Spring to find mates.

Diet & Feeding

Small rodents. Enters tunnels and runways of mice and voles to hunt them. Also takes birds, eggs, young rabbits, particularly when rodents are scarce.

Reproduction

1 - 2 litters of 4 - 6 young per year, depending on field vole abundance. Young are weaned by 4 weeks and family groups split up after 9 - 12 weeks.

Conservation & Threats

No legal protection in UK. Probably most numerous carnivore in the UK. Have been controlled by gamekeepers, but trapping probably has no long term effects. In bad rodent years, mortality is high and few survivors breed. Local populations often experience extinctions. Weasels are good at re-colonising areas when conditions improve.

Range

