

FIRST RECORDS OF THE LEAST WEASEL IN MCLEAN COUNTY

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ABSTRACT.—Four records of the least weasel (*Mustela vison*) are reported from McLean County, Illinois.

The authors have collected three specimens and have found one mummy of the least weasel (*Mustela vison*) near Normal, McLean County. Live-trapping was conducted in a 15 month period and totaled 6,299 trap nights.

On March 28, 1967, a male (testes 8mm. in length) was trapped along a railroad right-of-way two miles north of Normal. The vegetation consisted mainly of bluegrass (*Poa pratensis*) and miscellaneous weeds. The pelage of this specimen was white below a line from the ears to the base of the tail and brown with a few scattered white hairs on the dorsal surface.

The second specimen, a female with six embryos and six corpora lutea, was trapped May 26, 1967 in a grass waterway one-half mile west of the first capture. The pelage was unprime dorsad and showed the typical summer coat, except that on the feet only the digits were white.

Another female was trapped in a waterway on July 17, 1967 two and one-half miles east of the first capture. The uterus was not enlarged and had no placental scars. The entire pelage was dark brown except for a white throat

and chin and a few white hairs in the inguinal region.

The mummified specimen was found September 14, 1967 in the same waterway as the second specimen. It possessed the typical summer pelage.

The first three specimens are preserved as study skins and skulls in the Illinois State University mammal collection (No. 377, 378, 379).

These records provide a midpoint of occurrence for this species between Woodford (Parmalee and Munyer, 1966) and Champaign Counties (Hoffmeister, 1956; Hoffmeister and Mohr, 1957) in central Illinois and indicate that populations are locally extant in this area.

LITERATURE CITED

- HOFFMEISTER, D. F. 1956. Southern limits of the least weasel (*Mustela vison*) in central United States. *Trans. Ill. State Acad. Sci.* 48(2): 195-196.
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