meadow jumping mouse

Zapus hudsonius

Kingdom:	Animalia
Division/Phylum:	Chordata - vertebrates
Class:	Mammalia
Order:	Rodentia
Family:	Zapodidae

Features

The small (three to 3 1/2 inches long) meadow jumping mouse has a brown back. The golden sides have an orange stripe. The belly is white. It has a long (4 1/2 to six inches) tail. The top of the tail is the same color as the back while the bottom of the tail is white. The tail serves as a balance in jumping and any damage to it is extremely detrimental to the welfare of the mouse. Its orange or yellow upper incisors are grooved. The back feet are enlarged for jumping.

Natural History

The meadow jumping mouse lives in moist areas in fields, woods, and along streams, ponds, and marshes. It eats seeds. When this mouse is disturbed, it will move in a series of jumps. It can swim. It hibernates during the winter, usually entering hibernation in late September or October. It emerges again in late April or May. Mating probably occurs twice a year, once in spring and once in fall. Litter size varies between two and nine. Young are helpless at birth but develop rapidly and are able to live on their own after four weeks.

Habitats

wet prairies and fens; natural lakes and prairie marshes; bottomland forests; interior rivers and streams; constructed lakes, ponds, and reservoirs

Iowa Status

common, native

Iowa Range

statewide

Bibliography

Iowa Department of Natural Resources. 2001. *Biodiversity of Iowa: Aquatic Habitats* CD-ROM.