

## Montane Shrew (*Sorex monticolus*)



### **Taxonomy:**

Family Soricidae. Also called dusky shrew. There are 13 subspecies including *Sorex monticolus obscurus* from the region.

### **Description:**

Brown back and an underside washed with silver. Much smaller than *S. palustris*. Distinguished from *S. vagrans* and *S. cinereus* by the relative size and shape of the teeth.

Total Length: 95-116 mm; Tail Length: 40-49 mm; Weight: 4.4-10.2 g.



### **Distribution:**

Distributed from Alaska in the north almost continuously through the Rocky Mountains. It can also be found on mountain tops such as the Blue Mountains in Oregon, the Sierra Nevadas in California and others in Utah, Nevada and New Mexico. Common at higher elevations along the Wasatch Front.

### **Ecology and Diet:**

Montane Shrews are among the most common shrews, and do well in a variety of moist habitats: thick, grassy areas near streams or rivers; meadows; thickets of willow and alder; spruce-fir forests; and alpine tundra. They are dietary generalists, eating insects, earthworms, and other invertebrates. Activity occurs in peak periods: two at night and one in the early morning. They do not hibernate and are active all year long.

### **Life History:**

The breeding season lasts from February to August. Births have been noted as early as March. Females can have two litters a year, usually of 5 or 6 young. Usually females do not breed until after their first winter. Few individuals live through two winters and the normal lifespan is 16-18 months.

**Reference:** George 1999.