

American Mink

Neogale vison

Mammal · Here all year · does not hibernate



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A dark chocolate-brown to near-black semi-aquatic mustelid, slimmer than an otter and much smaller, usually with a small white patch on the chin or throat and a bushy tail. Mink were brought to Britain for fur farming from the 1920s and escaped or were released; they now live along the Nith and its tributaries and around the lochs of the region.

BEHAVIOUR

Mink hunt in water and on land, taking fish, water voles, rabbits, waterfowl and eggs. The damage they do to water voles is specific and severe: a female mink is slim enough to enter a water vole's burrow, so the vole's one defence — retreating underground — fails. Coordinated mink control along river catchments is now the main tool used to give water voles a chance of recovery.

WHEN TO SEE IT

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QUICK FACTS

FAMILY	Mustelids (Mustelidae)
SIZE	Body 30-45 cm plus a 15-25 cm tail
UK STATUS	Invasive non-native; illegal to release, and subject to control

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