

Pygmy Shrew

Sorex minutus

Mammal · Here all year · does not hibernate



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Smaller and paler than the common shrew, with a proportionally longer, thicker, hairier tail — the best way to tell the two apart. An adult weighs around four grams. Pygmy shrews live in rough grassland, moorland, hedge bottoms and woodland across the Dumfries area, often alongside common shrews but generally at lower density, and they range more widely through open ground than their larger relative.

BEHAVIOUR

Even more than the common shrew, the pygmy shrew lives on the edge: it must eat roughly one and a quarter times its own body weight every day, and feeds in short bursts around the clock with rests of barely an hour. It hunts small insects, spiders and woodlice at the surface rather than in tunnels, and rarely takes earthworms. Very few survive more than a single year.

WHEN TO SEE IT

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QUICK FACTS

FAMILY	Shrews (Soricidae)
SIZE	Body 4–6 cm · weighs 2.5–5 g, Britain's smallest mammal
UK STATUS	Protected from certain methods of killing; widespread

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