

**OCCURRENCE OF THE LEAST WEASEL (*MUSTELA NIVALIS*)
IN CUMBERLAND COUNTY, TENNESSEE**

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INTRODUCTION

In Tennessee, the occurrence of the least weasel (*Mustela nivalis*) has been reported only in Sullivan, Washington, and Unicoi Counties (Tuttle, 1968; Nagel, 1972; Smith et al., 1974). These counties are located in the Appalachian Mountains of northeastern Tennessee. The purpose of this paper is to record the existence of *M. nivalis* on the Cumberland Plateau in Cumberland County, Tennessee, approximately 100 miles west of the Appalachians.

EVIDENCE

On November 21, 1986 an adult male least weasel was killed by an automobile on Highway 101 approximately one mile south of Laurel Creek. The specimen was collected by Mr. Winfred Burgess, a taxidermist and the driver of the automobile. The frozen specimen was later examined by the author.

Identification was based on dentition (34 teeth), weight (50 grams), and external measurements (total length = 197 mm; tail length = 32 mm). Independent verification of the identity of this specimen was subsequently made by Dr. Winston Smith, a wildlife professor at Tennessee Technological University.

The skin of this specimen is held in the private collection of Mr. Winfred Burgess. The skull and other bones were damaged beyond repair and were discarded.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank Mr. Winfred Burgess for reporting and allowing me to examine the least weasel reported herein.

Thanks are also extended to Dr. Michael Kennedy of Memphis State University for his review and comments regarding this report, and to Dr. Winston Smith of Tennessee Technological University for his verification of the identity of the specimen.

LITERATURE CITED

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