
RANGE EXTENSION AND NOTES ON THE SHREW
SOREX CINEREUS IN OHIO

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ABSTRACT

In the course of trapping old fields on 3, 4, and 5 December 1962, fifteen *Sorex cinereus* were caught in Butler Township, Mercer County, 1.6 miles north of the town of Coldwater, Ohio. This is an extension 85 miles to the southwest of the range for the species in Ohio. Included are reproductive data, weights, and measurements, as well as a discussion of subspeciation.

The range of *Sorex cinereus* in Ohio was first outlined by Bole and Moulthrop (1942). Their conclusions were based on 181 skins and/or skulls collected from eight different counties. Seven of the counties, Lorain, Cuyahoga, Lake, Ashtabula, Geauga, Portage and Summit are in the extreme northeastern corner of the state while the eighth, Seneca, is northcentral. Hine (1912) had reported specimens of *Sorex cinereus* from Ashtabula and Summit counties as well as from Mahoning County, which is also in the northeastern corner of Ohio. Dexter (1946, 1957) subsequently reported seven additional specimens from Summit County and three from Portage County.

In the course of trapping old fields in western Ohio on December 3, 4, and 5, 1962, Mr. Dale Feist and I caught 15 *Sorex cinereus* in Mercer County. Fourteen of these shrews, seven of each sex, were taken from one field, and an additional male was caught in an adjoining grassy field. The reproductive tracts of all fifteen animals were so small that sex was determined with difficulty; evidently they were not in breeding condition. Both fields are located in Butler Township, Mercer County, 1.6 miles north of the town of Coldwater. This represents a considerable extension of the range for this species in Ohio. The nearest previously recorded specimens (Bole and Moulthrop, 1942) are from Maple Grove in Seneca County, 85 miles northeast of Mercer County. Extensive trapping efforts by the author and others south of Mercer County in western Ohio have failed to produce *Sorex cinereus*. Furthermore, this seems to be the first record of *Sorex cinereus*

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being caught in open fields in Ohio, previously reported captures having been made in woodlands and swamps. Hamilton (1943), Burt (1946) and others have, however, commented on the wide choice of habitat exhibited by this shrew. It is worth noting that within the same seven-acre plot in which 14 of the shrews were caught, four least shrews (*Cryptotis parva*) and six short-tailed shrews (*Blarina brevicauda*) were also trapped.

The taxonomy of *Sorex cinereus* in Ohio is not entirely clear. Bole and Moulthrop (1942) established the subspecies *S. c. ohionensis* for all Ohio masked shrews, and since the Seneca County specimens they observed were somewhat darker than those from the eastern part of Ohio, they established also the subspecies *S. c. lesueurii* for, ". . . a darker, subspecifically distinct, but hitherto unrecognized Indiana stock." If both of these subspecies are valid (?), the 15 animals from Mercer County could represent either a northeastern extension of *S. c. lesueurii* or a southwestern extension of *S. c. ohionensis*. All of our specimens had molted

TABLE 1
Diagnostic measurements and weights of eight male and seven female specimens of S. cinereus captured in Mercer County

Body and Tail (mm)	Tail (mm)	Hind Foot (mm)	Weight (g)
♂ 83.2 (76-88)	33.5 (33-35)	11.1 (11-12)	3.1 (2.7-3.5)
♀ 82.6 (73-89)	31.6 (28-34)	11.1 (11-12)	2.9 (2.5-3.9)

shortly before they were trapped and had dark, almost black, winter coats. However, since the Indiana subspecies has never been reported from Ohio, although Hall and Kelson (1959: 26) indicate its presence in Ohio, I have tentatively identified our specimens as *Sorex cinereus ohionensis*.

The skins and skulls of the animals reported here are deposited in the mammal collection of the University of Cincinnati and have museum numbers 1402 through 1416. Their measurements in millimeters and weights in grams are shown in table 1.

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