

## WOOD MOUSE

*Apodemus sylvaticus*

Many live in the Marinas woodland.



Sometimes called a long-tailed field mouse, the wood mouse is one of our most abundant mammals.

**DESCRIPTION** – Head & body length 9-11cm. Tail length 7-11cm. Weight 15-30g. Its coat is a sandy-brown colour and the underparts are white. Often, they have a yellow streak on the chest between the front legs. The ears and eyes are large the tail is long and lightly haired. They have large hind feet which enables them to leap and bound along at a fast rate. Unlike the house mouse the wood mouse has very little smell.

They are mainly silent but do make frantic, audible squeaks if in distress.

**HABITAT** - Not only living in woods but most other habitats except probably seashore and mountain summits. Often found in garden sheds and roof spaces especially during cold wet winter weather. If out in the open during winter they will sometimes go into a state of torpor – similar to hibernation – to help conserve their energy.

**FOOD** – They eat mainly seeds along with nuts, fungi, fruits, shoots and buds. They also enjoy snails, by nibbling through the shells. Also, insects and their larvae.

**BREEDING** – Season is from early spring to autumn. A female is capable of having 4-6 litters a year, each with 3-8 young. They live in a small network of tunnels which will include the nest chamber. These tunnels may be shared by others during the winter.

**PREDATORS** – Wood mice are heavily predated by Tawny Owls, Stoats, Weasels and Foxes.

**OTHER FACTS** – Wood mice are mostly nocturnal coming out at dusk to forage.

They lead mainly solitary lives.

When frightened, they will often wash and groom themselves, sitting on their haunches licking at their armpits, front legs and belly.

They have an acute sense of smell and rely on this as a means of recognising other mice.

They are exceptional climbers and will often use old bird nests as feeding stations.