

California Wildlife Habitat Relationships System
California Department of Fish and Wildlife
California Interagency Wildlife Task Group

BROAD-FOOTED MOLE

Scapanus latimanus

Family: TALPIDAE
M018

Order: INSECTIVORA

Class: MAMMALIA

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DISTRIBUTION, ABUNDANCE, AND SEASONALITY

The broad-footed mole is common in most of California from the Oregon border to San Pedro Matir, Baja California, Mexico and eastward into western Nevada excluding the hot deserts and portions of the Central Valley (Yates 1999). Optimal habitats are annual and perennial grassland, pasture, montane and valley foothill riparian, and aspen. Also occurs in cropland, orchard-vineyard, wet meadow, and a variety of open forest habitats. Its elevational range extends up to 3000 m (9840 ft) (Yates 1999).

SPECIFIC HABITAT REQUIREMENTS

Feeding: Important foods include earthworms, insects (adults, larvae, and pupae), spiders, centipedes, and some plant food. Occasionally eats small mammals, crustaceans, and seeds. Feeds just below the ground surface by burrowing. Detects some prey by feeling vibrations in the soil. May feed at deeper levels when conditions are dry or cold.

Cover: Largely subterranean, requiring friable soil for burrowing.

Reproduction: Makes a nest of grass and leaves in an additional tunnel, greater than 0.3 m (1 ft) deep.

Water: No data found.

Pattern: Prefers moist, friable soils. Avoids flooded soils. Most common in moist meadows and near streams.

SPECIES LIFE HISTORY

Activity Patterns: Active yearlong, intermittently day and night. Especially active after rain, probably in response to increased activity of prey, and easier digging.

Seasonal Movements/Migration: Moves away from flooded areas. May move into chaparral, or other dry habitats, when conditions are moist.

Home Range: Home range consists of a tunnel system. No data found on home range size for this species. The similar European mole (Lund 1976) had a home range of 0.02 to 0.2 ha (0.05 to 0.5 ac), depending on food availability. The eastern mole had a home range of 0.3 to 1.1 ha (0.75 to 2.75 ac) (Yates and Pedersen 1982). The broad-footed mole may travel at the rate 5.5 m (18 ft) per hr after rains.

Territory: Moles are highly territorial, defending and patrolling the burrow system. This species probably is solitary, except when mating or caring for young.

Reproduction: Breeds from February to May (Jackson 1915). The single yearly litter ranges from 2-5, with an average of 4 young. Lactation lasts from 30-35 days. Young leave the nest in June.

Niche: Predators include owls. This species does not occur with other moles in California. Moles may play an important role in soil development through their burrowing activities.

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Life history accounts for species in the California Wildlife Habitat Relationships (CWHR) System were originally published in: Zeiner, D.C., W.F.Laudenslayer, Jr., K.E. Mayer, and M. White, eds. 1988-1990. *California's Wildlife*. Vol. I-III. California Department of Fish and Game, Sacramento, California. Updates are noted in accounts that have been added or edited since original publication.