



Ask about Ireland



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Irish Stoat



Latin: *Mustela erminea*

Irish: Éasóg

Size: The Irish stoat is about 30cm long.

Months seen: All year

Habitat: The natural habitats for stoats are woodlands and farmland, where they make their homes in burrows or tree hollows.

Food: They hunt mainly by scent and will attack animals that are up to six times larger than themselves. Their diet includes rabbits, hares, pheasants, ducks, hens, and other smaller mammals such as mice. Usually, they hunt by night although they may also be seen during the daytime.



Features: Stoats in Ireland are often mistaken for weasels, but weasels are a different species and are not found here. The stoats found throughout the Irish countryside are smaller and have darker coloured red-brown fur than their relations in England and mainland Europe.

In colder northern climates, the colour of a stoat's coat will change from brown to completely white in wintertime, except for the tip of the tail which stays black. This helps the stoat to remain camouflaged against the snow. This winter white coat is known as ermine.

Stoats are excellent swimmers and climbers, have a keen sense of smell and hearing, but their eyesight is poor in comparison. They produce one litter a year and the young are usually born in March to April.