



# Ask about Ireland



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## Wood Mouse



**Latin:** *Apodemus sylvaticus*

**Irish:** *Luch fhéir*

**Size:** A wood mouse is 8-9cm long from the tip of the nose to the base of the tail, which is about the same length again.

**Months seen:** All year

**Habitat:** Gardens, hedgerows, parks, farmland, bogs, woodland, grassland and sand dunes. It is rarely found in buildings, although it may come into houses in cold winter weather.

**Food:** They eat a varied diet of seeds, grains, berries, acorns, bulbs and mushrooms, as well as larvae, earthworms and other small insects.

**Predators:** Badgers, pine martens, foxes, stoats, cats, owls and other birds of prey.

**Features:** The wood mouse is widespread throughout Ireland. It is recognised by its prominent ears, bulging eyes, and long tail. Its body is a chestnut brown colour, with a small patch of yellow on the front of its neck. Its underside is a creamy colour.

Wood mice are nocturnal animals and spend daytime underground in large burrow systems. Although they do not hibernate, they sometimes enter a period of inactivity during the winter when food is scarce and their body temperature drops to conserve energy.

Breeding usually takes place between April and October, with each litter containing 4-5 babies. They are blind and furless at birth, and rarely survive for more than one year. They are extremely fast breeders, and females can produce up to six litters each year.