

It often appears that they are even more industrious in this regard during the winter than during the summer; as in the former case the wonderful network of passages to be seen in the spring when the snow disappears, gives one some idea how industrious these little mammals must be under the blanketing snows. Here in the dim, ghostly light of their subterranean quarters far beneath the snow, in the wintry stillness, one cannot help but picture them scurrying to and fro, from point to point, feeding a little here and there as fancy dictates, upon the roots and stems of the abounding vegetation. And a warm nest of dead grass blades and fibres somewhere in the maze, in which to curl when the cold is intense, and possibly many in one nest cozy and warm.

Sometimes when the snow is not deep their tunnels reach the surface and here in a brief scamper across the snow, they make their way to another tunnel and disappear. These passages over the snow are never of great length, as a rule not exceeding two or three feet, and wisely so, no doubt, for they instinctively feel that a "bolt from the blue" might suddenly end their worthless careers.

Along the banks of ditches and creeks facing the south especially, where the grass is rank, they often have beautiful little tunnels constructed through the growth, leading to a pocket in the bank, completely arched over by vegetation, where they sit and feed. By lifting up the thick growth in these places, one often sees these small temporary dwellings where the mice feed and play. Often a thin deposit of excrement completely covers the floor of these miniature caverns, indicating a prolonged use by the mice for purposes of feeding and retirement.

During the summer they are not so much in evidence, due partly to a more even diffusion of individuals over fields and meadows and also to the fact that the constantly growing vegetation for a certain period, erases the more prominent runways, as seen in winter and spring, but even so their presence may be detected if sharply looked for.

A favorite place at all times is the old fence lines or bottoms, stone piles, decaying rail heaps in dense grass and all similar places. Here they build their nests and rear their young during the warmer months. Oftentimes the nest is cunningly constructed in a hollow cup in the ground or the base of a sheaf in a stook left in place for some time. The nest itself is of neat design and is completely arched over similar to an Ovenbird's nest, but constructed of lighter materials, mostly fine grass blades and plant fibres, with a small almost imperceptible opening on one side, leading to the warm, soft, spherical, interior. The outside dimensions vary, but would probably average about six inches, the interior about three inches in diameter.

The vole has many natural enemies and well it is that Nature has provided for a proper balance in this matter. Among these