

Except for one extra limit record by Miller<sup>3</sup> for North Bay, the species has only been found in Canada broadly coincident with the prairie conditions of the western provinces of Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta; in the south-western portion of the former and north to 55° in the two latter. In the United States its range is south to Kansas. While it is generally recognized as a prairie dweller, the poplar forests skirting the prairies harbor great numbers, as do also to some extent the darker coniferous areas. Probably the latter fact is not generally accepted. I have personally, however, frequently collected the species about the city of Edmonton. The immediate region comprises conditions peculiar to the north-west, such as the occasional grass or prairie lands, the poplar woods of the upper country, and the deep river basins and ravines which are comparatively heavily timbered. Over all such areas around Edmonton the long-tail ranges indifferently.

In summer the species over the upper parts is pale yellowish-brown, the under parts rich ochraceous or buff yellow. The winter fur is pure white. The tail is one-third the length of the animal and the black tip one-quarter of the length of the whole tail.

Measurements as given by Seton<sup>4</sup>: Length about 18 inches (457 mm.); tail 6 inches (152 mm.); hind foot 2 inches (51 mm.) Female about one-seventh smaller.

With the short-tailed species, *M. cicognanii*, the Edmonton region is favorably endowed. In winter their delicate paired tracks may be seen nearly everywhere. *M. longicauda* occurs in a ratio of about one to ten of *M. cicognanii*. Under the discussion of the latter I have placed my estimate on the general and specific numbers of all the weasels found around Edmonton.

Along the Saskatchewan river numerous deep wooded ravines open out upon the valley. Within these, probably induced by a greater abundance of game in winter, a goodly number of weasels, or ermine as they are called, make their daily rounds. The spaces under the spruces and the open runs of the little frozen streams are usually at very frequent intervals indented with the innocent-looking trails. Hither and thither they lead, under wind-falls and logs, through tangled growths, into crevices or other surface openings, etc. A blood-flecked hollow reveals the tragic end of a little deer-mouse; probably at a grassy margin a meadow vole. In a sheltered hollow a huddled hare has provided a sumptuous feast for days. And so all through the bitter weeks until nature fans the land with vernal

breezes, the great white page is written again and again with signs of frolic or grim tragedy that spells life or death.

Bordering the White-mud river which flows into the Saskatchewan about two miles south-west of Edmonton I found the favorite hunting grounds of *longicauda* in the meadow-like areas on both sides. On these miniature alluvial plains in the concavity of the bends now grown to grass and scattered poplars, the weasels bounteously fared on the numberless population of shrew, mice and rabbits. Such places always suggest good weasel grounds.

NEW YORK WEASEL, *Mustela noveboracensis* (Emmonds).

In comparison with other weasels this species has a relatively restricted range within which also occurs *Mustela cicognanii*. In some sections it yields in numbers to the latter, but in other areas entirely replaces it.

The range of this species is approximately within the area bordered by an imaginary line drawn from the southern New England States, south to the Carolinas, west to the Mississippi, north to Georgian Bay, and east to Montreal. Within such area it is confined to the Canadian, Transition and Upper Austral zones.

The summer color of *M. noveboracensis* is dark brown above and white below, sometimes tinged with sulphur-yellow. In Ontario the winter coat is pure white, excepting sometimes a slight xanthic tinge on the belly, buttocks and tail. The latter is one-third of its total length and the terminal half is black (at all seasons). By this character it may readily be distinguished from *M. longicauda*, but as the range of the two species do not coincide, it will not be needed as a field mark.

The following measurements of this species are given by Rhoads<sup>5</sup>: Total length, male 405 mm. (16 ins.), female, 325 (12¾ ins.); tail vertebrae, male, 140 (5½ ins.), female, 108 (4½ ins.); hind foot, male, 47 (1¾ ins.), female, 34 (1¼ ins.)

In the counties of Wellington and Waterloo, of the province of Ontario, I have found this species to be much less common than *M. cicognanii*. Brooks as recorded by Miller<sup>6</sup> saw weasels at Milton much larger than the latter. The species, I think, would scarcely be other than *M. noveboracensis*. Mr. W. E. Saunders, of London, Ont., has informed me that the New York Weasel is the form occurring there, and that it is common throughout the western part of the Ontario peninsula.

By a peculiar coincidence the first weasel I ever trapped in Ontario was this species. This was near

<sup>3</sup>Miller, Jr., G. S., Mammals of Ontario, Vol. 28, No. 1, 1896.

<sup>4</sup>Seton, E. T., Life Hist., N. Animals, Vol. II, p. 865, 1909.

<sup>5</sup>Rhoads, S. N., Mammals of Penn. and N. Jersey, p. 172, 1903.

<sup>6</sup>Miller, Jr., G. S., Mammals of Ontario, Vol. 28, No. 1, p. 44, 1896.