

Bulletin No. 4
July 23, 1922.

By: Walter Fry, In Charge
Nature Guide Service,
Sequoia National Park.

Stencil No. 35

SEQUOIA NATURE GUIDE SERVICE

KING RODENT DESTROYER IN SEQUOIA

Visitors to Giant Forest, Sequoia National Park, will often see a little animal not much larger than a big mouse, (upper body drab brown in color, tail with black tip, under lip, under parts and feet white), darting from sight under logs and rocks with a nervous but lithesome flight. This little animal is the Sierra Least Weasel, which inhabits the High Sierras above the elevation of 6,000 feet and is the ~~smallest~~ of the weasel family in this region.

It is difficult to imagine the capacity for destruction shown by this small animal; while its marked intelligence crowns the diminutive weasel as the King of all Rodent Killers in the Sierras.

As an illustration of the destructive nature of this little animal the following may be cited: A female weasel built her nest and reared six of her young in a building at Giant Forest during the summer season of 1919. This parent weasel, after the birth of her young, remained at the premises for a period of thirty-seven days; during which time, from actual count, the following numbers of rodent species fell victim to her prey: Mice 78; gophers 27; moles 2; chipmunks 34; wood rats 3; ground squirrels 4; This is a total of 148 rodents for the period of thirty-seven days. This record shows also, that rodents form their principal or almost their entire diet, as not a bird was captured during the period.

These weasels do not eat any of the flesh of their victims. They merely make an incision in the carcass with their needle-sharp teeth. The blood flows out freely and the weasels drink it.

Young weasels are born during the months of May and June and from three to six are usually produced at one litter. The young, when first born, with respect to marking and coloring, are similar to that of the adults.

So watch for the little vampire with the white stockings on his feet for his grace and poise in movement is bound to attract and interest you.