

## Weasel



Short-tailed Weasel  
Courtesy of the Taylor County Historical Society



### Short-tailed Weasel in Summer Under Butternut Tree in Kuse Nature Preserve

The weasel is a slim and swiftly moving animal. It is not as common in children's literature as some other animals but much can be learned about its place in nature.

#### Science

- Plot the life cycle of weasels on a time line.
- Talk about related animals such as the marten, badger, skunk and otter. Discuss likenesses and differences.

- How does a keen sense of smell help a weasel find prey?
- Examine photographs of the animal, view videos or read about its movements.
- Try to dramatize some of the movements of a weasel.
- Think about how a small, slender body would help a predator that was pursuing prey that was heading into a hole or passageway.
- Discuss why a weasel may want to remain hidden from humans. People trap it for its ermine and kill it when it takes poultry away from farms.
- Examine pictures of the tracks of weasels. What do the tracks tell about where it lives and travels?
- View the brief video of a weasel on this web site. Raise questions about weasels before and after watching the video.

### **Art**

- Use drawings or photos to record what you learn or observe about weasels. Do your diagrams show the number of legs, the number of toes, the long skinny body, the summer or winter colors? Remember you do not need to be an “artist” to record useful information about the animal you observe.
- Look at pictures of ceremonial robes or crowns worn in the past by kings and queens. The white fur with black tips on many of these was Ermine, another name for weasel. Think about how many animals would need to be trapped to make the trim down the front of a robe.
- Color some of the weasel puppets brown and leave others white. Let them talk about how their fur changes in color during the seasons and tell why that is helpful for the animal.

### **Language and Literature**

- Use pictures to learn related vocabulary words. (Ermine, fur bearing family, carnivorous, long-tailed weasel, short-tailed weasel)
- Let the puppet talk about what it may mean to “weasel out of something.”