

Harvest mouse

Regno: fauna

Mammals

 [topolinoris.jpg](#) [1]

Harvest mouse - *Micromys minutus*

The smallest European mouse, the Harvest Mouse can be recognised by its tiny ears and brownish-orange coat. Its tail is thin and partly prehensile.

It is not easy to see because of its very elusive habits, it is easier to spot by its characteristic nest, shaped like a ball, made of plaited plant material and suspended 40-50 cm above the ground.

It mainly frequents areas where the grass grows high, like the margins of roads, marshes, river banks and shrub-land. It can also be found in cereal fields and at the edges of cane beds.

The Harvest Mouse is a nimble climber: it uses its feet to climb and its tail more as a safety-hold than as an active support. Although it is prevalently nocturnal, the Harvest Mouse is more diurnal than most other mice, especially in winter.

In summer, it spends most of its time among the vegetation looking for seeds, whilst in winter it frequents the open surface or subsurface of the ground. The young, 4-6, are reared inside the typical nests.

Very widespread over all Europe except for Scandinavia and most of the Mediterranean area. In Italy it is widespread in the Po Valley, whilst the Fucecchio Marshes can be considered one of the most southern limits of its distribution.

Protected species under the Regional Law of Tuscany no. 56/2000.

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Links:

[1] <http://zoneumidetoscane.it/sites/default/files/topolinoris.jpg>