

Voles and Moles

Voles and moles are common residents at CNC. Despite similar names, these small and secretive animals are part of two different groups of mammals.

Voles are related to rodents and are often mistaken for mice. Unlike mice, voles have a blunt face, short tails and small ears that blend into its lush fur. Both the woodland and meadow vole can be found at the nature center but are often too quick to get a good look at to tell the difference. Just like their namesakes, each species has its own habitat preference. Meadow voles feed primarily on the shoots, seeds and roots of grasses and sedges while woodland voles feed on the seeds, bark and roots of trees and shrubs.



Moles are not rodents and are part of their own group of subterranean mammals. Equipped with large claws and paddle-like forefeet, these animals are designed to dig.

With very limited eyesight, moles rely on their keen sense of smell and touch to find their way.

Tunnels

Sometimes the only sign that a mole or vole is around is by the tunnels they leave behind. Voles dig under the snow to create a series of protected passageways. After the snow melts, voles use plant stems and leaves as protection. Voles will also use the premade tunnels of moles.



In the winter, eastern moles dig deeper tunnels. When the ground starts to thaw, these moles will move to the surface where their tunnel ridges can be seen. Under good conditions a mole can tunnel 15 ft./hour!

Stop by the Visitor Center Office for program information.