

Weasels are the most common and the least known of the world's carnivores. In predatory power, they rival any of the big cats; indeed, gram for gram they are much stronger than any lion. Few other animals have the willowy grace, predatory efficiency, astonishing boldness, and electric energy of these feisty little critters. They are, however, small and hard to see in the wild, and they can live in secret alongside people who never guess that they are nearby.

In their own environments, the weasels (*Mustela nivalis*, *M. erminea* and *M. frenata*) are small but important members of local communities of native predators. They balance a fine line between the hunters and the hunted; they can follow rodents under snow and into their last refuges, but they also easily fall prey to foxes and raptors. In New Zealand, they are a tragic example of human mismanagement of nature, with consequences disastrous both for the weasels and for the native fauna.

This beautifully illustrated book tells the stories of these fascinating and infuriating animals in both words and captivating artwork, using a carefully crafted mixture of clear descriptions, hard analysis, and affectionate anecdote. This is a book to treasure, in the best traditions of natural history literature.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Carolyn King is a Senior Lecturer at the Department of Biological Sciences, University of Waikato, Hamilton, New Zealand.

Roger Powell is a Professor in the Department of Zoology, North Carolina State University, Raleigh, North Carolina.

Consie Powell is a freelance artist and writer specializing in natural science illustration and natural history books for children.

Cover photograph of Longtailed Weasel by Jeff Hogan.

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"This goes far beyond what one expects in a "natural history" book. The authors bring together a wide range of information into a synthesis on the natural history of weasels and stoats, including ecology, behavior, morphology, physiology, and evolution. For example, the chapters on size and populations include discussions of various theoretical models for the evolution of weasels and stoats, then present an argument based on empirical data. The authors also go out of their way to look at different hypotheses and conclusions. The text is easy to read and explanations are clear, with sufficient "meat" to satisfy scientists' needs."

— **Gerald Svendsen**

Department of Biological Sciences,
Ohio University

"*The Natural History of Weasels and Stoats* is a significant contribution to wildlife biology and ecology, and there is no other book on mustelids of comparable scope. It builds upon the first edition by broadening its range to include many significant recent studies, particularly of North American interest. I found reading the book a real pleasure, as it is very well written and organized."

— **Elaine Murphy**

New Zealand Department of Conservation

"I read the first edition and was positive about it. I think the revised edition is better in two rather different ways. First, ecological thinking has advanced quite considerably since the publication of the first edition, and so the book is brought up to date. Second, the addition of Roger Powell as an author somewhat changes the approach. He is very knowledgeable, theoretically strong, and meticulous on detail. Carolyn King is also a thorough and thoughtful researcher, and the two of them together are really an excellent team."

— **David W. Macdonald**

Wildlife Conservation Research Unit,
University of Oxford



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King and Powell



The Natural History of Weasels and Stoats
Second Edition

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The Natural History of Weasels and Stoats

Ecology, Behavior and Management

Second Edition



Carolyn M. King and Roger A. Powell

With illustrations by Consie Powell