

The finding of *Crocidura suaveolens* in Saint Petersburg

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ABSTRACT. Lesser white-toothed shrews were trapped in Saint Petersburg in 2000–2009. It is the most northern finding for this species.

KEY WORDS: *Crocidura suaveolens*, northern population.

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Находка of *Crocidura suaveolens* в Санкт-Петербурге

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РЕЗЮМЕ. В период с 2000 по 2009 г. на территории Санкт-Петербурга были пойманы несколько экземпляров малых белозубок. Это самая северная находка для вида.

КЛЮЧЕВЫЕ СЛОВА: *Crocidura suaveolens*, северная популяция.

Most species of *Crocidura* Wagler, 1832 can be found in southern areas of the northern hemisphere in Europe and Siberia (Sokolov, 1973). As reported by Pavlinov *et al.* (2002), five species of the genus *Crocidura* live in the Russian federation. Such species as *C. gueldenstaedti* Pallas, 1811, *C. lasiura* Dobson, 1890, *C. leucodon* Hermann, 1780, and *C. sibirica* Dukelsky, 1930 can be found in the southern part of Russia only. As pointed out by Gureev (1979), *C. suaveolens* was not observed north of Moscow Province while the southern limit of its distribution range belongs to Kazakhstan and Altai. However, recently lesser white-toothed shrews were reported at higher latitudes such as Moscow (Karaseva *et al.*, 1999) and the region of Ural (Bolshakov *et al.*, 2005).

C. suaveolens as a species is not listed in the book “Mammals of Leningrad province” (Novikov *et al.*, 1970). On the contrary, there are historical evidences that, a century ago, lesser white-toothed shrews lived in Karelia and Estonia (Siivonen, 1979). One animal (male) of this species was trapped in 1986 in Gatchina District (Leningrad Region) near a cattle-breeding farm (Svimonishvili, 1992). Respectively, some exemplars of *C. suaveolens* have been reported from buildings located in the region of Ural (Chernousova & Tolkachev, 2006). The findings mentioned above clearly speak in favor of

the synanthropic status of that species (Gureev, 1979; Pavlinov *et al.*, 2002).

Continuous observations of lesser white-toothed shrews in the harbor area of St. Petersburg during nine years (2000–2009) came as a surprise. Small mammals belonging to 7 species (246 specimens in total) (Tab. 1) were trapped in different places during 1670 trapping events. Two female were trapped in September 2002 and a male and a female in January 2007.

Lesser white-toothed shrews were trapped only in a building belonging to a former warehouse (Tab. 1) and were not observed at all outside of that building. In other northern areas these mammals were seen in gardens and forest-parks (Karaseva *et al.*, 1999; Chernousova & Tolkachev, 2006). We believe that *C. suaveolens* can not survive outside of buildings in our region. We can conclude that *Crocidura* spp. can not tolerate low temperatures, contrary to *Sorex* spp. Therefore, lesser white-toothed shrews can not be expected to be found outside of houses and commercial buildings at the latitude of St. Petersburg. On the other hand, *Crocidura* spp. show a well-developed ecological adaptability. Thus, *C. suaveolens* can eat grain food, which is not the case with *Sorex* spp. It is highly probable that St. Petersburg is constitutes the most northern region where *C. suaveolens* presently live.

Table 1. Number of mammals in captured different habitats on the territory of the St. Petersburg harbor.

Habitat	<i>Sorex araneus</i>	<i>Crocidura suaveolens</i>	<i>Mus musculus</i>	<i>Rattus norvegicus</i>	<i>Microtus arvalis</i>	<i>Apodemus agrarius</i>	<i>Rattus rattus</i>
former warehouse	1	4	74	110			1
open habitats				46	3	7	

What was the path that white-toothed shrews took to St. Petersburg? *C. suaveolens* may have arrived in St. Petersburg with food commercially transported from the southern regions. Presence of lesser white-toothed shrews in the former warehouse makes a good evidence of that. The consistency of findings of *C. suaveolens* during recent years speaks in favor of the stability of its population.

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