Etruscan Shrew Fact Sheet

**Common Name:** Etruscan Shrew / Etruscan Pygmy Shrew / White-Toothed Pygmy Shrew

**Scientific Name:** Suncus etruscus

**Wild Status:** Least Concern

**Habitat:** Warm and damp areas, grasslands and forests

**Country:** Malaysia, Maltese Islands, Across Europe and North Africa

**Shelter:** Shrubs, rocks/stone walls, and human-cultivated areas

**Life Span:** 2 years

**Size:** 1.2 - 2 inches without tail, tail adds another 1 - 1.3 inches. Usually weighs less than 2 grams.

**Details:**

The Etruscan Shrew is a species of shrew, small mole-like animals, and holds the record for being the smallest mammal in the world by mass. They usually are only a couple inches long, and weigh less than 2 grams. While not completely nocturnal, the Etruscan Shrew is active during the night and usually stay near their nest during the day. Their diet is primarily made up of invertebrates like earthworms and insects, although they can sometimes hunt bigger prey like small lizards and rodents. When hunting, the Etruscan Shrew relies on its sense of touch much more than its vision to take out its prey. Birds of prey make up the majority of predators of the Etruscan Shrew, especially owls that are active during the night as well and can easily scoop up the small shrews when out in the open.
Cool Facts:

- They have a very high metabolism, eating up to 2 times their body weight per day.
- The Etruscan Shrew has a very fast heart rate, of up to 1511 beats per minute. That means their heart beats roughly 25 times each second!
- When there is a food shortage or cold season, the Etruscan Shrew can lower their body temperature and enter a state of temporary hibernation.
- The Etruscan Shrew is born naked and blind, and their eyes will usually open after 14 to 16 days.
- While the Etruscan Shrew is overall a least concern species, in certain locations they can be rare to find or even endangered.

Taxonomic Breakdown:

- **Kingdom:** Animalia
- **Phylum:** Chordata
- **Class:** Mammalia
- **Order:** Eulipotyphia
- **Family:** Soricidae
- **Genus:** Suncus
- **Species:** S. etruscus

Conservation & Helping:

Currently the Etruscan Shrew is of least concern on the endangered species list. However, the biggest threats to the species are from human activity, mainly destruction of their nests and habitat from farming.

Download all our fact sheets, take our quizzes, and more, all in the Critter Squad Kids’ Zone!

https://www.crittersquad.com/kids-zone/