



*A mother shrew "caravanning" with her young. Each young bites on to the body of the one in front of it.*

**S**HREWS are insectivorous. Insectivores are the most primitive group of placentals and their ancestors probably gave rise to all other mammalian groups. The Free State Dwarf Shrew, *Suncus orangiae*, is commonly found living in a round grass nest, approximately 10 cm in diameter, which they construct in disused termite mounds.

- The smallest mammal in the world is the pygmy shrew with a body length of only 38 mm and a mass of as little as 2,1g.
- Shrews, depending on the species can be arboreal, terrestrial, aquatic or fossorial.
- Shrews are notoriously aggressive animals and voracious feeders eating more than three times their body mass of food per day.
- Some American shrews have a poisonous bite, secreting a venom similar to that of cobras.
- In proportion to its size the hero shrew has the strongest backbone of all mammals and can support a mass of 73 kg.
- Shrews mature quickly and can, depending on the species, produce litters of up to ten when only 50 days old.



*A twice life-sized photo of a Free State shrew eating a small grasshopper.*

## Veselglasreplika

*Goeie vordering word gemaak met die voltooiing van die veselglasreplikas van diere waarvan daar gedurende 1973 te Skukuza gipsafdrukke gemaak is. Benewens die kop van Hapoor (bladsy 2) is die veselglaswerk aan die yslike krokodil en agtmaande-oue seekoeikalfie (onder) reeds deur Sep Roos en Sandra Bishop voltooi.*

**Skriftelike aansoeke om eksemplare van hierdie ses-maandelikse nuusbrief moet gerig word aan die Direkteur, Nasionale Museum, Posbus 266, Bloemfontein. Enige inligting sowel as foto's waarop geen kopiereg voorbehou is nie, kan oorgeneem word met erkenning van die bron.**

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