

**Latin name : *Talpa europaea***

**Size : 11 to 16 cm**

**Lifespan : rarely more than 3 years, up to 6 years**

# Mole

Moles are mammals that feed mainly on earthworms. They dig tunnels in the earth at speeds of up to 5 m per hour. Their eyes are no good, so they use their noses to track down their prey. They can smell in stereo, meaning that each nostril can smell independently, enabling them to determine the direction in which their prey is moving.



The tunnels are dug between 10 and 30 cm below the surface, but when it is dry they can go down to a metre. Its body is covered with fur that does not point in any particular direction, enabling it to move forwards or backwards with equal ease. Its tunnels are also used by voles and mice, for example. Living underground in their tunnels, moles evolve in an environment with a low oxygen content and also breathe the air they expel, which is low in oxygen and high in carbon dioxide. They have adapted to these unfavourable conditions, with red blood cells that have a particular type of haemoglobin, capable of transporting much greater quantities of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) than most animals, and therefore of not poisoning themselves.