

found at any great distance from inhabited places. They copulate in spring, when the males will fiercely contend on the roofs and sheds for the female. They then leave her, and go into the fields or woods for the summer, but she remains in her dwelling, and does not take her young ones out till towards the end of the summer; she produces from three to five, does not suckle them long, but soon accustoms them to suck blood, and the eggs of birds.

In towns they chiefly subsist on prey, and in the fields or woods on what the chace affords them; when in the latter they fix their residence in the burrows of rabbits, clefts of rocks, or trunks of hollow trees, from whence they issue at night in quest of the nests of partridges, larks, and quails; they climb trees to get at those of other birds; are constantly on the watch for rats, field-mice, and moles, and are at continual war with the rabbit, who cannot escape, as they enter their burrows with ease. A single family of polecats is sufficient to destroy a whole warren; and indeed this would be a simple method of diminishing their number where they are found too numerous.

The polecat is rather less than the marten; it has a shorter tail, a sharper snout, and its
hair