

Western Harvest Mouse

Reithrodontomys megalotis

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Date: October 23, 2007

Conservation Status

Included in Section 7 Notice: No

Designated as Identified Wildlife: No

Federally Designated (COSEWIC): **Yes (Special Concern)**

Species identified in Kamloops, Lillooet or Merritt SFMP: **Yes (Merritt)**

Description

- A slim, nocturnal long-tailed mouse (Length: 133mm (including tail); Tail length 68mm) that is sometimes mistaken for the introduced house mouse (the Western Harvest Mouse is more buffy with a furry tail).
- Back is grey brown containing a dark central stripe from the forehead to the tail.
- The cheeks and sides are buffy brown; the feet and underparts are greyish white and the tail is bicoloured.



Photo: Bob Gress



Photo: Barbra L. Clauson

Forest Districts

Okanagan Shuswap

BEC Zones

- BG
- IDF
- PP

Elevation

300-780m with most occurrences below 600m.

Important Habitat Features

- Rangeland, old fields, grassy edge habitats, and especially dry gulleys with abundant and dense shrub cover that border grasslands.
- Prefers a high grass cover and a shrub understorey in these habitats. Typical shrub species include: wild rose (*Rosa spp.*), mock orange (*Philadelphica lewisii*), Saskatoon berry (*Amelanchier alnifolia*), chokecherry (*Prunus virginiana*), squaw currant (*Ribes cereum*), Douglas maple Trends (*Acer glabrum*), snowberry (*Symphoricarpus albus*), and black hawthorn (*Crataegus douglasii*).
- Most often occurs in the very dry hot subzone of the Bunchgrass biogeoclimatic zone (BGxh).

Additional Information

The range of this species extends throughout most of the Okanagan Valley as far north as Vernon, and throughout the Similkameen Valley north to Keremeos. However, it is absent from adjacent arid valleys, such as the Thompson River and Kettle River valleys.

Management Recommendations

Consult with a Registered Professional Biologist prior to implementing the following management recommendations because certain situations may require custom solutions based on specific site characteristics.

- Budget permitting, develop a habitat model to help identify high value habitat found within your areas of interest. The complexity of the model, and therefore its accuracy, will be dependent on budgetary constraints.
- Identify locations where this species is known to occur: if available, obtain occurrence data from the Conservation Data Centre (<http://srmwww.gov.bc.ca/cdc/>) and if necessary conduct surveys to confirm presence or absence of this species.

In areas where this species is identified:

- Where possible, avoid road construction through rangeland, old fields, grassy edge habitats, and especially dry gulleys with abundant and dense shrub cover that border grasslands.
- Retain undisturbed edge habitats with high grass and dense shrub cover.
- Do not use pesticides.
- Do not conduct prescribed burning.

References

BC Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks. 1999. *Reithrodontomys megalotis* in Rare Amphibians, Reptiles, and Mammals of British Columbia.

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Cannings, S.G., L.R. Ramsay, D.F. Fraser, and M.A. Fraker. 1999. Rare amphibians, reptiles, and mammals of British Columbia. Wildl. Branch and Resource Inventory Branch, B.C. Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks, Victoria, BC. 198pp.

Nagorsen, D.W. 1995. Status of the Western Harvest Mouse in British Columbia. Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks Wildlife Branch. 25pp