

Kangaroo Rats (*Dipodomys* sp.)

Status - Federal: Endangered; California: Endangered



Giant



Tipton



Stephens



Fresno

Kangaroo rats owe their name to their large hind legs, which they use for jumping as they move from place to place. These nocturnal rodents inhabit open, sparsely vegetated areas, digging their burrows in soft soils.

Kangaroo Rats: Biology and Distribution



Giant



Tipton



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Fresno

Distribution

Kangaroo rats can be found primarily in sparsely vegetated areas where fine soils are the predominant substrate. The giant kangaroo rat is known to occur in Merced, Fresno, San Benito, Kings, Kern, San Luis Obispo, and Santa Barbara counties.

Tipton kangaroo rats prefer habitats such as alkali marshes and plains; with scattered woody shrubs. They can be found in parts of Kings, Tulare and Kern counties.

Stephen's kangaroo rats prefer coastal sage scrub and open grasslands. Currently occupied habitat can be found in parts of western Riverside and in northern San Diego counties.

Fresno kangaroo rats have been described as occupying alkali marsh habitats. Currently occupied habitats are found in southwestern Madera, central Fresno, and northern Kings counties.

Reproduction

Kangaroo rats have a breeding season extending from January through May, reaching its peak in early spring. Mating takes place outside the burrow. Kangaroo rats produce litters of 2-6 offspring. Young are born and reared inside the burrows.

Food and Water

Kangaroo rats are primarily granivorous. They store seeds in small caches in the vicinity of their burrows. They also eat the seeds of annuals and grasses in season. Seeds and sometimes leaves of Peppergrass and Filaree are primary foods, along with Saltbush and Cudweed.

Kangaroo rats do not require freestanding water. Their kidneys are very efficient at deriving metabolic water from their food.



California Department of Pesticide Regulation
Endangered Species Program
www.cdpr.ca.gov/docs/endspec/index.htm

