

# Salt Marsh Harvest Mouse (*Reithrodontomys raviventris*)

Status -- Federal: Endangered ; California: Endangered

Photo: B. "Moose" Peterson/WRP



The Salt Marsh Harvest mouse is a small, primarily nocturnal rodent found in coastal salt marshes of San Francisco Bay and its tributaries.

Its body length ranges from 2.75 to 3.0 inches (69 - 75 mm) . The tail can be bicolored and equally long or longer than the body.

Body weight ranges from 0.3 to 0.5 ounces (9 - 14 g.)

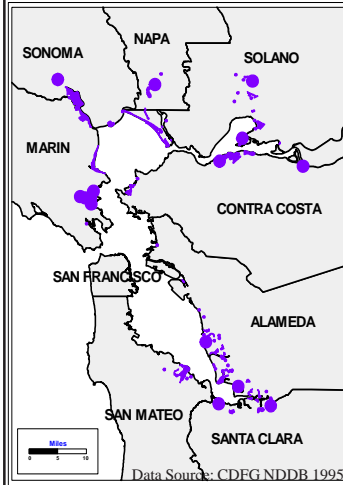
Salt Marsh Harvest mice have a dark brown coat on the back, the belly and sides are pinkish-cinnamon to tawny.

This rodent prefers tidal and diked coastal salt marshes characterized by dense stands of pickleweed (*Salicornia sp.*). Grasslands adjacent to pickleweed marsh are also used, but only when new grass growth affords suitable cover. Some daily movement of individuals from pickleweed marsh to higher grassland occurs in spring and summer, or otherwise as plant cover affords escape from predators.



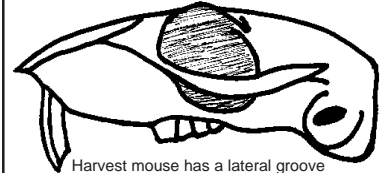
Photo: Tupper Ansel Blake

## Salt Marsh Harvest Mouse

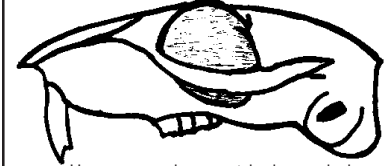


### Skull Comparisons:

Harvest mouse vs. House mouse



Harvest mouse has a lateral groove on the upper incisor



House mouse has a notched upper incisor

### Behavior

Salt Marsh Harvest mice are primarily nocturnal, however, some crepuscular activity has also been observed under laboratory conditions. They are active all year round. Harvest mice are good swimmers and climbers. They do not use burrows, they build a grass nest or use abandoned birds' nests.

### Distribution

There are two known subspecies divided in two ranges: Northern, found in Marin, Sonoma, Napa, Solano and northern Contra Costa counties; Southern, found in San Mateo, Alameda and Santa Clara counties. Some isolated populations occur in Marin and Contra Costa.

### Reproduction

Breeding takes place from spring to fall. They produce one to two litters per year. The average litter size is 3-4 young. There is no information available for weaning or age of sexual maturity.

### Food and Water

Harvest mice presumably feed on seeds, grasses and forbs available in their habitat. In winter, fresh green grasses are preferred. The rest of the year, they feed on pickleweed and salt grass. They require free water, but they are known to consume brackish or sea water.



California Department of Pesticide Regulation  
Endangered Species Program  
[www.cdpr.ca.gov/docs/endspec/index.htm](http://www.cdpr.ca.gov/docs/endspec/index.htm)

