

## Northern grasshopper mouse (*Onychomys leucogaster*)



### **Taxonomy:**

Family Cricetidae. Eleven subspecies are recognized, including *Onychomys leucogaster brevicaudus*, the regional subspecies.

### **Description:**

Robust body, grayish-brown above and white below. The tail is thick with a blunt tip, and is less than one-half the head-body length.

Total length: 119-190mm; Tail: 29-62; Hind foot: 17-25mm; Ear: 12-17mm; Weight: 25-38 g.



### **Distribution:**

Distributed from Saskatchewan, Alberta, and Manitoba, south throughout the intermountain western US into northern Mexico. Found mainly in desert shrub habitat at low elevations along the Wasatch Front.

### **Ecology and diet:**

Unlike other regional rodents, northern grasshopper mice are primarily insectivorous and carnivorous, eating grasshoppers, beetles, mice, and small vertebrates, but also consuming seeds. They live in semi-arid and arid habitats and are active throughout the year. They utilize underground burrows as nest and

places to cache food. Grasshopper mice have large ranges and aggressively defend their territories from intruders. They engage in complex courtship rituals and communicate with a variety of vocalizations.

### **Life History:**

Reproduction begins in March or April. Females have 3-6 litters of 3-4 offspring annually. Gestation is about 27 days. Young are sexually mature between 6-12 months old. Maximum lifespan is 3-4 years.

**References:** Macarty 1978; Riddle 1999;