

Deer mouse (*Peromyscus maniculatus*)



Taxonomy:

Family Cricetidae. Also called wood mouse. More than 60 subspecies are recognized, including *Peromyscus maniculatus rufinus* which occurs in the Wasatch region.

Description:

Distinguished from other species of *Peromyscus* by the combination of relatively short ears, and strongly bicolored tail, which is shorter than the head and body and lacks a terminal tuft of hair.

Total length: 148-180 mm; Tail: 56-82 mm; Hind foot: 19-22 mm; Ear: 16-20 mm; Weight: 20-30 g.



Distribution:

Occurs throughout the southern half of Canada and most of the contiguous US except for the parts of the southeast, south into central México including the Baja peninsula. A common species throughout Utah.

Ecology and diet:

The deer mouse is the most widespread and locally abundant mammal in western North America, occurring in virtually all habitats from arid deserts to alpine tundra. Deer mice are active year-round and are nocturnal, although they are occasionally seen near dusk. Their diet consists mainly of seeds and wild fruits, but they feed opportunistically on a wide assortment of plant and animal matter.

Life History:

After gestation of 21-27 days, females give birth to 1-8 young. They may have up to 4 litters per year between late winter and fall, and the breeding season may be prolonged when winters are mild. Young animals may mature as early as 5 weeks of age. Adults generally do not live longer than 1 year.

References: Handley 1999.