

THREATENED SPECIES OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY



SHARK BAY MOUSE ALICE SPRINGS MOUSE *Pseudomys fieldi*

Conservation status

Australia: Vulnerable.

Northern Territory: Extinct.

Description

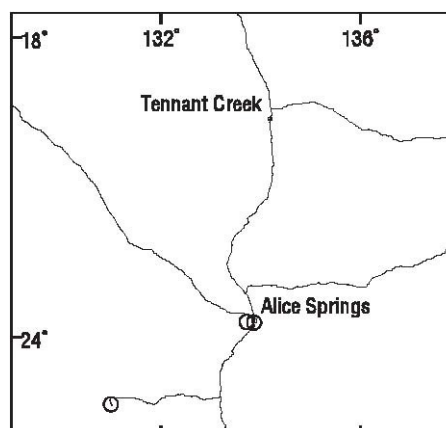
The Shark Bay mouse is a moderately-sized rodent (body mass 30-50 g) with grizzled, shaggy hair (Watts and Aslin 1981). The tail is slightly longer than the head-body.

Distribution

The species once occurred from central Australia across central Western Australia to the coast. It is now confined to Bernier Island off Shark Bay and has recently been introduced to Doole Island (Exmouth Gulf) and Trimouille Island (Montebello Islands off the Pilbara). In central Australia, the Shark Bay mouse was recorded only from a single damaged specimen from Alice Springs in 1895, and from bones in owl pellets (probably several hundred years old) from Uluru Kata-Tjuta National Park, West MacDonnell National Park (Simpson's Gap) and the Gibson Desert (Baynes and Johnson 1996).

Conservation reserves where reported:

None (although it formerly occurred in areas that are now included within Uluru Kata-Tjuta National Park and West MacDonnell National Park).



Known locations of the Shark Bay mouse.
o = pre 1970

Ecology

Nothing has been recorded of the ecology of the Shark Bay mouse in central Australia. However, studies in coastal Western Australia have shown that the species uses runways and short shallow burrows; and has a broad diet including flowers, foliage, fungi and invertebrates. The litter size is 3-4 (Morris and Robinson 1995).

Conservation assessment

The Shark Bay mouse is presumed to have become extinct in the NT in the early twentieth century (Parker 1973).

Threatening processes

The reasons for the decline and extinction of the Shark Bay mouse in central Australia are not known, but the most likely cause is predation by foxes and feral cats, with further problems associated with vegetation change caused by exotic herbivores and by changed fire regimes.



Conservation objectives and management

There are no imminent plans to re-introduce this species to the NT.

Compiled by

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References

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