

CPER SMALL MAMMALS (LTER MONITORING PROGRAM)

The following is a description of the most common rodent species on the Central Plains Experimental Range. Other small mammals, including juvenile desert cottontails (*Sylvilagus audubonii*) and long-tailed weasels (*Mustela frenata*), have also been captured on the CPER but are not listed here.

- THTA** *Thomomys talpoides* Northern pocket gopher
Description: Adults 80-150 g. Light chocolate brown with grayish belly, very small eyes and ears, large claws, and short fleshy tail. **No longitudinal grooves on face of upper incisors.**
Habitats: All areas but most common on coarse-textured soils, often with abundance OPPO.
Abundance: Common, but lives mostly underground, so rarely captured in traps.
NOTE: Plains pocket gophers (*Geomys bursarius*) also occur in eastern Colorado, but are more commonly found in disturbed, floodplain, or riparian areas. Large size and presence of two longitudinal grooves will distinguish it from THTA.
- PEMA** *Peromyscus maniculatus* Deer mouse
Description: Adults 17 - 28 g. Rusty brown dorsum, white belly, **strongly bicolored tail**, white-tipped hair in large ears.
Habitats: Widespread but usually in shrubbier areas, especially with ATCA.
Abundance: Abundant
- ONLE** *Onychomys leucogaster* Northern grasshopper mouse
Description: Adults 28 - 55 g. Tawny or buff-colored, with gray, **short tail, stocky body**, long front claws, musky odor.
Habitats: Coarse-textured soils, especially in areas with small shrubs, cactus, soil disturbances.
Abundance: Abundant
- REME** *Reithrodontomys megalotis* Western harvest mouse
Description: Adults 9 - 14 g. Resembles small PEMA except has **single groove in each upper incisor**, grayish belly, tail long and weakly bicolored, **orange-tipped hair in ears.**
Habitats: Floodplain areas with dense ATCA, tall grass (i.e., PASM) or weedy areas.
Abundance: Common
- REMO** *Reithrodontomys montanus* Plains harvest mouse
Description: Adults 7 - 11 g. Like REME except **smaller**, tail may be shorter (< 64 mm), more furred and bicolored, dorsum is more buffy and often with a broad darker stripe.
Habitats: **Drier, sandier areas than REME**, in areas with widely-spaced shrubs or open prairie.
Abundance: Uncommon
- MUMU** *Mus musculus* House mouse
Description: Like PEMA except is **uniform gray** in color (with adult mass), **scaly sparsely-haired tail.**
Habitats: Near buildings, corrals, and other human-occupied areas
Abundance: Rare
- MIOC** *Microtus ochrogaster* Prairie vole
Description: Adults approximately 40 g. **Chocolate brown** dorsal color with gray belly, **small hairy ears**, small eyes, short tail.
Habitats: Floodplain areas with dense ATCA and tall grass, also roadside ditches and dense weeds.
Abundance: Uncommon
- DIOR** *Dipodomys ordii* Ord's kangaroo rat
Description: Adults 55 - 90 g. **Orangish dorsal color** with white stripe on flanks, white belly, **long tail, large hind feet**, fur-lined cheek pouches.
Habitats: Sandy areas with soil disturbances, usually with shrubs and annual forbs, roadsides.
Abundance: Common

- CHHI** *Chaetodipus hispidus* Hispid pocket mouse
Description: Adults approximately 40 g. **Orangish-tan dorsum** flecked with black, white-gray belly, short ears, long rostrum, **fur-lined cheek pouches**.
Habitats: Coarse-grained soils with widely-spaced shrubs and midgrasses (STCO, ORHY, SIHY).
Abundance: Uncommon
- *PEFL** *Perognathus flavus* Silky pocket mouse
Description: Adults 6-9 g, **total length < 120 mm**. Small size with soft silky fur. Color is yellow/buffy and flecked with black, **yellow spots behind small ears, tail not crested**, fur-lined cheek pouches.
Measurements: (95-118) - (41-58) - (12-18) - (4-7). Incisors not grooved.
Habitats: Coarse-grained soils with widely-spaced small shrubs, midgrasses (STCO, ORHY, SIHY).
Abundance: Uncommon
- *PEFS** *Perognathus flavescens* Plains pocket mouse
Description: Adults 7-12 g, total length > 120 mm. Small size with small ears. **Upper fur is yellowish to pale brown, usually without a black wash**. Lateral line separating white belly and upper fur is buffy.
Measurements: (123-145) - (52-71) - (16-19) - **(6-8)**. Fur-lined cheek pouches. Incisors not grooved.
Habitats: Coarse-grained soils with widely-spaced small shrubs, midgrasses (STCO, ORHY, SIHY).
Abundance: Rare
- *PEFA** *Perognathus fasciatus* Olive-backed pocket mouse
Description: Adults 10-13 g, total length > 120 mm. Small size with small ears. **Upper fur is olive-brown with a black wash**. Lateral line separating white belly and upper fur is yellow-orange.
Measurements: (125-145) - (55-75) - (14-19) - (7-12). Fur-lined cheek pouches. Incisors not grooved.
Habitats: Coarse-grained soils with widely-spaced small shrubs, midgrasses (STCO, ORHY, SIHY).
Abundance: Very rare
- SPTR** *Spermophilus tridecemlineatus* Thirteen-lined ground squirrel
Description: Adults > 150 g. **Patterned dorsum, with spots and stripes in dark brown**, yellow belly, long body, loud chirping vocalizations.
Habitats: All CPER habitats except deep sand
Abundance: Abundant

***NOTE:** It is very difficult to distinguish the 3 small species of pocket mice without practice and measurements. If these are captured, please take measurements (T - T - H - E), mass (in grams), and note pelage characteristics.

RECORDING AGE, REPRODUCTIVE CONDITION, AND MEASUREMENTS

1. AGE: Adult (A), Subadult (S), Juvenile (J)

Small mammals can be aged using a combination of pelage color and body mass. Juveniles of many species are uniform gray dorsally. Subadults are somewhat larger and pelage is grayish, often with brown highlights. Adult coloration is brown, often with rusty or orangish tint.

2. REPRODUCTIVE CONDITION: Non-reproductive (N), reproductive (R)

Reproductive:

FEMALES: Obvious teats or lactating, perforate/bleeding vaginal opening, pregnant

MALES: "Scrotal" testes

3. MEASUREMENTS: write in Comments

Always written as **TOTAL LENGTH - TAIL LENGTH - HINDFOOT LENGTH - EAR LENGTH**, in millimeters.

- TOTAL - tip of nose to tip of tail vertebrae (not hairs)
- TAIL - tip of tail vertebrae (not hairs) to where tail joins the back
- HINDFOOT - from heel to tip of longest claw, right foot whenever possible
- EAR - from notch at base to end of fleshy part of ear