

NOTEWORTHY RECORD OF WESTERN HARVEST MOUSE  
(MURIDAE: *REITHRODONTOMYS MEGALOTIS*) ON THE  
BAJA CALIFORNIA PENINSULA

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**ABSTRACT**—In 1998, we made an inventory of mammals in the Valle de los Cirios Reserve of the central portion of the state of Baja California, Mexico. New records of *Reithrodontomys megalotis* were obtained and were collected in 3 years at the same locality. This species is restricted to small marshes within an arid region. The range expanded 230 km to the south.

**RESUMEN**—En 1998 se realizó el inventario de mamíferos de la reserva del Valle de los Cirios en la zona central del estado de Baja California, México. Se obtuvieron nuevos registros de *Reithrodontomys megalotis* colectándose por 3 años en la misma localidad. Esta especie se encuentra restringida a una pequeña zona anegada dentro de una región muy seca. Este registro incrementa la distribución hacia el sur en 230 km.

The western harvest mouse, *Reithrodontomys megalotis*, has a broad geographic range from southwestern Canada to southern Mexico (Hooper, 1952; Hall, 1981; Webster and Jones, 1982). This mouse has been recorded from 3 areas in northern Baja California (Hall, 1981; Alvarez-Castañeda and Cortés-Calva, 1999; Fig. 1): *R. m. megalotis* from 1 locality along the Colorado River delta of northeastern Baja California; *R. m. longicaudus* from the Sierra de San Pedro Mártir (Hall, 1981); and *R. m. peninsulae* from the San Quintín-El Rosario region of the Pacific coastal plains (Elliot, 1903; Hall, 1981).

We surveyed the current status of mammals in the Valle de los Cirios Reserve of the central peninsula in February 1998 during an unusually wet season caused by the 1997 El Niño-Southern Oscillation event. We set 120 Sherman live traps for 1 night along a small marsh near Nuevo Rosarito (73 km N, 3 km E Guerrero Negro). Two specimens of *R. megalotis* were collected. Additional specimens were col-

lected during trapping in November 1998 (10 specimens, 160 trap-nights) and February 2000 (1 specimen; 240 trap-nights).

Nuevo Rosarito is 230 km south of El Rosario, the previous southernmost known location on record, and we know of no seemingly appropriate habitat between El Rosario and Nuevo Rosarito. We provisionally assigned the specimens from Nuevo Rosarito to the geographically closest subspecies (also of the Pacific Coast), *R. m. peninsulae*. The specimens from Nuevo Rosarito might represent a new subspecies; they are smaller in size (based on 2 external and 6 cranial measurements), and their dorsal coloration is a darker gray compared to 9 specimens in the collection of the San Diego Museum of Natural History representing *R. m. longicaudus* and *R. m. peninsulae*.

All specimens ( $n = 12$ ) were deposited in the mammal collection at the Centro de Investigaciones Biológicas del Noroeste (CIBNOR), La Paz, Mexico: CIB 2588–2589, 4080–4088,

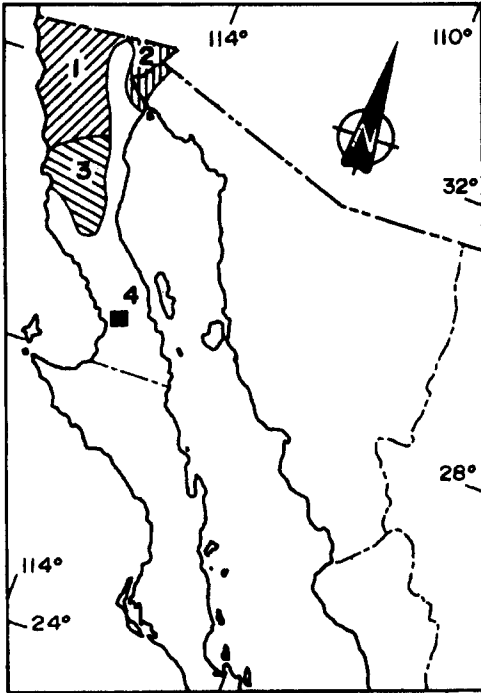


FIG. 1—Distribution of the known subspecies of *Reithrodontomys megalotis* from Baja California Peninsula: 1) *R. m. longicaudus*, 2) *R. m. megalotis*, 3) *R. m. peninsulæ*, and 4) *R. m. peninsulæ* from Nuevo Rosarito.

4954. Means and ranges for external measurements of 10 adults (in mm) are: total length, 136 (125 to 149); tail length, 70 (59 to 80); hind foot length, 17 (16 to 18); ear length, 15 (14 to 16). Means and ranges for cranial measurements of 6 adults are: greatest length of skull, 20.3 (20.0 to 20.5); skull depth, 7.7 (7.5 to 8.1); zygomatic width, 10.4 (10.3 to 10.6); interorbital breadth, 3.0 (2.8 to 3.2); nasal length, 7.7 (7.3 to 7.9); nasal breadth, 1.8 (1.7

to 1.9); length of maxillary tooth row, 2.9 (2.9 to 3.0); jaw height, 4.4 (4.3 to 4.6).

The dominant plants in the marsh near Nuevo Rosarito were salt grasses (*Distichlis palmeri*, *Jouvea pilosa*) and weedy vegetation (*Franquenya palmeri*, *Allenrolfea occidentalis*). On the nearby slopes, cacti (*Mammillaria*, *Pachycereus*), ocotillo (*Fouquieria diguetii*), torote/elephant tree (*Bursera microphylla*), and succulent plants are common. Other rodent species caught in the area were desert wood rat (*Neotoma lepida*), cactus mouse (*Peromyscus fraterculus*), and deer mouse (*P. maniculatus*).

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