



Alabama Beach Mouse

(Peromyscus polionotus ammobates)

Issue

The Alabama beach mouse is federally listed as endangered because of habitat loss and degradation.

Background

The range of the Alabama beach mouse historically included much of the Fort Morgan Peninsula on the Alabama Gulf coast and extended from Ono Island to Fort Morgan. Coastal residential and commercial development and roadway construction have fragmented and destroyed habitat used by this species. Hurricanes, tropical storms, and dune use by pedestrians have also damaged or destroyed sand dunes and related habitats. Stalking by domestic and wild cats, as well as other animals, plus competition from other rodents have also contributed to Alabama beach mouse declines.



The Alabama beach mouse is one of several subspecies of old field mice living only in coastal sand dune areas. These small light-colored mice burrow and nest in dunes and are primarily active at night. They eat various plant seeds and insects. They prefer sand-covered slopes with patches of sea oats, beach grass, other grasses and herbs. Interior sand dune ridges provide vital habitat for survival during flooding.

Beach mice are an important part of the coastal dune ecosystem. Thriving beach mouse populations indicate a healthy dune system. The mice themselves contribute by collecting and distributing seeds. Uneaten seeds grow into plants which help to stabilize dunes. Beach mice are also an important part of the food chain, providing a food source for dune predators such as the snakes and owls.

What you can do to help

- If you have property in or near Alabama beach mouse populations:
- Install sand fences to aid in rebuilding dunes. Avoid using hay bales.
 - Plant sea oats, bluestem, and other native coastal vegetation to restore dunes.
 - Avoid planting turf grasses, ornamentals, and non-native species.
 - Maintain gravel-free, sandy habitat during construction and land development.
 - Avoid walking or driving in dune areas. Use dune walkovers for beach access.
 - Control outdoor and wild cats to reduce predation on beach mice and other wildlife species.
 - Place bagged garbage in intact trash cans to prevent house mice or other rodents from becoming established.
 - Avoid using poisons, snap traps, glue boards and similar techniques outdoors.
 - Replace gravel driveways with concrete.
 - Do not store or accumulate lumber, metal, or other construction debris on the property. Stage construction materials on driveway or slab.

Further studies are needed to better understand the Alabama beach mouse and the sand dune ecosystem. Such information is vital for protecting, conserving and recovering this unique animal and the habitat crucial to its survival.

For more information

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