

PREBLE'S MEADOW JUMPING MOUSE

Zapus hudsonius preblei (Threatened Colorado, Federally)



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Preble's meadow jumping mice live along Colorado's Front Range from Colorado Springs to southwestern Wyoming.

THE PREBLE'S MEADOW jumping mouse is a 9-inch mouse with large hind feet, a long tail and a dark stripe down the middle of its back. Preble's bears two or three litters a year, averaging five young per litter, in a grass-lined nest. In late summer, the mice gorge themselves on a diet of seeds, fruits and insects to prepare for hibernation; they sleep in an underground burrow from September to May. The mice live in and near shrub-dominated riparian (streamside) areas along Colorado's Front Range from Colorado Springs north into southeastern Wyoming. This area is undergoing rapid residential and industrial development that can impact their habitat. This ongoing habitat change led to the federal listing of the mouse in 1998. Recent genetic research indicates that the mouse may not be a separate subspecies, and could lead to removal from those lists.

Since 1995, much has been learned about the Preble's meadow jumping mouse due to research conducted by the Division of Wildlife, the U.S. Air Force, U.S. Department of Energy, Boulder County Open Space and the Colorado Department of Transportation. In addition, surveys required under the Endangered Species Act have increased our knowledge of the distribution.

Counties throughout Preble's range have been actively developing habitat conservation plans that will allow for some development to occur while not negatively impacting the mice. A recovery plan that will describe the population and habitat conditions needed to remove this species from the federal list is also being written. Federal, state and local governments have protected lands that will contribute to recovery and long-term survival of Preble's meadow jumping mouse.