

Fulvous Harvest Mouse

Reithrodontomys fulvescens



Identification

Fulvous harvest mouse is small, 6 in/16 cm with the tail more than half the length and weighing 0.5-1 oz /14-30 g. Inside of the ears are covered with reddish hair. The back of mouse is reddish-buff with some black, sides lighter buff, and undersides pale buff or white. The tail is lighter color on the bottom compared to the top matching the body coloration. Fulvous harvest mice have grooved front incisors as do all harvest mice. The young are gray and lack tawny sides.



Photo credit: [Greg Grasley](#)/iNaturalist

Observation Tips

Fulvous harvest mouse is found in the southern Great Plains south to Central America (El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, and Nicaragua). This mouse is nocturnal, active and breeding year-round. Litter size is typically 2-6. Young are probably sexually mature in 2-4 months. Fulvous harvest mouse are found mostly on private lands and in Big Bend Ranch State Park, Texas. They utilize trails created by other small mammals.

Interesting Fact

Fulvous harvest mice nests are usually built 1-3 ft/30-91 cm above the ground often in bushes. These nests can be converted bird nests or created by fulvous harvest mice. The baseball-sized nests are composed of shredded grass and forb stems with one opening.

Ideal Habitat

Fulvous harvest mouse prefers grassy areas (>60% herbaceous cover) containing scattered shrubs (>5% shrub cover) or shrubby trees. They are also found in creek bottoms with tangles of grasses, vines, and bushes. This mouse eats forb and grass seeds, invertebrates and soft parts of green plants. In Texas, fulvous harvest mice are found in riparian woodlands as well as desert scrub dominated by mesquite. They will feed on the ground or up to 3 ft/1 m high in vegetation. In Mexico, fulvous harvest mice are found in grasslands, rocky outcrops with patches of scrub, and pine-oak forest. Dense vegetation is required to hide the nests in tall grasses and shrubs. Fulvous harvest mice will live in underground burrows as well as nests in bushes above the ground.



Range map provided by International Union for Conservation of Nature

Management Activities that Benefit Species – Best Management Practices (BMPs)

Maintain dense herbaceous vegetation areas such as riparian areas and grasslands. Rotational grazing that provides areas with tall and dense vegetation will provide appropriate nesting habitat. Fulvous harvest mice will also take advantage of roadsides, old fields, and field edges that are not heavily grazed.

Management Activities to Avoid

Avoid conversion of highly productive and dense grasslands and shrublands to agricultural croplands and residential development. Avoid mowing all areas of dense vegetation.

Other Species that Benefit from Similar Habitat Management

Management for fulvous harvest mice will benefit white-footed mice, as well as predators including snakes, barn owls, barred owls, and red-tailed hawk.

Other Resources

International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). 2014. The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. Version 2021-1

[Reithrodontomys fulvescens](#)

NatureServe. 2021. NatureServe Explorer: An online encyclopedia of life [web application]. Version 7.1. NatureServe, Arlington, Virginia. [Fulvous harvest mouse](#)

Texas Tech University. Mammals of Texas. [Fulvous harvest mouse](#)