



# Beach Mouse Fun Facts

Beach mice live in the sand dunes of Perdido Key and Santa Rosa Island. Conserving their habitat protects the dunes, the dunes in turn protect the houses, condominiums, and hotels along the beach. The dunes are good for the mouse and good for people.

## Taxonomy

Beach mice are subspecies of the old-field mouse (*Peromyscus polionotus*). There are seven sub-species of beach mice and five of these subspecies are found along the Gulf coast - Alabama, **Perdido Key**, **Santa Rosa**, Choctawhatchee, and St. Andrews.



*Santa Rosa Beach Mouse*



*Perdido Key Beach Mouse*

## Conservation Status

All beach mice are federally protected, with the exception of the Santa Rosa beach mouse.

Habitat loss from coastal development and hurricanes are the primary reasons these mice have federal and state protective status.

## Ecology

Habitat: Beach dunes and open scrub.

Predators: Feral and free roaming cats, which do not belong in a natural setting. Beach mice are particularly easy prey for domestic cats because they have not developed the senses to avoid this predator.

Home range size: Average 5000 square meters.

# Perdido Key Beach Mouse

## *Peromyscus polionotus trissyllepsis*

A unique beach mouse which is found only on Perdido Key. The mice burrow and dig in the primary, secondary, and scrub dunes of Perdido Key. They are active at night (nocturnal) and eat the seeds of sea oats and other coastal plants.

The mouse habitat on Perdido Key is undergoing rapid development as prime ocean-front property. Due to reduced habitat, the Perdido Key beach mouse is in the highest risk category for extinction, thus is protected as a state and federally endangered species.



# Santa Rosa Beach Mouse

## *Peromyscus polionotus leucocephalus*

A unique beach mouse that can only be found on Santa Rosa Island, Florida. This mouse burrows and digs in the primary, secondary, and scrub dunes of Santa Rosa Island. They are active at night (nocturnal) and eat the seeds of sea oats and other coastal plants.

These beach mice are the least pigmented of the Gulf Coast subspecies and are the only extant beach mouse that is not endangered or threatened.



The Santa Rosa beach mouse has the lightest colored fur of all the beach mice. It is pale gray along its back and there is no tail stripe.