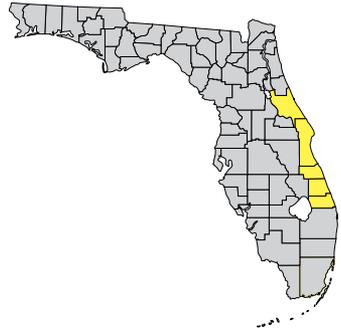


# SOUTHEASTERN BEACH MOUSE

*Peromyscus polionotus niveiventris*

**Order:** Rodentia  
**Family:** Cricetidae  
**FNAI Ranks:** G5T1/S1  
**U.S. Status:** Threatened  
**FL Status:** Threatened



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**Description:** A small, light-colored mouse. Adult males average 5.3 in. (134 mm); adult females average 5.5 in. (139 mm). Average tail length in males and females is 2. in. (53 mm) and 2.2 in. (55 mm), respectively. Hairs of the dorsal fur are buff-tipped with gray bases. Hairs on the forehead and snout are buff to the base. Flanks, feet, cheeks, and underside are white. Tail is bicolored buff or gray above and white below.

## SOUTHEASTERN BEACH MOUSE

*Peromyscus polionotus niveiventris*

**Similar Species:** Other subspecies of beach mouse (oldfield mouse) are similar in appearance, but do not overlap in range. Cotton mouse (*Peromyscus gossypinus*) is larger (5.6 - 8.1 in. = 142 - 206 mm), has a relatively longer tail (2.7 - 4.5 in. = 71 - 116 mm), and is chestnut-brown and gray. Florida mouse (*Peromyscus floridanus*) is also larger (7.3 - 8.0 in. = 179 - 203 mm) and similar in color to cotton mouse; hind feet generally have five large pads (plantar tubercles) versus six to seven (rarely five) small pads of beach mice and other *Peromyscus* species. House mouse (*Mus musculus*) is gray above with a slightly lighter gray underside and has a hairless, nearly unicolor (gray-pink) tail that is generally longer than 2.5 in. (63 mm).

**Habitat:** Primary, secondary, and occasionally tertiary sand dunes with a moderate cover of grasses and forbs, including sea oats (*Uniola paniculata*), bitter panicum (*Panicum amarum*), and beach dropseed (*Sporobolus virginicus*). Adjacent coastal palmetto flats (coastal strand) and scrub are important during and following hurricanes.

**Seasonal Occurrence:** Less active when the moon is bright.

**Florida Distribution:** Historically occurred from New Smyrna Beach possibly as far south as Miami Beach. Now known from a few isolated locations from southern Volusia County to Martin County.

**Range-wide Distribution:** Same as Florida distribution. Southeastern beach mouse is a subspecies of oldfield mouse, which is common throughout Alabama, Georgia, southern South Carolina, and most of Florida.

**Conservation Status:** The extensive habitat at Cape Canaveral Air Station and Canaveral National Seashore provide a stronghold for the southeastern beach mouse. Small tracts of suitable habitat exist south of Brevard County; however, long-term survival at these sites is unlikely without population augmentation.

**Protection and Management:** Prevent damage to dune habitat: construct boardwalks over dunes; prevent off-road-vehicle (ORV) use on dunes; restore breaks in the primary dune to prevent erosion and flooding during high tides and surges. Remove feral cats, which are thought to cause high mortality.

**Selected References:** Brown 1997, Humphrey (ed.) 1992, Whitaker 1996.