

Description: The fur of this grey-brown native rodent is flecked with dark guard hairs that make the heath mouse look fluffy. It is paler underneath, has a blunt face, bulging eyes and short rounded ears.

The native heath mouse looks similar to introduced black rats but can be distinguished by their tails. The tails of heath mice are dark above and light underneath while black rats have ringed tails.

Diet and Habitat: Heath mice have a diet that changes throughout the year in response to seasonal availability. During their breeding season they will consume highly nutritious flowers, seeds and berries, but will eat leaf and stem material as well as truffle-like fungus when their preferred foods are unavailable.

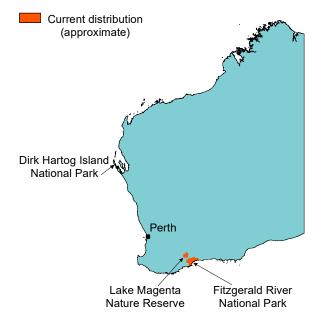
They construct multiple shallow burrows, usually under a low bush. Although generally nocturnal, heath mice are sometimes active during the day.

Breeding: The heath mouse breeding season lasts four months, occurring once a year during late spring and summer. Females begin breeding at 10 to 12 months of age and can produce two litters of three young per year. Young develop quickly and growth is rapid, juveniles reaching adult size in 3 - 4 months.

Distribution: Heath mice may still occur in south-west Victoria, southern South Australia and southern Western Australia (WA).

They were thought to be extinct in WA until they were rediscovered in 1987

They are proposed for reintroduction to Dirk Hartog Island National Park as part of the *Return to 1616* Ecological Restoration Project.





Conservation Status

Numbers of heath mice are declining and are threatened by feral predators, habitat loss and habit fragmentation.

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Wildlife Conservation (Specially Protected Fauna) Notice 2018



