

## House mouse (*Mus musculus*)



### **Taxonomy:**

Family Muridae. The house mouse is a commensal species native to Eurasia that has been introduced nearly world-wide. The taxonomy of house mice is complex. Animals in North America represent the subspecies *musculus*, *castaneus* and *domesticus*; the last is the source for the laboratory mouse.

### **Description:**

Distinguished from other small mice by its general dark color, lack of external cheek pouches, smooth upper incisors, and nearly naked tail with distinct scale rings

Total length: 130-190 mm; Tail: 70-93 mm; Hind foot: 14-19 mm; Ear: 10-14 mm; Weight: 15-30 g.

### **Distribution:**

Occurs throughout much of North America, principally in close association with humans. Common along the Wasatch Front in and around buildings in both urban and rural areas.

### **Ecology and diet:**

The house mouse is a non-native species that has a nearly world-wide distribution. It is a true commensal, nearly everywhere living in close association with humans. They are mainly found as pests in or around buildings where they have shelter from severe weather and access to resources. They are omnivorous, consuming a wide variety of food including stored grains and other human foodstuff as well as naturally available food items. Harsh winter weather in the Wasatch area probably limits their distribution away from buildings, but they can persist in riparian habitats and may be plentiful in areas surrounding warm springs.

### **Life History:**

House mice tend to breed opportunistically wherever and whenever there are adequate resources. They mature rapidly and have high fecundity. Under optimal conditions, females have several litters per year averaging 6-8 young per litter.

**References:** Durrant 1952; Hall 1981.