

Western Jumping Mouse (*Zapus princeps*)



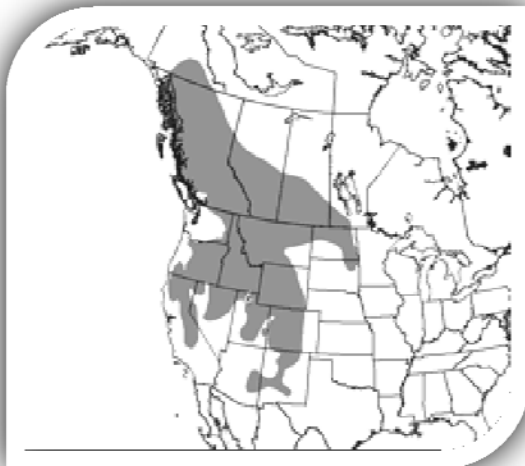
Taxonomy:

Family Dipodidae. There are 12 recognized subspecies including *Zapus princeps utahensis*.

Description:

Have a dark brown, or grizzled back and often have a lateral line of pale-yellowish buff down the side. The ears have a border of whitish hairs and the tail is faintly bicolored. Jumping mice can be distinguished by their very long tails and large hind feet.

Total length: 216-247 mm; Tail length: 129-148 mm; Weight: 18-24 g.



Distribution:

Found in the Rocky Mountains from the Yukon south into Arizona and New Mexico, westward through eastern Oregon, throughout the Cascade and Sierra Nevada Mountains, and east into the northern Great Plains. Common at higher elevations along the Wasatch Front.

Ecology and Diet:

Western Jumping Mice are found in high mountain meadows and riparian streams and marshes. They are commonly associated with streams and areas with moist soils that support rich forbs, herbs, and grass communities. Their

diet is variable depending on what's available, eating fungi, arthropods, and seeds from forbs and grasses. They are only active for about 90 days out of the year and the rest of the time is spent in hibernation.

Life History:

Zapus princeps spend about 9 months of the year in hibernation and consequently females only have one litter per year. Breeding occurs just after coming out of hibernation and after a gestation period of 18 days litters ranging from 2-8 are produced. The young nurse for about 30 days which means that after they are weaned they only have about 45 days to fatten up to hibernation mass.

Reference: Cranford 1999.