

The White-Footed Mouse, *Peromyscus leucopus*



Habitat: Found throughout most of the Eastern United States and Eastern Mexico. The white-footed mouse can be found nearly anywhere, ranging from open fields to forests, and can be found in suburban habitats where parks or fields are nearby.

Diet: Consists of seeds, nuts, vegetables, fruits, invertebrates, bird eggs, and some small vertebrates. Mice do not hibernate. Mice store their food for the winter.

Life Cycle/Reproduction: Mating occurs year round, but is mostly seasonal, occurring in the spring to late summer. The gestation period lasts 22 to 28 days. Mice can have 2 - 4 litters per year, with a range of 2 - 9 babies per litter. Five babies are typically born per litter. In the wild, mice typically live for less than one year.

Dispersal: The young disperse from their mother shortly after they are weaned. When young are in danger, female mice will carry them home by their teeth. Mice are primarily nocturnal, and run, swim and climb to move around. While dispersing, mice are subject to predation (see biotic interactions), especially along the edges of their habitat. Mice aid in the dispersal of fungi and plants.

Biotic interactions: Predators include birds of prey, skunk, foxes, raccoons, weasels, and small mammals. Competitors include other vertebrates with similar diets. Mice are hosts to many internal and external parasites (viruses, bacteria, worms, arthropods, etc). As stated above, mice aid in the dispersal of plants and fungi by eating or transporting seeds and spores. Mice also control the population of gypsy moths by consuming them, which is important because in large population sizes, gypsy moths can severely damage oak trees.

References:

- Aguilar, S. 2002. "Peromyscus leucopus" (On-line), Animal Diversity Web. Accessed May 27, 2010 at http://animaldiversity.ummz.umich.edu/site/accounts/information/Peromyscus_leucopus.html.
- Saunders, D.A. 1988. Adirondack Mammals. State University of New York, College of Environmental Science and Forestry. 216pp.
- Scott E. Hygnstrom; Robert M. Timm; Gary E. Larson PREVENTION AND CONTROL OF WILDLIFE DAMAGE — 1994 Cooperative Extension Division Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources University of Nebraska -Lincoln, United States Department of Agriculture Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service Animal Damage Control.

Based on the fact sheet, what resources and conditions would favor the growth of a population of mice? What resources and conditions would benefit an individual mouse?

Organism	Resources	Conditions
<i>Peromyscus leucopus</i> (White-footed mouse)	Nutrients and energy obtained from feeding on available resources	Biotic Conditions <i>Competition</i>
	-generalist consumers, the diet consists of nuts, seeds, acorns, moths and other small invertebrates, and even the eggs of ground-nesting birds	-compete with other species for access to food resources
	Resources needed for burrowing, building nests, and storing food over winter	<i>Predation/Death</i>
		-susceptible to predation by owls, raptors, and other animals
		-human trapping
		<i>Dispersal</i>
		-while dispersing in search for food, can be susceptible to predation, especially when removed from the intact forest (and facing "edge effects")
		Abiotic Conditions
		-a suitable temperature
		-availability of water and air
	-favorable soil conditions for burrowing and nest building	