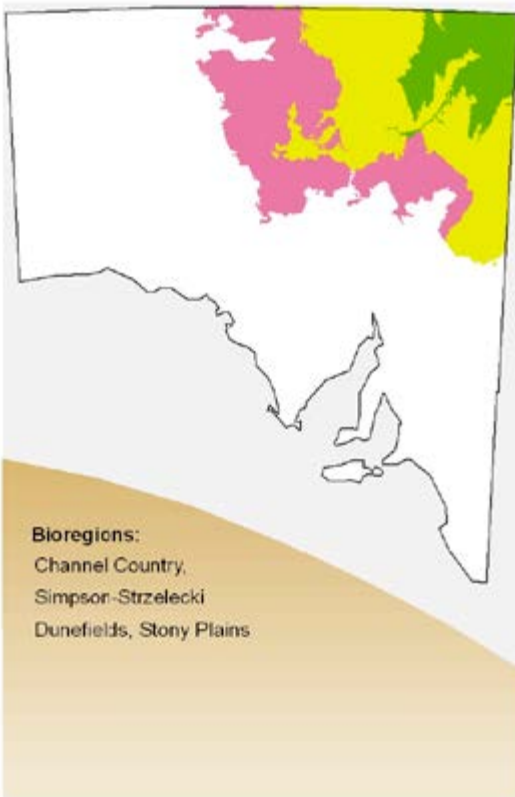


Dusky Hopping-mouse

Notomys fuscus



Map courtesy of Mapping Unit, Customer and Commercial Services.

Map is not intended to indicate spatial distribution of the species, only the bioregions in which the species is found.

Dusky Hopping-mice have long narrow hind feet that they hop on when travelling quickly. They also have large ears, dark eyes, strong incisor teeth and a tail that is longer than their body with black tuft on the end. Similar in appearance to Fawn Hopping-mice, Dusky Hopping-mice are distinguished by their distinctive throat pouch which is present on both females and males! Numbers of this animal have declined greatly since European settlement.

Diet

Their diet consists mainly of plant material (seeds and shoots), berries and occasionally insects. Dusky Hopping-mice do not need to drink as they get moisture from their food. Along with many animals living in arid areas these mice are nocturnal, sheltering in burrows during the day and coming out at night to look for food. They usually forage close to their burrows in the sand dunes, rarely venturing far into surrounding areas.

Breeding

Dusky Hopping-mice are quite fertile and can breed any time of year, but are more likely to breed after rainfall when more food is available. Populations can fluctuate greatly depending on season and other factors.

Habitat

Dusky Hopping-mice are found in northern South Australia and adjoining states. Once widespread throughout many arid areas of the state, they are now restricted to an area east of Lake Eyre. They live in sandy habitats with dunes and perennial vegetation. Dusky Hopping-mice are social animals and live in burrows in groups of three to five individuals. Burrows dug by these mice are elaborate with a series of complex tunnels and chambers up to one metre deep and five metres long. Denser populations of Hopping-mice are usually found near lakes or drainage lines and this may be because areas near water sources have more plants for these animals to eat.

Threats

Dusky Hopping-mice are threatened by habitat degradation. This is caused by vegetation clearance and soil compaction due to farming, stock and development. Burrowing animals struggle to make their nests if the soil becomes too compacted. Predation by cats and foxes is common. Competition with introduced rabbits and house mice for food and habitat is leading to further population decline.



Their burrows have a series of pop-hole entrances that they can escape into.

Conservation

Recovery strategies, such as protecting native vegetation and population research, are being put into action in some of their habitat areas.

You can help the Dusky Hopping-mouse by:

- being a responsible pet owner – desex your cats and dogs, keep them inside at night and don't take them into national parks
- spreading the word – tell other people about the plight of these unique animals
- acting to protect remnant areas of native bush for native species like the Dusky Hopping-mouse.

For further information

Public enquiries

For more local information on any of the species in this resource please contact your nearest Natural Resource Centre office on:

Eastwood: (08) 8273 9100

Gawler: (08) 8523 7700

Lobethal: (08) 8389 5900

Willunga: (08) 8550 3400

Education enquiries

For teachers wanting more information about environmental education resources and opportunities please contact the relevant NRM Education sub regional team on:

Northern Adelaide: (08) 8406 8289

Barossa: (08) 8563 8436

Central Adelaide: (08) 8234 7255

Southern Adelaide: (08) 8384 0176

Southern Fleurieu: (08) 8551 0524

