

The Water Mouse Project

Xeromys myoides



The Mouse

The water mouse is a nocturnal native rodent which is found in coastal habitats including saltmarsh, saline grasslands, mangroves and coastal wetlands. Its known distribution is Proserpine to the Queensland/New South Wales border. The species has also been recorded in the NT. The water mouse has small eyes and small rounded ears. Its back has silky, slate-grey fur (sometimes spotted white), and its belly is sharply defined with white fur. It has a short, sparsely haired tail, and weighs up to 50g. The water mouse is carnivorous and feeds on small crabs, shellfish, mud lobsters and marine flatworms. It forages at night at low tides, and its movements and habits are governed by the tidal cycles.

The water mouse typically lives above the high tide line and constructs nests. Some of the known nesting habits are listed below:

large, free-standing, termitarium-like mounds of mud up to 60 cm high.

Inconspicuous tunnels in the supralittoral bank at the marine/terrestrial boundary.

Slightly elevated 'islands' standing away from the supralittoral bank OR with the supralittoral bank.

Within living or dead trees in the intertidal zones (often creating walls with entrances and exits out of mud)

The species is listed as 'Vulnerable' under the Commonwealth Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999, and the same under the Queensland Nature Conservation Act 1992.



The Project

Pioneer Catchment & Landcare (PCL) has received funding from the Australian Government through the National Landcare Program to collect data on population sizes and conduct key threat assessments for the species. These studies will span four gazetted water mouse conservation parks via remote camera monitoring. Fox monitoring and the utilisation of a den-detection dog will help identify fox populations. Data will be collected from September until approximately the 15th of August 2019. Throughout the project PCL will disperse educational materials and conduct engagement events to inform the community on the importance of the water mouse and project findings. PCL will also look to work with landholders who border or live on water mouse habitat.

If your property borders these National Parks or you own a property on the coast with salt flats/mangroves then we would like to hear from you. Contact Kade Slater at 0497 441 979 or via email at kade.slater@pioneercatchment.org.au.

The Sites

The four sites (shown below) have known populations of *X. myoides*, and have areas that are yet to be surveyed but are suspected to have populations.



Cape Palmerston National Park

Where: Approximately 80 km drive South of Mackay.

Size: Over 7100 hectares.

Sandringham Bay Conservation Park

Where: Approximately 20 km south of Mackay.

Size: Over 500 hectares.



Bakers Creek Conservation Park

Where: Approximately 17 km south of Mackay.

Size: 550 hectares.



Skull Knob Conservation Park

Where: Approximately 70 km north of Mackay

Size: 295 hectares.



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