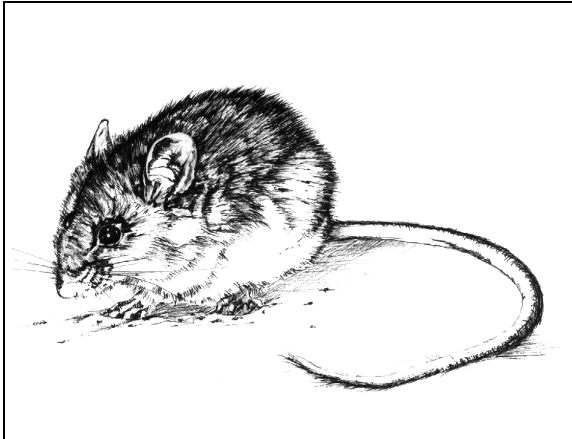


THREATENED SPECIES AND COMMUNITIES OF THE ACT

Fact Sheet No. 23 **THE SMOKY MOUSE (*Pseudomys fumeus*)** An endangered species

The Smoky Mouse (*Pseudomys fumeus*) is a blue-grey to black native mouse, the size of a small rat with a grey - white belly. It has a ring of dark hairs around each of its large, bulging eyes, pink feet with white fur and a tail that is darker above and lighter below.



The Smoky Mouse occurs mainly in coastal and mountainous areas of Victoria and has also been recorded in widely separated parts of south-eastern NSW but records are sparse everywhere. The Smoky Mouse has been found in a wide range of vegetation types mostly with a diversity of heath-like shrubs.

Despite intensive surveying for a Smoky Mouse population, only two have been trapped in the ACT, plus there have been two hair records in or near the ACT. It is highly likely that the species still occurs within and adjacent to the ACT, in low numbers.

The distribution of the species is thought to have declined prior to European settlement, and to have declined further due to habitat loss. The current distribution is difficult to interpret.

The Smoky Mouse apparently relies on three very nitrogen rich food sources, legume seeds, berries and bogong moths, but in winter when these are unavailable it digs for truffle-like fungi.

Populations are subject to large annual fluctuations in abundance possibly due to variations in food availability or due to social conflict. The female component of the population fluctuates less.

Conservation threats

Since European settlement, environmental changes are likely to have disadvantaged the species, including vegetation clearance; changed fire regimes, resulting in changes to the shrub vegetation; and introduction of predators.

The combination of several effects may have had a significant impact on an already declining species.

Conservation actions

The major conservation objective is to secure in the long term, viable, wild populations of *P. fumeus* as a component of the indigenous biological resources of the ACT region and contribute to the national conservation of the species.

Lack of understanding of the ecological requirements of the species is the main barrier to its conservation. Therefore the objective is to be achieved mainly by regional co-operation and encouraging research.

In addition:

- No fire trails or walking tracks will be constructed near areas most likely to comprise Smoky Mouse habitat, including none in the Bimberi Wilderness Area;
- Feral pig control programs involving poisoned wheat baits will continue to be managed so as to avoid areas of likely Smoky Mouse habitat; and
- The conservation requirements of the species will be a consideration in the Bush Fire Fuel Management Plan covering Namadgi National Park. The current level of effort to minimise the frequency of

The primary objectives of the Namadgi National Park Conservation Action Plan where a full bibliography is available.

Action Plans are available from the Environment ACT Homepage:

<http://act.gov.au/environ>

Environment ACT Helpline: (02) 6207 9777