

HUALAPAI MEXICAN VOLE
(Microtus mexicanus hualpaiensis)

STATUS: Endangered (52 FR 36776; November 2, 1987) without critical habitat.

SPECIES DESCRIPTION: A small, cinnamon-brown, mouse-sized mammal with a short tail and fur that nearly covers its small, round ears.

HABITAT: Primarily associated with woodland forest types containing grasses and grass-sedge associates. Occurs in moist, grass/sedge habitats along permanent or semipermanent waters (such as springs or seeps), but may be able to occupy drier areas when grass/forb habitats are available, particularly during wetter years.

RANGE: Historic: The type locality for the subspecies is in the Hualapai Mountains of Mohave County. At the time that the recovery plan was finalized, two specimens from the lower Prospect Valley, Coconino County, had been tentatively assigned to the Hualapai Mexican vole. In addition, specimens from the Music Mountains, Mohave County, were known but unidentified at the subspecies level.

Current: Recent research suggests that populations in the Hualapai Mountains, Music Mountains, Hualapai Nation, Aubrey Cliffs, Chino Wash, Santa Maria Mountains, and Bradshaw Mountains may be regarded as this subspecies. Populations from Round Mountain and Sierra Prieta may also be included as this subspecies based on geography. However, the conclusions are tentative at this time. Peer review of existing studies and, potentially, additional genetic studies are needed to come to a more definitive conclusion. In the meantime, the range of the subspecies is considered by the Service to be restricted to the Hualapai Mountains.

REASONS FOR DECLINE/VULNERABILITY: Endangered due to rarity and very limited habitat along with threats posed by drought; elimination of ground cover due to grazing by livestock and elk, increased concentration of ungulates at developed water sources, and human recreation.

LAND MANAGEMENT/OWNERSHIP: Bureau of Land Management, state land, private lands, possibly Hualapai Nation land, and the Forest Service in the Hualapai Mountains.

NOTES: A Recovery Plan was completed in August 1991 and is available online at:
<http://www.fws.gov/southwest/es/arizona/Documents/RecoveryPlans/HualapaiMexicanVole.pdf>

On May 15, 2008, we published in the Federal Register (73 FR 28094) a notice of our 90-day finding on a petition to remove the Hualapai Mexican vole from the Endangered Species Act's Federal List of Threatened and Endangered Wildlife and Plants and our initiation of a status review for the subspecies. We will conduct a one-year status review to determine whether the Hualapai Mexican vole is correctly recognized under the Endangered Species Act and whether its continued protection may be warranted. Should the status review indicate that the Hualapai Mexican vole is a member of a larger classification, we will assess the status of that larger grouping of Mexican voles. Such an evaluation could lead to a proposal to remove the vole from the endangered species list.