

South Florida

Survey Protocol For Beach Mice

When live trapping for small mammals in areas known to be, or potentially inhabited by, beach mice (*Peromyscus polionotus* ssp.), implementation of the following guidelines are essential to assure that data are collected in a standardized way and to preclude or minimize mortality of endangered and threatened beach mice. These guidelines apply when trapping to determine presence of beach mice in or adjacent to coastal or island dune systems, but may also have generic utility with respect to other beach mouse trapping efforts or inland small mammal trapping operations.

1. Individuals conducting the trapping should have previous experience in live trapping, handling, and identification of small mammals.
2. Surveys should include the entire dune system within the project area and, if permission can be obtained, adjacent lands with beach mouse habitat. Trapping areas should include all suitable habitat types such as: frontal dunes, secondary dunes, scrub dunes, and dry flats behind dune systems, regardless of distance from the beach.
3. Trapping should be conducted along linear transects with live-traps spaced at 10 to 15 m (33-49 ft) intervals. Linear transects should be parallel to the frontal dune system, and at least one transect should be placed in each habitat type.
4. Transects should extend the full length of each habitat type except where long blocks of habitat are involved (≥ 750 m [2,460 ft]). In those cases, the habitat may be covered by several non-contiguous transects.
5. Two traps per trapping station are desirable, but one trap per station is acceptable.
6. Traps should be operated for five nights per trapping season or until a beach mouse is caught. At least three nights of trapping should be consecutive.
7. Traps should be checked and all mice released between 12 AM and thirty minutes after official sunrise time. All traps should be closed after checking and reset late each afternoon to preclude mortality of mice and other small mammals during the day.
8. When nighttime temperatures are forecast to be $<15^{\circ}\text{C}$ (60°F), a ball of cotton batting (or similar synthetic material) should be placed in each trap for insulation purposes. Trapping should not be conducted when nighttime temperatures are forecast to be $<10^{\circ}\text{C}$ (50°F), without prior coordination from the permitting agencies.
9. Trapping should not be conducted when the moon phase is three-quarters to full, if feasible.

10. Bait should consist of either long-cooking rolled oats, sunflower seeds or safflower seeds.
11. Each trap should be visually inspected before closing to assure no small mammals or other animals are inadvertently left in the trap.
12. Captured mice should be gently released on the ground near protective vegetation immediately adjacent to the trapping station.
13. Any exotic species captured during beach mouse trapping should be euthanized humanely.
14. Presence of beach mice can be documented in a single trapping period, but to determine absence with any degree of certainty will require multiple trapping periods. In that respect, trapping should be conducted seasonally (fall, winter, spring, summer) and in all dune habitats for at least two consecutive years or until mice are caught.
15. All traps should be individually numbered and labeled with identification of ownership.
16. Site description and trapping data should be recorded. Site description should include project location, habitat on the project area and adjacent lands, and trapping design relative to habitat distribution. Daily trapping data should include number of beach mice captured per day, non-target species captured, weather conditions, lost or missing traps, and moon phase. If population data is being collected, sex, age, and reproductive status of beach mice should also be reported. All information should be submitted to the following offices:

Protected Species Permit Coordinator
 Bureau of Wildlife Diversity Conservation
 Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
 620 South Meridian Street, Mail Station WLD-BLX
 Tallahassee, FL 32399-1600

Regional Biologist
 Bureau of Wildlife Diversity Conservation
 Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

Counties

Northeast Region
 1239 SW 10th Street
 Ocala, FL 34474-2797

Indian River

South Region
 8535 Northlake Boulevard
 West Palm Beach, FL 33412

St. Lucie
 Martin
 Broward
 Miami-Dade