

California Wildlife Habitat Relationships System
California Department of Fish and Wildlife
California Interagency Wildlife Task Group

ARIZONA COTTON RAT

Sigmodon arizonae

Family: MURIDAE
M124

Order: RODENTIA

Class: MAMMALIA

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DISTRIBUTION, ABUNDANCE, AND SEASONALITY

In California, found in isolated sections of marshy and grassy areas adjacent to the Colorado River. Restricted to moist habitats, such as desert riparian, grassland, cropland, and fresh emergent wetland, but little is known about the distribution or abundance of this species in California.

SPECIFIC HABITAT REQUIREMENTS

Feeding: Feeds primarily on grasses. The related *S. hispidus* also feeds on sugar beets, citrus, other crops, some insects, eggs, and carrion.

Cover: Tall, dense grass is preferred.

Reproduction: Nests of woven grass are constructed either in burrows or on the ground surface (Baar et al. 1974).

Water: No data found, but probably does not require free water.

Pattern: Riparian thickets with moderate to dense grass cover are optimal, but the species may occur in drier grassy areas. Zimmerman (1970) found the Arizona cotton rat in association with willows, tamarisk, poplars, Johnson grass, bluestem, mesquite, bear grass, gramma grass, and catclaw. Goldman (1928) reported that this species was associated with sedges, rushes, cane, cattails, and grasses.

SPECIES LIFE HISTORY

Activity Patterns: Active yearlong. Both diurnal and nocturnal.

Seasonal Movements/Migration: None.

Home Range: No data found.

Territory: No data found.

Reproduction: No data found.

Niche: No data found.

Comments: The biology of *S. arizonae* probably is similar to that of *S. hispidus* (see Cameron and Spencer 1981).

REFERENCES

- Baar, S. L., E. D. Fleharty, and M. F. Artman. 1974. Utilization of deep burrows and nests by cotton rats in west-central Kansas. *Southwest. Nat.* 19:440-444.
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- Zimmerman, E. G. 1970. Karyology, systematics, and chromosomal evolution in the rodent genus *Sigmodon*. *Mich. State Univ. Biol. Ser.* 4:385-454.

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Life history accounts for species in the California Wildlife Habitat Relationships (CWHR) System were originally published in: Zeiner, D.C., W.F.Laudenslayer, Jr., K.E. Mayer, and M. White, eds. 1988-1990. *California's Wildlife*. Vol. I-III. California Department of Fish and Game, Sacramento, California. Updates are noted in accounts that have been added or edited since original publication.