

UC SANTA CRUZ CAMPUS NATURAL RESERVE

SAN FRANCISCO DUSKY-FOOTED WOODRAT



Rui Chen

Scientific Name: *Neotoma fuscipes* subsp. *annectens*

Common Name: San Francisco Dusky-footed Woodrat

Global Rarity: Imperiled/Vulnerable

State listing: CA Species of Special Concern; Imperiled/Vulnerable

UCSC Rarity: Common

General Description

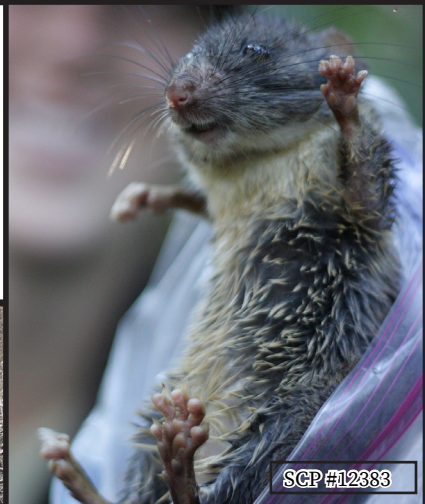
The San Francisco Dusky-footed Woodrat is the local subspecies of the more broadly distributed Dusky-footed Woodrat. Like members of the broader species, individuals construct large stick nests with distinct chambers for raising young, sleeping, and eating. These nests, which are either built on the ground or up to 5-10 m in trees or shrub branches, provide essential shelter for many other species such as salamanders, snakes, lizards, mice, frogs, crickets, beetles, and millipedes. A single woodrat may keep multiple houses, and visit them to broaden their forage range.

Identification

Fur: Brown-gray above, white/cream below chest, sooty-gray feet, and may have sooty-gray face

Tail: ~17-22 cm, all dark or faintly bicolored, lightly haired

Body length: ~19-23 cm



Geographic Range

This subspecies is largely restricted to the Santa Cruz Mountains and a few areas within the greater Bay Area of California.



Conservation Status

**California Species of
Special Concern**

UCSC Distribution

Common in appropriate habitat, which includes chaparral, mixed evergreen forest, and riparian areas.

Life History

Habitat: Oak woodland; chaparral; conifer, hardwood and mixed forest; riparian areas

Reproduction: Females choose the males and may mate with multiple males. One litter of 2-3 pups per year. Pups stay with mother for up to a year. The daughters tend to stay near the mother, and may even inherit her house. The males disperse up to 500 ft.

Behavior: The adults live alone in their nests, but they nest close to each other and form neighborhoods. They are primarily nocturnal.

Diet: Leaves, flowers, berries, seeds, nuts, acorns, and fungi. Favorite foods include poison oak, coast live oak, bay laurel, and coffeeberry

Predators: Coyotes, bobcats, foxes, owls

Fun Facts

- They are also called packrats or trade rats for their habit of picking up shiny objects while gathering food and sticks.
- Dusky-footed Woodrats rattle the tip of their tails in their nests when disturbed, something that is readily audible.

Threats

Statewide

1. Habitat loss
2. Wildfire or prescribed fire
3. Grazing in certain habitats may reduce cover needed for nesting and foraging

UCSC campus

1. Development
2. Wildfire or prescribed fire



Ways You Can Help

1. Work with the UCSC Campus Natural Reserve to map San Francisco Dusky-footed Woodrat nests on the UCSC campus

References and Photo Credits

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