



WILDLIFE NOTES

Pygmy mouse *Baiomys taylori*

Talk about small! The pygmy mouse is just seven or eight grams – about a quarter of an ounce – and must surely rank as one of New Mexico's smallest mammals. There is nothing down-sized about this mouse however. They reach adulthood at 50 days and produce their first litter at an average age of 82 days.

You are not likely to see pygmy mice in the wild. They are confined to southern Hidalgo County in New Mexico, the southeast corner of Arizona, and southern Texas locations. They

are normally found in plains and desert grasslands. Constructing runways under dense grass, these mice protect themselves from predators. Males help care for he young, which average three per litter. Pygmy mice are most active in the afternoon and early evening. They eat seeds and other plant parts, and probably are more numerous where there is a little extra rainfall – such as in swales or along the sides of roads.

Pygmy mice have been observed in stands of galleta, grama, sacaton, mesquite, and yucca. They point their noses upward when they sound a warning.

They most likely have to compete for their food with other scavengers, including cotton rats. They also need cover for concealment from

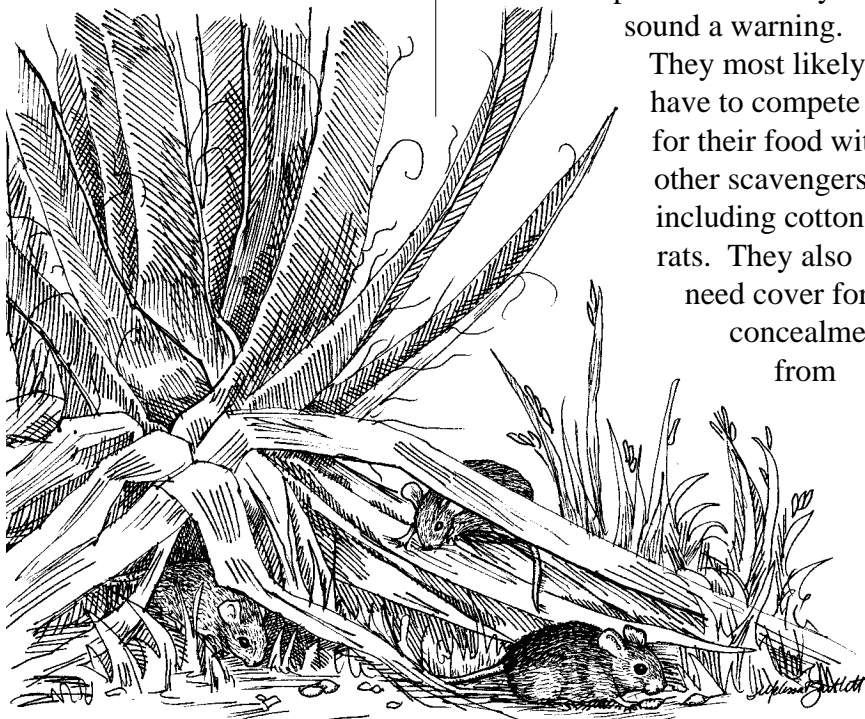
coyotes and raptors.

Chisel-tipped upper incisors are the dental trademarks of this mouse. The ears, head, and feet are small. Fur is dark on top, with reddish casts, and the stomach is gray or buff..

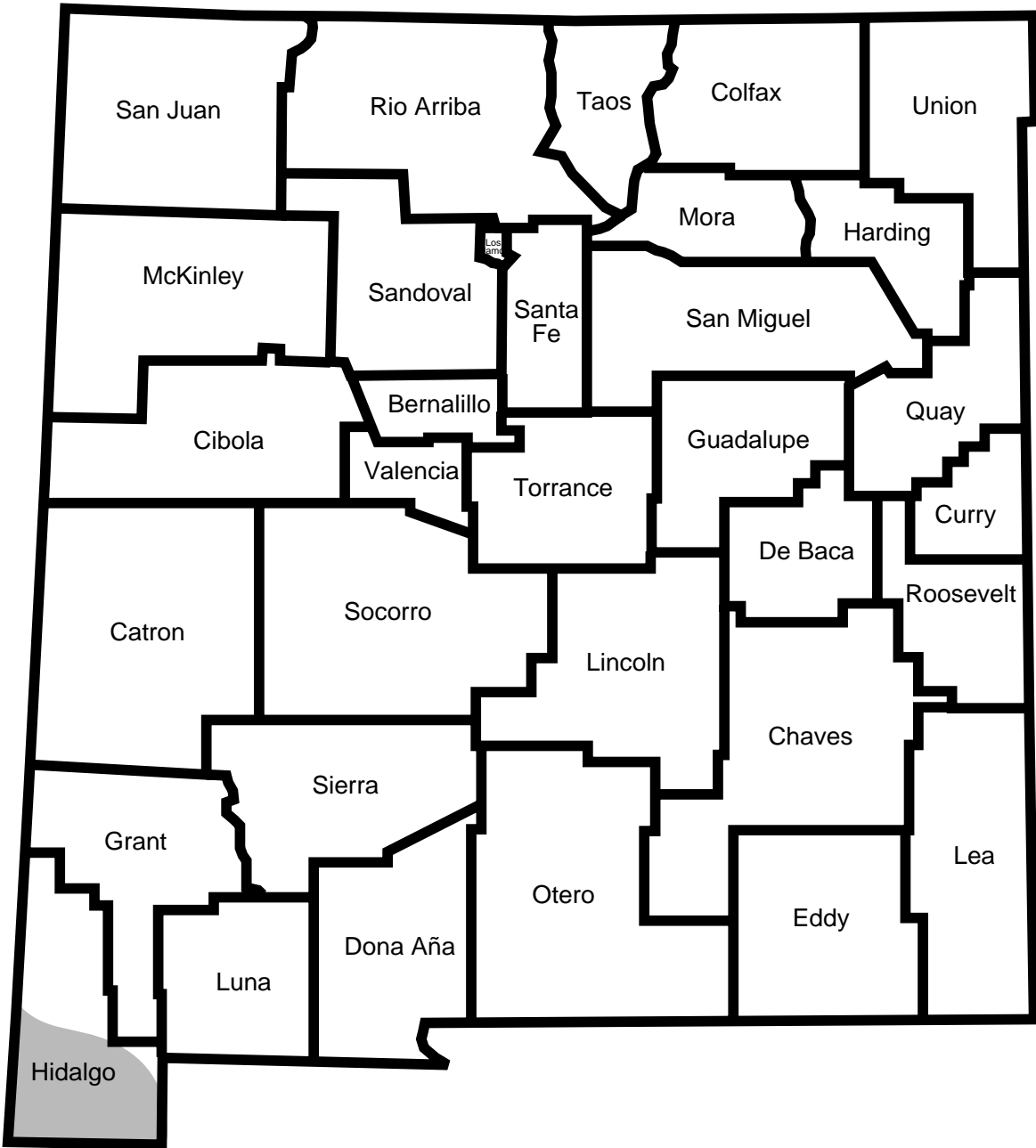
The other living species of *Baiomys* is found in Nayarit, in western Mexico. Some biologists think pygmy mice may be related to brown mice, *Scolinomys*, of Central America.

Pygmy mice have apparently been around a while, because evidence of their remains has been found from the Pliocene and Pleistocene eras.

Published 1992



Wildlife Notes is published by the Department of Game and Fish. If you are interested in obtaining additional copies, please send your request to:
Conservation Education Section
Department of Game and Fish
PO Box 25112
Santa Fe, NM 87504
(505) 476-8119



Shading indicates area of regular occurrence.