

Scientific name	<i>Apodemus agrarius</i> (Pallas, 1771)
Common name	Striped field mouse
Order - Family	Rodentia - Muridae
Global IUCN status	Least Concern - LC
National IUCN status	Least Concern - LC
Legal protection	Not protected by law

Taxonomy

The species has wide Eurasian range. In Italy, it is the only species belonging to the subgenus *Apodemus*. It is believed to have become recently part of the European fauna, as suggested by both the low genetic divergence recorded between European populations and the evidence that the oldest fossils found in Europe date back to 7500 years ago.

Measurements and description

Body weight: 16-27 g

Head-body length: 75-120 mm

Tail length: 70-85 mm

Foot length: 17-22 mm

The coat is brown, with an evident black stripe, a few millimeters wide, running the entire top of the back, from the base of the neck to the base of the tail. The belly is clear, grey or white.



Apodemus agrarius. Photo by Fabio Dartora.

General distribution

The species is widespread in a wide Palaearctic range extending from Central Europe in the west to the Caucasus in the south and Korea and China in the east. It is present on several islands of Korea and Japan, as well as in Taiwan.

Distribution in Italy

In Italy, the distribution of the species is limited to the plain areas of North-Eastern Italy. It is present in Friuli-Venezia Giulia, Trentino, Veneto and in some localities in Lombardy.

Habitat and Ecology

It is widespread in flat and low-hill areas, inhabiting wet biotopes with high environmental diversity. It is found in the marginal areas of small woods and cultivated fields and in the bushy areas. Compared to other *Apodemus* species, it is less nocturnal, being active also during the day and especially at dusk. It feeds on herbs, buds, seeds of both grasses and trees, as well as invertebrates.

Distinction from similar species

The ears are smaller than those of other Italian *Apodemus*, the length of the tail is shorter than the head-body length. The vibrissae are also shorter.

Did you know?

In the Asian part of its range, the species is often responsible for extensive damage to cereal crops. In Italy, it can sometimes cause damage to crops and to forest seedlings and plantings. Furthermore, especially in winter, it may enter rural houses and warehouses, where it can sometimes be harmful by consuming food and damaging structures.

References

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Author

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