



**P & K Pets
Info Sheet #06**

19 Magill Rd

Stepney

SA 5069

P: 08 8362 2375

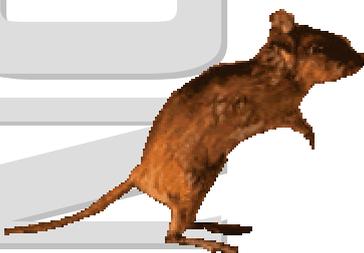
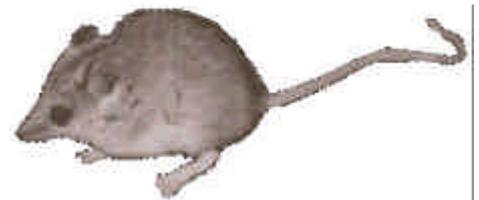
F: 08 8362 2942

info@pkpets.com.au

www.pkpets.com.au

HOPPING MICE

CARE



INFORMATION

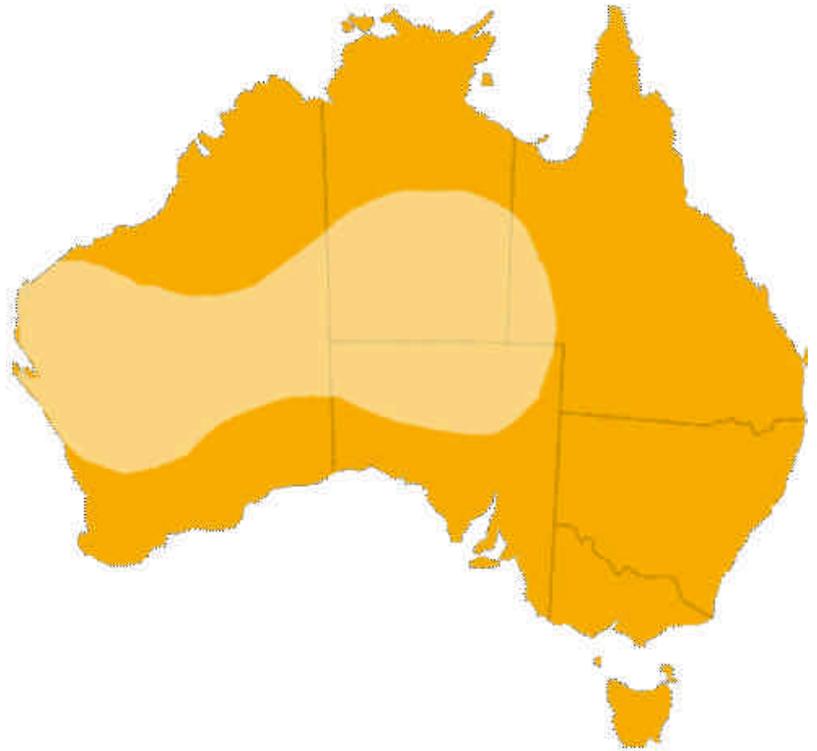


P & K Pets Info Sheet #06

19 Magill Rd
Stepney
SA 5069
P: 08 8362 2375
F: 08 8362 2942
info@pkpets.com.au
www.pkpets.com.au
ABN: 54 461 065 535

INTRODUCTION

The Spinifex Hopping Mouse (*notomys alexis*) is the most widespread of all hopping-mice and is found in Central Australia extending west in areas of sandy soil. Hummocky spiny spinifex is the characteristic vegetation. However they are also found in open Eucalypt woodland, Acacia shrubland and tussock grassland.



Hopping-mice are well-adapted to cope with the environmental conditions of arid Central Australia. They are nocturnal and shelter during the day in deep humid burrows. These can be up to 1 metre deep and colonies of up to 10 individuals may reside in each burrow system.

Spinifex Hopping-mice are relatively easy to obtain and can be kept indoors, although, as they are rodents, they do have a “mouse” smell. They weigh about 35 grams (range 27 – 45 grams) and have a head-body length of about 102 mm and a tail length of about 137 mm. Consequently, it is an ideal choice for anyone wishing to keep a small native animal, be they a first time novice or an experienced keeper.

HOUSING

A suitable environment would be an empty aquarium appropriately landscaped to accommodate a ground-dwelling mammal. Dry plasters sand, straw, sawdust or leaf litter are good bases for these animals. As they do dig, hollow logs and any other heavy objects should be placed at the bottom of the enclosure with the substrate placed over the top. This will prevent them from being injured should their tunnels collapse.



P & K Pets Info Sheet #06

19 Magill Rd

Stepney

SA 5069

P: 08 8362 2375

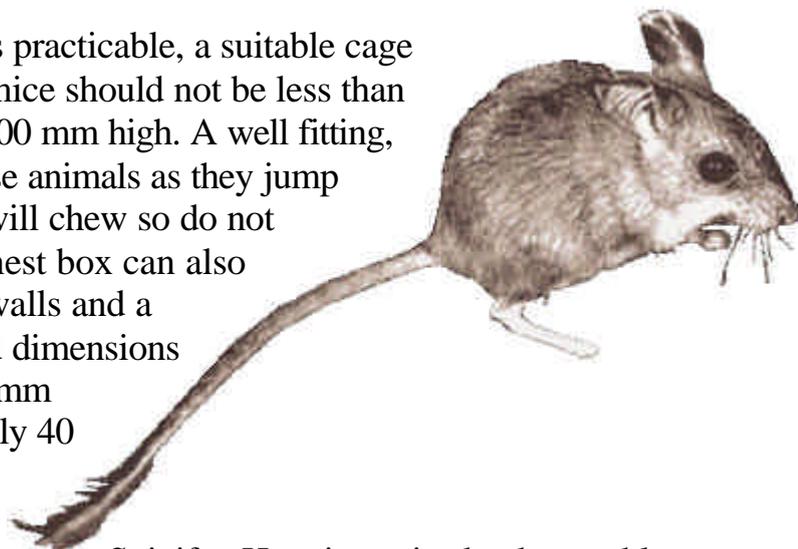
F: 08 8362 2942

info@pkpets.com.au

www.pkpets.com.au

ABN: 54 461 065 535

Although cages should be as large as practicable, a suitable cage size for a pair of Spinifex Hopping-mice should not be less than 900 mm long by 400 mm wide and 500 mm high. A well fitting, well-ventilated lid is essential for these animals as they jump very well. As they are rodents they will chew so do not put them in a wooden enclosure. A nest box can also be provided which consists of four walls and a simple but removable lid. Suggested dimensions could be 100 mm by 100 mm by 80 mm with an entrance hole of approximately 40 mm in diameter.



It is recommended that a cage holding two Spinifex Hopping-mice be thoroughly cleaned every 2 – 3 weeks to maintain a healthy cage environment. Naturally, when more animals are maintained, the cage will need to be cleaned more regularly. The animals should be removed to a secure holding area while their cage is being cleaned. Hopping-mice are very delicate animals and they should not be held by hand. Empty jars, drinking glasses, etc can be used to catch them without damaging them. This is not recommended for transportation over a long period of time, just for holding them for cage cleaning.

When trying to catch Spinifex Hopping-mice, do not grab them by the tail as this will strip away the fur and then the tail to die and drop off. Once this happens, it will not regrow. Like most animals, when you decide to introduce a new member to the group, always do this on neutral territory as this will prevent fighting from the dominant animal. Once this has been done (allow a couple of hours to allow familiarity) your group can be placed back into their original cage environment.



P & K Pets Info Sheet #06

19 Magill Rd
Stepney
SA 5069
P: 08 8362 2375
F: 08 8362 2942
info@pkpets.com.au
www.pkpets.com.au
ABN: 54 461 065 535

WATER

Water should always be available, a sipper bottle for water will need to be provided. Standard sip/drip bottles that are available from most pet shops for small animals are perfectly suitable and preferable over a water bowl or dish.

FOOD

Captive diets should preferably consist of a variety of foods including fruits, vegetables, seeds and some small invertebrates. A weekly feeding schedule should include small parrot mix, dog biscuits, various chopped fruit and vegetables including apple, peas, sweet corn, melon, pear etc (but not citrus fruits), plus some live foods, such as mealworms or crickets etc. Clean, fresh water should always be available. Allow approximately 1 tablespoon of seed and 1 tablespoon of fruit and vegetables provided on a per animal per day rotational basis. Additional foods, such as seeding grasses, fresh grass, leaves, etc. will be appreciated by your animals, but be careful to only obtain these from sources that you know are free from chemical contaminants and pesticides. As Spinifex Hopping-mice are not strictly nocturnal they can often be seen foraging about for food during the day, however they are primarily active at dusk and dawn.

HANDLING

If the animal is caught and held by the tail there is a danger of stripping the tail bare of skin. A simple method of inspection is to lower a glass tumbler over the animal and then use the palm of the hand to keep the animal contained. The sex of the animal and other features can be observed through the glass. Careful handling of the young will "gentle" the animals, and females will become more settled with successive litters and will accept handling.





P & K Pets Info Sheet #06

19 Magill Rd
Stepney
SA 5069
P: 08 8362 2375
F: 08 8362 2942
info@pkpets.com.au
www.pkpets.com.au
ABN: 54 461 065 535

BREEDING

Although wild mammals usually breed in the spring, breeding can occur at any time of the year in captivity. The gestation period is approximately 32 days with an average litter size of about 3 – 4 young. Weaning is at around 30 -40 days and sexual maturity is at approximately 60 days. Females will leave the young in the nest and both males and females will retrieve any young that wander away from this site. The life expectancy is 3 – 4 years.

In captivity, overcrowding may occur and this is often associated with the death of surplus males, chewed ears and tails, cessation of breeding and fur loss. Breeding in the wild suggests that these animals lead a monogamous lifestyle however, in captivity a single male can serve several females. Mating can be long and sometimes aggressive.

OBSERVATION

Hopping mice are normally active at night, but this pattern can be changed by providing food early in the morning and/or enclosing the vivarium in black plastic (or paper) with peep holes for observation. Red cellophane can be used on one side and also on the lid under the light (watch ventilation though), as the mice do not seem to detect red (or blue) light. At night strong white light (remove cellophane or switch' on extra lights) is left on the mice to simulate daytime. This also solves night time heating problems. A time switch is very useful. Red and white fluorescent tubes can be used in place of incandescent lamps.

