

REPORT ON THE OCCURRENCE OF *RATTUS RATTUS WROUGHTONI*
HINTON, 1918 (MAMMALIA : RODENTIA : MURIDAE), IN
MADHYA PRADESH, INDIA

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While studying a small collection of rodents, collected during the recent survey trip to Balaghat and Mandla districts of Madhya Pradesh in 1991, I came across a number of specimens of *Rattus rattus wroughtoni* Hinton, 1918. Further, while examining the collection of this taxon present in the National Zoological Collection, some more specimens from Shahdol, Sidhi and Rewa districts of Madhya Pradesh collected and identified by late Dr. M. L. Roonwal, were traced out, but, which were not recorded by him.

According to authoritative literature (Ellerman and Morrison-Scott 1951 and Ellerman 1961) the distributional range of *Rattus rattus wroughtoni* Hinton, 1918 is restricted to southern peninsular India only. Therefore, the present material of this taxon from Madhya Pradesh constitutes its first authentic record from that state and eventually extends its distribution much further north and north-eastwards.

The present study reveals that two of the white-bellied forms of *Rattus rattus*, viz. *Rattus rattus narbadae* and *Rattus rattus wroughtoni* occur in Madhya Pradesh, out of which *Rattus rattus narbadae* is restricted to the West and *Rattus rattus wroughtoni* to the east of 80°E longitude.

Further, during the course of collection trip to Balaghat and Mandla districts of Madhya Pradesh, *Rattus rattus wroughtoni* Hinton and *Rattus rattus rufescens* (Gray) were trapped at the same spot both inside the kitchen as well as in the forests. However, out of 21 specimens of both the forms, no intergrades were found. This supports the view of Tiwari *et al.* (1971) that *Rattus rufescens* is a full species and not a subspecies of *Rattus rattus*.

The details of the specimens are given below. All measurements (in millimetres) are taken after Ellerman (1961).

Material : Madhya Pradesh : Balaghat district : 3 ♂, 2 ♀, 1 sub ad ♀ : Mukki, 21-26 Jan 1991, R. K. Ghose coll. ; 2 ♂ : Supkhar, 28, 29 Jan 1991, R. K. Ghose coll. Mandla district : 3 ♂, 3 ♀ : Kanha, 15-19 Jan 1991, R. K. Ghose coll. ; 4 ♂ : Motinala, 1, 2 Feb

1991, R. K. Ghose coll. Shahdol district : 2 ♂ : Baiohari, c 74 Km SE of Rewa, 15 Apr 1947, M. L. Roonwal coll. Sidhi district : 1 ♂, 2 ♀ : Jhuko, c 134 Km E of Rewa, 31 Mar—2 Apr 1947, M. L. Roonwal coll. Rewa district : 1 sub ad ♀ : Waidan, c 106 Km E of Rewa, 22 Mar 1947, M. L. Roonwal coll.

Measurements : External : 12 ♂ : Head and body 145-182 (169.5) ; tail 175-230 (196.8) ; hind-foot 30.5-34 (31.9) ; ear 20-25 (22.4). 6 ♀ : Head and body 137-178 (155.3) ; tail 155-217 (193.5) ; hind-foot 29-32 (30.8) ; ear 21-23.5 (22.1).

Cranial : 5 ♂ : Occipitonasal 40.5-41.7 (41.0) ; palate 21.3-22.9 (21.8) ; anterior palatal foramina 7.1-7.7 (7.4) ; nasal 13.8-15.0 (14.3) ; upper toothrow 6.0-6.6 (6.3) ; bulla 7.4-7.7 (7.5). 3 ♀ : occipitonasal 39.1-41.6 (40.7) ; palate 21.1-22.3 (21.8) ; anterior palatal foramina 7.1-7.4 (7.2) ; nasal 13.4-14.5 (13.9) ; upper toothrow 6.2-6.6 (6.4) ; bulla 7.2-7.3 (7.3).

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