

# DEAD MAN DUNES



The Dead Man Dunes are a small, slightly declining population of Island mice that live in the forested, mid-elevation, Paradise Palm habitats of Darlost’s Island southern coast. So named for their unpleasantness and the sandy transitional zone that separates the Paradise palm forest from the Beach Bum beach, this population is uniquely reviled by native islanders and tourists alike. Unlike their neighbors to the west in the Snowmelt Thicket and the Beach Bums to the east, the Island mice from Dead Man Dunes are reclusive, ill-tempered, and the most prone to bite.



Despite their outwardly abrasive demeanor and unusual affinity for field technicians setting traps to heavy metal rock music, this population is extremely sensitive to loud noise, particularly the explosive bursts from falling coconuts hitting the forest floor.



The Dead Man Dunes population narrowly escapes Skull Mountain’s plume of toxic gases, thanks to the cold winter trade winds, which blow the plume toward the Snowmelt thicket and Cannibal Cove.



Each spring, as the snowcapped peaks of the mountains thaw, the river bisecting the Snowmelt Thicket and Dead Man Dunes begins to flood. Visit Castaway Island to learn more about these floods and potential implications for the Dead Man Dunes.



During the hurricane of 2002, the Dead Man Dunes mice escaped rising waters by climbing to the tops of trees, but many mice died from cardiac arrest as loud thunder echoed across the Island.



After his hands healed from the bites of capture mice, Steven “Marley” James carved the results of his mark-recapture population estimates for the Dead Man Dune onto the sides of dead trees. Over the last 10 years, the Dead Man Dunes population has decreased slightly, and Mr. James reasons that emigration to the Beach Bums population is solely responsible for this decline. However, the native islanders disagree strongly and submit drowning during the spring floods is solely responsibly for this decline. Further, a recently published study indicates that this population has the lowest fecundity of any Island mouse population, likely due to their antagonistic, intraspecific behavior. An expert plan recently indicated that the decline is likely a result of all three, as more and more Dead Man Dune mice head for the sunnier Beach Bum beaches, are lost to floods, and the reproductive rate remains relatively low.

Survey Year	1970-1980	1981-1990	1990-2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006-2010	2011	2012-2013	2014	2015
# of Individuals (From Tree Carvings)	200	198	190	200	150	150	140	130	125	110	100	90	80

## CLIMATE CHANGE

Pirate rats currently do not drift ashore at Dead Man Dune. But, if the cold winter trade winds shift to the southeast as predicted under the high emissions scenarios, Pirate rats could invade the palms of the Dead Man Dunes, although researchers disagree whether the off-putting antagonism of the Island mice in this population will increase or deter predation.

