

# DARLOST'S DOME



**S**o named for its resemblance to Chuck Darlost's prominent forehead, Darlost's Dome supports a small, relatively isolated population of Island mice in its high-elevation mountain habitats. The Island mice on Darlost's Dome closely resemble their Misty Mountain neighbors to the east, except mice on Darlost's Dome have lighter brown fur due to the warmer temperatures and lower elevation of their mountaintop habitats compared to those on Misty Mountain. Both Mountain populations are uniquely

adapted to their mountain habitats, and use interstitial spaces between rocks and boulders to hide their nests, escape Jack's sparrow, and stay warm if mountaintop temperatures drop below 80°F.



Genetic analyses reveal that approximately 1,500 years ago the two Mountain populations were connected as one population, but became isolated following an eruption from Skull Mountain that widened the valley separating the two mountains. This valley now acts as a complete barrier to genetic exchange between the two, small Mountain populations. Although Island mice on Darlost's Dome share some haplotypes with other coastal and mid-elevation populations, genetic analysis reveals that they have been isolated for hundreds of years. The small population sizes of both Mountain populations continues to be a concern.



Skull Mountain's toxic plume of volcanic gasses rarely reaches Darlost's Dome due to the barrier provided by Misty Mountain. As a result, Darlost's Dome supports a larger population of Island mice of approximately 101 individuals. However, shifts in the cold winter trade winds due to climate change could expose Darlost's Dome already small population of Island mice to increased concentrations of toxic gases.



The native islanders of Cannibal Cove prize the darker, thicker pelts of both Mountain populations for use in ceremonial garments. The islanders collect no more than 15 mice from either Darlost's Dome or Misty Mountain every 3 years.

Counts conducted by the native islanders reveal that this population is decreasing slightly in size.

Survey Year	1979	1982	1985	1988	1991	1994	1997	2000	2003	2006	2009	2012	2015
# of Individuals (counts during collection)	120	120	120	120	125	120	120	122	115	110	110	101	101