

Geocapromys thoracatus. By Gary S. Morgan

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Geocapromys Chapman, 1901

Capromys (*Geocapromys*) Chapman, 1901:314. Type species *Capromys brownii* Fischer, by original designation. First described as subgenus of *Capromys*.

Geocapromys: G. M. Allen, 1917:8. First use of name as genus.
Synodontomys G. M. Allen, 1917:5. Type species *Capromys columbianus* Chapman, by original designation.

CONTEXT AND CONTENT. Order Rodentia, Suborder Hystricognathi, Superfamily Octodontoidea, Family Capromyidae. *Geocapromys* includes six described species: *G. brownii* from Jamaica (see Anderson et al., 1983); *G. ingrahami* from East Plana Cay, Bahamas; *G. thoracatus* from Little Swan Island; and three extinct species known from fossil deposits in Cuba, *G. columbianus*, *G. megas*, and *G. pleistocenicus*. An undescribed extinct species of *Geocapromys* has been reported from fossil deposits in the Cayman Islands (Morgan and Woods, 1986). *Geocapromys* is distinguished from the closely related genus *Capromys* by a number of external and cranial characters, including: considerably shorter tail (<25% of total length); reduced first digit on front foot; shorter finer fur; origin of upper incisor root capsule high on maxilla above P4; broad vertically or posteriorly oriented superior zygomatic root of maxilla; anteriorly convergent upper tooth rows; 30° inclination of occlusal surface on all cheek teeth; and presence of third anterolingual reentrant (anteroflexid) on p4 (Morgan, 1985; Woods and Howland, 1979). The following is a key to the three Recent species of *Geocapromys*:

1. Size large (length of head and body greater than 370 mm; alveolar length of maxillary tooth row greater than 18.0 mm); tail considerably shorter than hind foot; dorsal coloration dark, ranging from dark reddish-brown to blackish-brown; dorsal margin of frontals noticeably inflated anteriorly *G. brownii*
Size small (length of head and body less than 350 mm; alveolar length of maxillary tooth row less than 16.5 mm); tail equal in length to or longer than hind foot; dorsal coloration lighter, generally grayish-brown; frontals not inflated 2
2. Tail approximately equal to length of hind foot; ears essentially naked; transverse band of cream-colored fur on venter between front limbs; braincase and auditory bullae not inflated; jugal spine present; small spinous process present on posterior margin of palate along midline *G. thoracatus*
Tail considerably longer than hind foot; ears densely furred, with two long tufts on dorsal margin; cream-colored spots generally absent on venter, but when present extend lengthwise between front and hind limbs; braincase and auditory bullae noticeably inflated; jugal spine absent; palatal spine absent *G. ingrahami*

Geocapromys thoracatus (True, 1888)

Swan Island Hutia

Capromys brachyurus thoracatus True, 1888:469. Type locality, "Little Swan Island, one of two small islands lying at the entrance of the Gulf of Honduras."

Capromys (*Geocapromys*) *thoracatus*: Chapman, 1901:321. First recognition of *thoracatus* as a distinct species.

Geocapromys thoracatus: G. M. Allen, 1917:8-9. First use of present name combination.

CONTEXT AND CONTENT. Context in generic account above. No subspecies of *Geocapromys thoracatus* are recognized.

DIAGNOSIS. As noted in the key, *G. thoracatus* differs from the two other Recent species in the genus, *G. brownii* and *G. ingrahami*, in: size (length of head and body >330 mm and <350 mm); color; and length of tail. Ears comparatively large, almost naked, and lacking tufts; 17 caudal vertebrae present (*G. brownii* averages 14 caudals; *G. ingrahami* averages 19); frontals not inflated anteriorly or constricted posteriorly; temporal crests strong, but rarely meeting to form sagittal crest; braincase and auditory bullae not inflated; jugal spine present, but not large; internal nares constricted dorso-ventrally resulting from dorsal inclination of palate from anterior to posterior; small spinous process on posterior edge of palate along midline. Alveolar and occlusal lengths of upper and lower tooth rows comparatively shorter than in other two species as a result of reduced amount of cement on all cheek teeth (Morgan, 1985).

GENERAL CHARACTERS. *Geocapromys thoracatus* (Fig. 1) has grayish-brown upperparts and a light brown to tan venter. The majority of the hairs on the dorsum are light brown at the base with tan tips, but interspersed with these, especially in the middle of the back, are long unbanded dark-brown hairs. These darker hairs, together with the paler-banded hairs, produce the overall grayish-brown color. The guard hairs on the back average 20 to 25 mm in length, being slightly longer on the rump. The sides are lighter than the dorsum and darker than the venter, with the dark brown hairs on the back giving way to unbanded medium brown hairs. The uniform light brown underparts are interrupted by a band of lighter, cream-colored hair 1 to 3 cm in width that extends transversely across the chest between the front limbs. The rhinarium has a dense covering of short hairs above the external nares, with somewhat longer hairs extending slightly distal to the nares. Eight to 10 fine mystacial vibrissae averaging 50 mm in length are present on either side of the snout. The ears are comparatively large and appear to be almost naked, although both external and internal surfaces have a sparse covering of extremely short fine hairs. Ears tufts are absent. The tail is short, approximately equal to length of the hind foot, and has a scanty covering of long dark-brown hairs. The mammae, two on each side, are located about midway up on the thorax. Males possess a well-developed spatulate-shaped baculum. Sexual dimorphism is not marked, but males are slightly larger than females in most cranial and external measurements, although there is broad overlap between them (Morgan, 1985).

The cranium of *G. thoracatus* (Fig. 2) is intermediate in size between the larger *G. brownii* and the smaller *G. ingrahami*. Cranial measurements of *G. thoracatus* average 15 to 20% smaller than *G. brownii*, depending on the measurement, with almost no overlap between the smallest *G. brownii* and the largest *G. thoracatus*. The



FIG. 1. Photograph of *Geocapromys thoracatus* collected on Little Swan Island in 1937 (from Moyne, 1938).



FIG. 2. Dorsal, ventral, and left lateral views of the skull, and lateral and dorsal views of the left mandible, and outline drawings of the upper dentition (bottom left) and lower dentition (bottom right) of *Geocapromys thoracatus* (American Museum of Natural History 34547).

Swan Island hutia averages 6 to 8% larger than *G. ingrahami*, but there is broad overlap between them in some measurements. The frontals show no evidence of the anterior inflation or the constriction in the vicinity of the fronto-parietal suture that are so characteristic of *G. brownii*. Consequently, the frontals are somewhat broader

posterior to the supraorbital processes than anterior to them, in direct contrast with *G. brownii*. The supraorbital processes are reduced. The temporal crests are well developed, but only rarely meet to form a weak sagittal crest. The lambdoidal crest and paroccipital processes are prominent. The zygomatic arches are broadest lateral to the orbits. The jugal is deep below the orbits, the lateral jugal fossa is prominent, and a small jugal spine is present. The superior zygomatic root of the maxilla is broad and oriented vertically or slightly posteriorly. The entire zygomatic arch is rotated ventrally such that the ventral margin of the jugals is inclined relative to the alveolar margin of the upper cheek teeth. The jugal spine and part of the lateral jugal fossa project ventral to the occlusal surface of the cheek teeth, obstructing the molars in lateral view. The palate and upper cheek teeth are slightly inclined dorsally from anterior to posterior. Because of the dorsal inclination of the palate, the internal areas are constricted dorso-ventrally. A small spinous process projects 1 to 2 mm beyond the posterior palatal margin along the midline. The upper tooth rows converge anteriorly. Unlike *G. ingrahami*, the braincase is not inflated nor is the pterygoid region constricted. The auditory bullae are not inflated, and hence do not project ventrally below the basioccipital. The mandible (Fig. 2) has a broad rounded masseteric crest that originates ventrolateral to the p4, curves laterally, and terminates posteriorly in the prominent spinous angular process. The pterygoid shelf on the medial surface of the angular process is well developed. The articular surface of the condyloid process is ovoid to nearly circular in outline, and the postcondyloid process is reduced. The coronoid process originates lateral to the m3, is triangular in shape, and has the tip oriented vertically (Morgan, 1985).

The dental formula is: i1/1, c0/0, p1/1, m3/3, total 10. The upper and lower incisors are strongly curved and more procumbent than in species of *Capromys*. They are pale yellow to cream-colored, in contrast to the deep yellowish-orange incisors of *G. brownii*. The upper and lower molars are essentially square in outline, whereas the fourth premolars are slightly longer than wide (Fig. 2). The occlusal surface of the cheek teeth is flat. The upper tooth rows are inclined labially at a 30° angle, while the lowers are inclined lingually at the same angle. The cheek teeth are hypsodont, rootless, and evergrowing. The upper teeth are characterized by two labial and one lingual re-entrant enamel folds (flexi), while the lowers have one labial and two lingual re-entrants (flexids), except for the p4, which has a third small anterolingual re-entrant (anteroflexid). Alternating with the flexi/flexids are triangular-shaped lophi/lophids, three labial and two lingual on the uppers and two labial and three lingual on the lowers, except for the p4, which has four lingual lophids. These alternating enamel re-entrants and triangular-shaped lophi/lophids are convergent with the enamel patterns of some microtine rodents (Fig. 2). A thin covering of cement is present on all teeth external to the continuous enamel bands, whereas the region within the enamel bands consists entirely of dentine. The amount of cement is reduced on all cheek teeth in *G. thoracatus* in comparison to its congeners. In particular, the cement is thin or absent on the anterior edge of P4/p4, posterior edge of M3/m3, posterolabial margins of P4-M2, and anterolingual margins of m1-m3. The edges of the labial lophi and lingual lophids on the upper and lower molars, respectively, are more prominent in *G. thoracatus* because the flexi and flexids are not filled entirely to their margins with cement as they are in *G. brownii* and *G. ingrahami*. The thinner layer of cement on the anterior and posterior margins of the cheek teeth accounts for the smaller teeth and shorter tooth row lengths observed in this species when compared to *G. ingrahami*, which is generally smaller otherwise (Morgan, 1985).

The postcranial skeleton is conservative, and as such is typical of most members of the Capromyidae. The vertebrae consist of: 7 cervicals, 15 thoracics, 6 lumbar, 4 sacral, and 17 caudals. The first digit on the front foot is highly reduced, possessing two small phalanges and a tiny, blunt claw. The remaining four digits on the forefoot and all five digits on the hind foot are well-developed and have long sharp claws. The proximal limb segments are approximately equal in length to the distal segments on both limbs; however, all segments of the hind limb (femur, tibia-fibula, foot) are approximately 50% longer than the corresponding limb segments in the front limb (humerus, radius-ulna, foot; Morgan, 1985).

Means and observed ranges (in parentheses) for external and cranial measurements (in mm) of adult non-captive specimens of *G. thoracatus* (8 individuals for external measurements, 20 individuals for cranial measurements) are as follows: length of head and body,

335 (310 to 344); length of tail, 65 (57 to 70); length of hind foot, 66 (64 to 70); length of ear from notch, 26 (24 to 28); greatest length of skull, 68.6 (65.9 to 73.0); condylobasal length, 63.6 (60.4 to 67.9); zygomatic breadth, 34.8 (32.7 to 36.9); interorbital breadth, 17.8 (16.3 to 19.3); mastoid breadth, 25.0 (23.4 to 27.1); length of upper diastema, 17.0 (16.0 to 18.5); alveolar length of maxillary tooth row, 15.2 (14.4 to 15.9); greatest length of mandible, 45.2 (41.4 to 48.3); length of mandibular symphysis, 19.8 (19.0 to 20.7); length of lower diastema, 12.8 (11.5 to 14.3); alveolar length of mandibular tooth row, 14.6 (13.3 to 15.4). According to available data in museum collections, only one specimen of *G. thoracatus* was ever weighed (BMNH 49.648), an adult female weighing "1 lb. 14 oz." (850 g). Based on the small size of the skull of this animal, individuals probably ranged up to 1 kg in mass, if not slightly more (Morgan, 1985).

DISTRIBUTION. *Geocapromys thoracatus* is known only from Little Swan Island, a tiny (2 km²), remote, limestone island located in the northwestern Caribbean Sea at 17°24'N latitude and 83°56'W longitude (Fig. 3). Even though Great Swan Island is less than 0.5 km west of Little Swan, is larger, and supports a more luxuriant vegetation, there is no evidence that *G. thoracatus* ever occurred there. The Swan Islands are among the most isolated islands in the West Indies, being separated from the nearest land by a distance of 180 km and depths in excess of 2,000 m. Geologic evidence suggests that the Swan Islands have not been connected to other land areas since they formed in the Miocene. However, during Pleistocene glacial intervals, portions of the Nicaraguan Plateau may have been emergent, thus providing the means by which *G. thoracatus* (or its progenitor) could have reached the Swan Islands from Jamaica by island hopping. Although it has been suggested that *G. thoracatus* may have been carried to the Swan Islands from Jamaica by Amerindian peoples, the morphological distinctiveness of this species would argue that it has been isolated on Little Swan Island since the late Pleistocene or earlier (Morgan, 1985).

FOSSIL RECORD. No fossils of *G. thoracatus* are known from the Swan Islands. However, Miller (1916) referred an edentulous mandible and a femur from an archeological site near Salt River, Clarendon Parish, Jamaica, to *G. thoracatus*. Miller (1916:48) distinguished these two specimens from *G. brownii* by their "conspicuously smaller size (greatest length of femur without epiphysis about 56 mm, lower tooth row 16.4 instead of 19.4) and in the obviously reduced condition of the third molar . . ." An examination of these fossils in the U.S. National Museum of Natural History confirmed that the lack of the epiphysis on the femur and the reduced m3 are juvenile features, and the two specimens are clearly referable to *G. brownii*, not *G. thoracatus*. Furthermore, the largest individual of *G. thoracatus* measured has a mandibular toothrow length of only 15.4 mm, considerably smaller than Miller's specimen from Jamaica.

FORM AND FUNCTION. Nothing is known about the physiology of *G. thoracatus*, nor are there any anatomical studies of its myology or internal organ systems. Knowledge of this species is restricted to external and skeletal features. Facial vibrissae consist of mystacial, genal, and superciliary tufts. Anderson et al. (1983) figured the vibrissae, fore and hind feet, and female anogenital region of the closely related species, *G. brownii*. Because of the enlarged clitoris in female *Geocapromys*, it is likely that collectors incorrectly determined the sex of at least some specimens of *G. thoracatus*, as only four of the 21 sexed specimens examined in museum collections were recorded as females (Morgan, 1985).

ECOLOGY. Little was recorded about the ecology and behavior of *G. thoracatus* prior to its extinction (Lowe, 1911; Moyné, 1938). *G. thoracatus* occurred only on Little Swan Island, a minuscule, rugged, uninhabited island composed of uplifted coralline limestone. The plateau formed by the top of the island is densely covered with low trees, thorn scrub, and cacti, that form a low canopy above the pinnacled, fissured, and deeply-eroded limestone surface. According to Moyné (1938:83), "As there is no soil on the island and the animals have no opportunity of burrowing, they live in the jagged fissures in the coral rock." Apparently, none of the species of *Geocapromys* dig their own burrows, as both *G. brownii* (Anderson et al., 1983) and *G. ingrahami* (Clough, 1972) also inhabit natural crevices, caves, and solution holes in areas of limestone karst.

Lowe (1911:114) noted that the hutias were, ". . . diurnal in

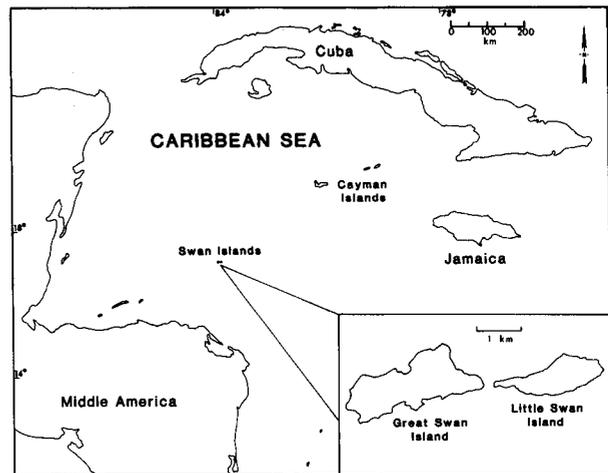


FIG. 3. Outline map of western Caribbean Sea showing location of Swan Islands. Inset in lower right corner is an enlarged map of Swan Islands.

their habits." Moyné (1938:84) remarked that, ". . . they seem only to leave the shelter of the cactus thickets late in the day, two or three hours before sunset." Clough (1976:44-45) related the account of a Captain Glidden, a long-time resident of Great Swan Island, who said that, ". . . the hutias on Little Swan were active in the daytime. They could frequently be seen by fishermen returning late in the day as their boats passed by the open cliff tops." This diurnal, or perhaps more accurately crepuscular, activity cycle contrasts with *G. brownii* and *G. ingrahami* (Anderson et al., 1983; Clough, 1972), both of which are almost exclusively nocturnal. There are no direct observations available on the food habits of *G. thoracatus*, except a statement by Moyné (1938:84) that the hutias ". . . browse on a kind of wild vine which grows in profusion on the edges of the limestone cliffs." Clough (1976) noted that food plants selected by *G. ingrahami* on East Plana Cay were abundant on Little Swan, especially the shrubs *Strumpfia maritima* and *Phyllanthus epiphyllanthus*.

Moyné (1938:83) found the hutias, ". . . so quarrelsome that their ears were scarred and mutilated and frequently bleeding from fierce bites. They spent the first night on board in a large pen over my cabin and kept me awake by their incessant fighting and squeaking." Conversely, Lowe (1911:112) noted that, "This rat is of an extremely mild and almost genial disposition . . ." After exhibiting a specimen of *G. thoracatus* to King Edward VII and the king's dog, Lowe (1911:114) remarked that, "The rat exhibited not the faintest signs of fear or suspicion in the presence of the dog, or even of awe in the presence of His Majesty . . ." As with other capromyids, *G. thoracatus* gave birth to one or sometimes two precocial young. Moyné (1938:83) stated that, ". . . the only birth during our three months' observation took place during the night and the young animal was dead by the morning. It was so large and mature in appearance that the b'sun mistook it for an adult . . ." Another of the females Moyné took to England gave birth to two young.

Swan Island hutias were kept in captivity on two occasions. Lowe (1911) captured two live specimens on Little Swan in 1908, one of which died on the trip back to England. The other hutia died soon after its arrival at The Zoological Society of London on 17 July 1908. Moyné (1938) collected 14 live hutias on Little Swan in 1937 in hopes of establishing a captive breeding colony. He stated that (1938:84), "On arrival in England the females were given to three of my friends who specialize in breeding rare species." None of these animals appears to have survived more than 3 years. According to accession records of The Zoological Society of London, six Swan Island hutias were presented to the Society by Moyné on 7 February 1938. Two of these individuals were presented to J. Delacour and two more died a month later from injuries inflicted by their companions. The following year the two remaining captive hutias died of pneumonia. The mammal collections of the British Museum (Natural History) contain four specimens of *G. thoracatus* received from the London Zoo in the late 1930s and early 1940s. These were four of the six hutias originally collected on Little Swan

by Moynes. The skin label attached to one of these specimens (BMNH 73.1781), a male named "Archie," reads "Lived in the London Zoo from 25 February 1938 to 22 May 1940" (both the arrival date and death date of this specimen conflict somewhat with data provided by the London Zoo).

Geocapromys thoracatus was first discovered on Little Swan Island in 1887 by Charles H. Townsend, the naturalist aboard the U.S. Fish Commission Steamer *Albatross*, who collected the type series of two specimens described by True the following year. Naturalists in the first half of this century found hutias to be extremely abundant on Little Swan Island. Lowe (1911), who visited Little Swan for several days in 1908, saw more than a dozen individuals and G. Nelson collected 15 Swan Island hutias for the Museum of Comparative Zoology in March and April of 1912 (Morgan, 1985). Moynes (1938), the last person to collect live specimens of *G. thoracatus*, found hutias so abundant on Little Swan during his brief visit in 1937 that he obtained 12 live specimens in about 2 h. Moynes (1938:86) also noted that, "... only a few weeks previously the head man on the western island had introduced six goats, and if these animals multiply the destruction of the flora and fauna is only a question of time." Several years later, G. M. Allen (1942:110-111) made this unfortunately prophetic statement, "At the present time the species [*G. thoracatus*] seems safe enough in the narrow limits of its island home, but should any important changes take place there, such as clearing, or the introduction of goats or mongooses [Allen was apparently not aware of Moynes's book at that time], its future would at once be in danger." According to Stewart (1962:141-142), who visited the Swan Islands for 7 days in March of 1960 aboard the U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey Ship *Explorer*, "None of the expedition personnel saw any [*G. thoracatus*] on Little Swan Island, and the five Cayman Islanders who went to Little Swan Island specifically to catch specimens for the *Explorer* to bring back spent all of one day on the island but saw none, neither did they see any of the droppings which had been much in evidence some 10 years previously. This, they said, had been the case since the hurricane in 1955; they had seen none since then." Based on this evidence *G. thoracatus* went extinct sometime between 1950 and 1960. The Swan Islands suffered a devastating hurricane in 1955 and in the late 1950s a box of unwanted cats was released on Little Swan (Clough, 1976). These two events, along with the introduction of goats some years previously, undoubtedly resulted in the rapid demise of the Swan Island hutia. R. Crombie and S. Busack spent 2 days on Little Swan in February 1974 collecting reptiles for the Smithsonian Institution, but saw no hutias or their previously omnipresent fecal pellets (R. Crombie, personal communication). G. Clough and R. Howe spent 5 days on Little Swan in July and August of 1974 (Clough, 1976) specifically looking for *G. thoracatus* or evidence of its existence there. No hutias or fecal pellets were found and a weathered skull provided the only evidence that the species had ever occurred on the island. Taking into account the great abundance of hutias observed on Little Swan Island by earlier visitors and the total lack of evidence of their existence there after 1960, it appears almost certain that *G. thoracatus* is extinct. The IUCN Red Data Book (Thornback and Jenkins, 1982:297) lists the Swan Island hutia (they call it *G. brownii thoracatus*) as, "... almost certainly extinct," apparently on the basis of Clough's (1976) observations.

A comparatively large body of information is available on the ecology, behavior, and reproductive biology of *G. brownii* (Anderson et al., 1983; Oliver, 1976) and *G. ingrahami* (Clough, 1972; Howe, 1974; Howe and Clough, 1971). In light of the lack of data available on *G. thoracatus*, these accounts should be consulted for information on the ecology of *Geocapromys*. Although conjectural, the ecology and behavior of *G. thoracatus* would probably have most closely approximated that of *G. ingrahami*, as both species inhabit(ed) small limestone islands with xeric vegetation. There are no data available on the genetics of *G. thoracatus*.

REMARKS. *Geocapromys thoracatus* originally was described by True (1888) as a subspecies of the Jamaican hutia, *Capromys brachyurus* Gosse, 1851 (= *C. brownii* Fischer, 1830). True (1888) compared only external characters in the two forms using Gosse's (1851) original description, as specimens of the Jamaican animal were not available to him. True (1888:468) distinguished *thoracatus* primarily by the presence of a "... white band [of fur] across the breast." J. A. Allen (1891) compared *G. thoracatus* and *G. ingrahami*, and noted that these two species were

similar in coloration, but differed in size and several cranial features, the Swan Island animal being larger. Allen (1891:336) figured the upper and lower dentition and zygomatic arch of the holotype of *G. thoracatus*. In the first direct comparison of *G. brownii* and *G. thoracatus*, Chapman (1901) observed that these two animals differed widely in color, cranial characters, and size, particularly of the ears. He considered *G. thoracatus* to be a distinct species. Chapman was also the first author to figure the complete skull of *G. thoracatus* (1901, plate 40). G. M. Allen (1917:8-9) elevated *Geocapromys* to generic rank. Miller (1929) summarized many of the important characters that establish the generic distinction of *Geocapromys*. Lawrence (1934) presented a key to the species and subspecies of *Geocapromys*. Mohr (1939) relegated *G. thoracatus* to its original status as a subspecies of *G. brownii* based on brief and superficial comparisons of external characters. Nevertheless, almost all recent authors have followed Mohr in calling the Swan Island hutia *G. brownii thoracatus* (Clough, 1976; Corbet and Hill, 1980; Hall, 1981; Honacki et al., 1982; Oliver, 1977; Varona, 1974). Furthermore, Mohr (1939) reduced *Geocapromys* to its former status as a subgenus of *Capromys*, a usage followed by several recent authors (Hall, 1981; Varona, 1974). The justification for recognizing *Geocapromys* as a distinct genus has already been discussed. On the basis of a large suite of external, cranial, and dental characters, Morgan (1985) concluded that *G. thoracatus* is a distinct species. Although there are many features that distinguish *G. thoracatus* and *G. brownii*, Morgan (1985) demonstrated that they share a close phylogenetic relationship based on the presence of a unique complex of characters in the zygomatic arch region.

Because there are so few specimens of *G. thoracatus* in museum collections and since the species is now extinct, it is appropriate to briefly summarize the museum holdings of this species. The British Museum (Natural History) (BMNH) has 12 specimens, the Museum of Comparative Zoology (MCZ) has 10, and the U.S. National Museum of Natural History (USNM) has two, including the type. The American Museum of Natural History (AMNH), Field Museum (FMNH), and Yale Peabody Museum (YPM) each possess one or two specimens received in trade from the MCZ or the BMNH. The preserved museum material of *G. thoracatus* includes skins, skulls, skeletons, and fluid-preserved specimens.

The name *Geocapromys* is derived from *geo*, Greek for earth, and *Capromys*, the generic name of the Cuban long-tailed hutias, and reflects the more terrestrial habits of the species of *Geocapromys* compared to species of *Capromys*. The specific name *thoracatus*, Greek for breast, refers to the transverse band of cream-colored fur on the breast that is characteristic of the Swan Island hutia.

G. G. Musser (AMNH), J. E. Hill (BMNH), M. E. Rutzmoser (MCZ), and M. D. Carleton (USNM) allowed me to examine specimens of *G. thoracatus* housed in the collections under their care. R. I. Crombie and the late G. C. Clough provided important information from their field work on Little Swan Island. B. C. R. Bertram of The London Zoological Society kindly sent me information on captive *G. thoracatus*. A. E. Pratt took the photographs in Fig. 2. Blackie and Son Limited kindly permitted me to reproduce the photograph of *G. thoracatus* originally published in the book *Atlantic Circle* by Lord Moynes (1938).

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