
Townsend's Pocket Gopher

Thomomys townsendii

Mammalia — Rodentia — Geomyidae

CONSERVATION STATUS / CLASSIFICATION

Rangewide: Apparently secure/Secure (G4G5)
Statewide: Imperiled (S2)
ESA: No status
USFS: Region 1: No status; Region 4: No status
BLM: No status
IDFG: Unprotected wildlife

BASIS FOR INCLUSION

Habitat threats and lack of trend data.

TAXONOMY

The subspecies *T. townsendii townsendii* occurs in Idaho.

DISTRIBUTION AND ABUNDANCE

This species occurs in scattered locations in California, Oregon, Nevada, and Idaho. Idaho populations are in southern Idaho along the Snake River in Elmore, Owyhee, Ada, Canyon, Payette, and Washington counties. Disjunct populations occur near American Falls Reservoir in Bingham, Power, and Bannock counties. The distribution of Townsend's pocket gophers is partly related to the distribution of deep soil deposited by Pleistocene lakes across the Intermountain West, and the populations in western Idaho are thought to be related to the extent of Pleistocene Lake Idaho (Verts and Carraway 1998).

POPULATION TREND

Population trend is unknown.

HABITAT AND ECOLOGY

Few data are available regarding habitat affiliations or ecological characteristics. Populations are associated with deep soil, primarily in sagebrush- and shadscale-dominated habitat (Thaeler 1968). This species herbivorous, consuming non-woody forbs and grasses.

ISSUES

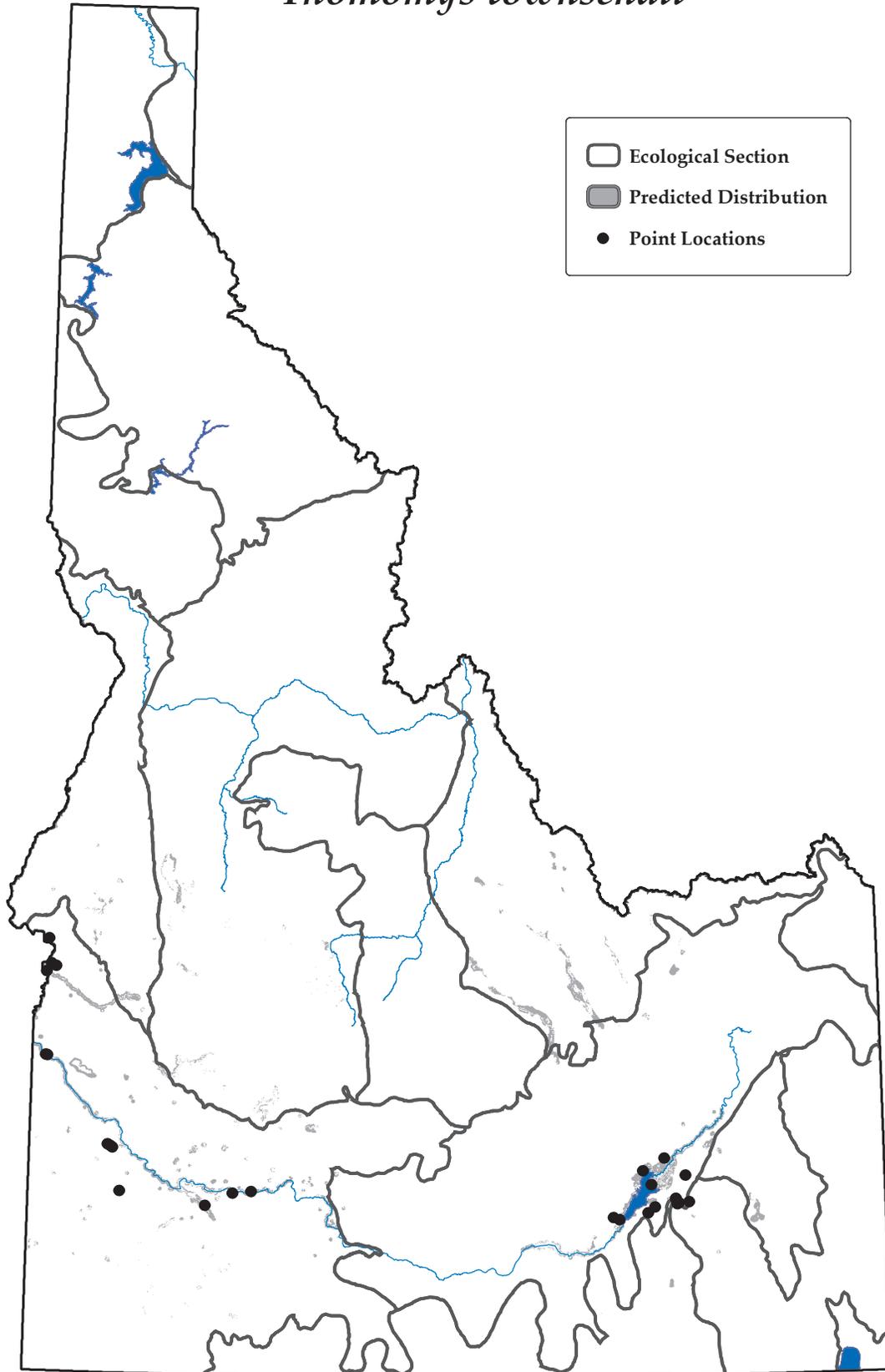
Habitat loss is the primary threat to this species. Activities that reduce plant biomass, such as habitat conversion, livestock grazing, and wildfires, can negatively affect populations. Much of the habitat in the former range has been converted to urban or agricultural habitat. Plant composition in shrub-steppe habitat is affected by livestock grazing and an altered fire regime, both which promote the establishment of invasive plants.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

Surveys are needed throughout the Idaho range to determine the distribution and status of populations, as well as habitat associations, habitat condition, and local threats to habitat suitability.

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Map created on November 17, 2005
and prepared by Idaho Conservation Data Center.
Sources: Point data are from Idaho Conservation Data Center,
Idaho Department of Fish and Game (2005). Predicted distribution
is from the Wildlife Habitat Relationships Models (WHR),
A Gap Analysis of Idaho: Final Report. Idaho Cooperative Fish
and Wildlife Research Unit, Moscow, ID (Scott et al. 2002).
Predicted distribution is approximate (for more information, go to
http://www.wildlife.uidaho.edu/idgap/idgap_report.asp).

