

Mouse-like mammal may hold genetic key

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Researchers at Purdue University in Indiana say the shadowy, mouse-like vole is little known but an important scientific tool.

The rodent, a fast-evolving mammal, has puzzling genetic traits that could help explain human genetics and evolution, studies show.

The report on voles, found in the Northern Hemisphere and normally considered a pest because it eats vegetation, appears this month in the journal *Genetica*.

Purdue's J. Anthony DeWoody calls the voles an "evolutionary enigma" with many bizarre traits that could shed further light not only on human genetics but gene therapy as well.

The study focuses on 60 species that have evolved in the last 500,000 to 2 million years.

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