

# Turkish Journal of Zoology

Turkish Journal

of

Zoology

**Morphological and Biometrical Comparisons of *Mesocricetus* Nehring, 1898 (Mammalia: Rodentia) species distributed in the Palaearctic Region**

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**Abstract:** Currently, 4 species, *Mesocricetus auratus*, *Mesocricetus raddei*, *Mesocricetus newtoni*, and *Mesocricetus brandti* of the genus *Mesocricetus* are accepted as the valid taxa based on karyotype and morphologic features. A potential fifth species, *Mesocricetus nigriculus*, is under dispute and is currently listed as a subspecies of *M. raddei*, along with *Mesocricetus raddei raddei* and *Mesocricetus raddei avaricus*. UPGMA cluster analyses performed with biometrical measures confirm, only partially, the common separation of *Mesocricetus* hamsters into a Transcaucasian group with *Mesocricetus newtoni*, *Mesocricetus brandti*, and *Mesocricetus auratus*, and a Ciscaucasian group including the *M. raddei* subspecies. The status of *M. nigriculus* could not be resolved by these analyses. Biometric measurements group *M. nigriculus* and *M. auratus* together. *M. raddei* were found to be the most divergent species according to its biometrical characteristics. In addition to this, there are no morphologic or biometric differences in the subspecies level between *M. r. raddei* and *M. r. avaricus*; however, the differences among taxa might be explained by the fact that the species inhabits mountainous areas and that body measures and coloration reflect ecological adaptation more than true phylogenetic position. Morphometric data revealed an increasing similarity in *M. brandti* from the eastern to the western part of its range. *M. newtoni* proved to be an intermediary between *M. auratus* and *M. brandti*.

**Key Words:** *Mesocricetus* spp, morphology, UPGM cluster, Palaearctic region

Turk. J. Zool., **30**, (2006), 291-299.

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