

## VI. A RECORD OF *VANDELEURIA OLERACEA*, AND A NOTE ON ITS FOOD

On 18 July 1971, in my garden on the outskirts of Chiang Mai, I found a nest of the Palm Mouse *Vandeleuria oleracea* (Bennet) about 1.25 metres up in tall grass *Imperata cylindrica* Beauv. The nest was woven from the living leaves of the grass. Having ascertained that it was occupied, I placed a plastic bag over the nest, clasped it below, and cut off the supporting grass stalks. Put in a cage, it proved to contain a female and six just-weaned young.

I kept the family for two months, feeding them on commercial birdseed mixture and unhusked rice. There was also a skink *Mabuya multifasciata* (Kuhl) in the cage, which I fed with insects caught in a sweep-net (mostly grasshoppers). While watching the mice one evening, I noticed that the young were eating the grasshoppers; it turned out that they ate large quantities of insects during their first month in captivity, after which they gradually gave up the habit. I presume the reason for this un-mouse-like feeding habit was a need for plenty of protein during the phase of very rapid growth after weaning when the supply of milk protein from the mother has declined or ceased. I never saw the mother eating insects, but I could easily have missed this as the mice were largely nocturnal, and the mother was much shyer than her offspring.

On 15 September I sent the family to Dr. J.T. Marshall, of the SEATO medical research laboratory in Bangkok, for further studies.

*Vandeleuria oleracea* is probably not rare in Thailand, but there have been only a few definite records.

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