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**A NEW GENUS OF HELISCOMYID RODENT (RODENTIA, GEOMYOIDEA,  
HELISCOMYIDAE) BASED ON CRANIAL MORPHOLOGY**

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ABSTRACT

The cranium of *Heliscomys mcgrewi* Korth is described. It differs from previously described skulls of *Heliscomys* in its larger size, the presence of a rostral perforation (elsewhere only known in Heteromyidae), shortening of the nasal bones posteriorly (typical of all other geomyoids), presence of a foramen on the alisphenoid anterior to the accessory foramen ovale (present in early heteromyids), and having the posterior palatine foramina within the maxillary-palatine suture. These more advanced features of the cranium, along with the much larger size of the species, are the basis for the establishment of the new genus *Megaheliscomys* containing only the type species *M. mcgrewi*. The presence of these otherwise heteromyid-like cranial features of *M. mcgrewi* may suggest that the Heteromyidae originated with a heliscomyid ancestor. However, the specialization of the dentition of *M. mcgrewi* (marked reduction of P4) bars this species from any direct ancestry of heteromyids.