**SPECIATION OF SNOW VOLES (*CHIONOMYS* *NIVALIS* AND *C. GUD*) IN GLACIAL PERIODS AND IMPORTANCE OF ANATOLIAN HIGH MOUNTAIN REFUGIA**

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Anatolia is a tectonically active region and many mountains, steppes and plains have emerged since the Pericambrian Era (1). In Pleistocene Epoch, glacial and interglacial periods occurred, successively. In the glacial periods, the average temperature decreased and the regions in high latitudes were covered with glaciers. Whereas some species became extinct because of the climate change, some species located in the refugia in southern regions such as Anatolia. They spreaded from these refugia during interglacial periods (2). Genus *Chionomys* is represented by three snow vole species: *C. nivalis* (Martins, 1842), *C. roberti* (Thomas, 1908) and *C. gud* (Satunin, 1909). These species rapidly differentiated from each other in the Pleistocene Epoch and especially *C. nivalis* and *C. gud* formed isolated populations locating in high mountain refugia of 1500m and above. *C. nivalis* has fragmented and scattered populations in Central and Southern Europe, Anatolia, Western Caucasia, Palastine and Iran whereas *C. gud* populations are distributed in Caucasia and Northeastern Anatolia (3,4,5,6). In the light of studies in the literature, it could be concluded that with the effect of the high mountain refugia, Anatolia has become the center of differentiation for groups such as *Chionomys*.

**Keywords:** *Chionomys*, Snow vole, Anatolia

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