

Your Guide To  
**DEFENDING YOUR HOME**  
Against  
**RATS & MICE**



	<b>Norway Rat</b>	<b>Roof Rat</b>	<b>House Mouse</b>
<i>Also Known As:</i>	House rat Brown rat Wharf rat Sewer rat Water rat Gray rat	Black rat Ship rat Gray-bellied rat Alexandrine rat White-bellied rat	N/A
<i>Size (Adult)</i>	<b>8-10 in</b>	<b>5-7 in</b>	<b>2.5-3.75 in</b>
<i>Weight (Adult)</i>	<b>12-16 oz</b>	<b>5-9 oz</b>	<b>0.5-1 oz</b>
<i>Appearance &amp; Physical Characteristics</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stocky body</li> <li>• Coarse body fur</li> <li>• Back fur ranges in color from reddish to grayish brown, but several color variations exist, including black</li> <li>• Underside fur is usually buff-white</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pointed snout</li> <li>• Large ears, long enough to reach the eyes when pulled down</li> <li>• Long tail, long enough to reach snout when pulled over body</li> <li>• Very young rats have heads that are very large in proportion to body</li> <li>• Back fur ranges from grayish black to solid black</li> <li>• Underside fur varies from buff-white to all-gray</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Small, slender body</li> <li>• Large ears</li> <li>• Long, semi-naked tail as long as the head and body combined</li> <li>• Fur is usually dark gray on back and light gray on underside, but coloration can vary wildly</li> </ul>
<i>Avg. Lifespan in the Wild</i>	<b>Less than 1 yr.</b>	<b>1 year</b>	<b>1-1.5 years</b>
<i>Behavior</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong and aggressive</li> <li>• Strong swimmers</li> <li>• Well-adapted to colder climates</li> <li>• Outdoors, make nests by burrowing underground tunnels</li> <li>• In buildings, generally make nests in the basement or ground floor</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agile climbers</li> <li>• Outdoors, make nests in above-ground areas like shrubs, trees, and dense vegetation</li> <li>• In buildings, make nests in enclosed and elevated spaces like attics, walls, false ceilings, and cabinets, thus the nickname "roof rat"</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mostly nocturnal</li> <li>• Outdoors, make nests in between cracks in rocks or walls, or burrow underground tunnels</li> <li>• In buildings, make nests in rafters, storage areas, or any other secluded area near a food source</li> <li>• Once a nest is established, house mice rarely leave the immediate proximity</li> </ul>

## Norway Rat

### Feeding Habits

- Eat 1 ounce of food per day
- Drink ½ - 1 ounce of water per day
- Cannot survive long without water
- Will eat almost anything but prefer food high in proteins and carbohydrates

## Roof Rat

- Eat 0.5 oz of food per day
- Diet is high in water content and more vegetarian than most rats, preferring to eat seeds, fruits, and vegetables, but like all rats will eat almost anything

## House Mouse

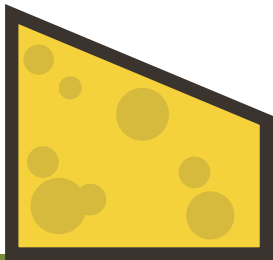
- Eat 1-1.5 oz of food per day
- Prefer seeds and cereal grains, but will eat almost anything
- Feed almost exclusively during the night, with most activity at dusk and just before dawn

### Mating Habits

- Breeding peaks in spring and fall
- 22-day gestation period
- Average female produces 4-7 litters per year
- Litter size : 8-12
- Average female weans 20+ pups annually

- Breeding peaks in summer and autumn, but can last year-round if environmental conditions are favorable
- 21-29 day gestation period
- Litter size: 6-12

- Breeding peaks from spring to early fall but lasts year-round
- 19-21 day gestation period
- Litter size: 3-12
- If conditions allow, average female may give birth to a new litter every 24-28 days





## **The Norway Rat**

*RATTUS NORVEGICUS*

The Norway rat has a storied history, first appearing in China before spreading to Europe and North America by stowing away on ships. Now, the Norway rat can be found on every continent except Alaska, and are the most widely-distributed rat species in the US.

Larger, stronger, and more aggressive than its smaller cousins, Norway rats are fiercely territorial and will not hesitate to kill other rodents they come across, particularly roof rats.

Norway rats are fast breeders: with a gestation period of just 22 days and 8-12 pups per litter, what starts as a small Norway rat population can quickly grow into a huge problem.



## **Roof Rat**

*RATTUS RATTUS*

*Rattus rattus* has many names: the black rat, for its black fur; the ship rat, for its ability to flourish on ships; the house rat, for its preference to live in human dwellings, etc. However, homeowners should come to know it as the roof rat, because that's exactly how it gets into homes.

The roof rat is even more widely-dispersed than the Norway rat, and can be found on every continent on earth. It is well-equipped to live in any human-populated area, but are particularly numerous in coastal regions due to its history of hitching rides on ships.

While smaller in size, roof rats can be an even bigger nuisance than Norway rats. They can and will decimate whole crops on farms, and will destroy whatever they can't eat. They urinate and defecate on grain, cereals, and other food sources. Worst of all, they serve as host to all manner of disease-spreading parasites, most infamously the fleas that caused the Bubonic Plague.



## House Mouse

*MUS MUSCULUS*

While comparatively less harmful than Norway rats and roof rats, house mice can still devastate a home they've infested. Like their cousins, they will defecate on, urinate in, or gnaw through anything they can get their paws on, causing untold damage.

Of the three major rodent threats, house mice are the most neophobic, meaning that fear new things and will rarely leave the immediate vicinity of their nests. However, they are comparatively more intelligent, and can memorize obstacles, food and water sources, shelter, and environmental features easily, allowing them to quickly find food and bring it back to the nest to hoard for later.

House mice are nocturnal, making up for their poor eyesight with keen senses of hearing, smell, taste, and touch. The fact that they are both nocturnal and highly neophobic means that they will avoid traps and bait for several days after they've been placed. This combination of traits also means that, if you see one during the day, your house may have a severe infestation.

## Why They Invade

Norway rats, roof rats, and house mice are in a constant mating cycle, but beyond the desire for a safe environment to raise young, rodents are particularly drawn to the smell of food in a home.

While house mice are the most neophobic of the three, Norway rats and roof rats also prefer to stick to a small territory that's close to an immediate food source, and a human home fits the bill perfectly.

While they may enter the home through different means, all three can squeeze into holes less than an inch in diameter, and from there gnaw their way to every other part of the home.

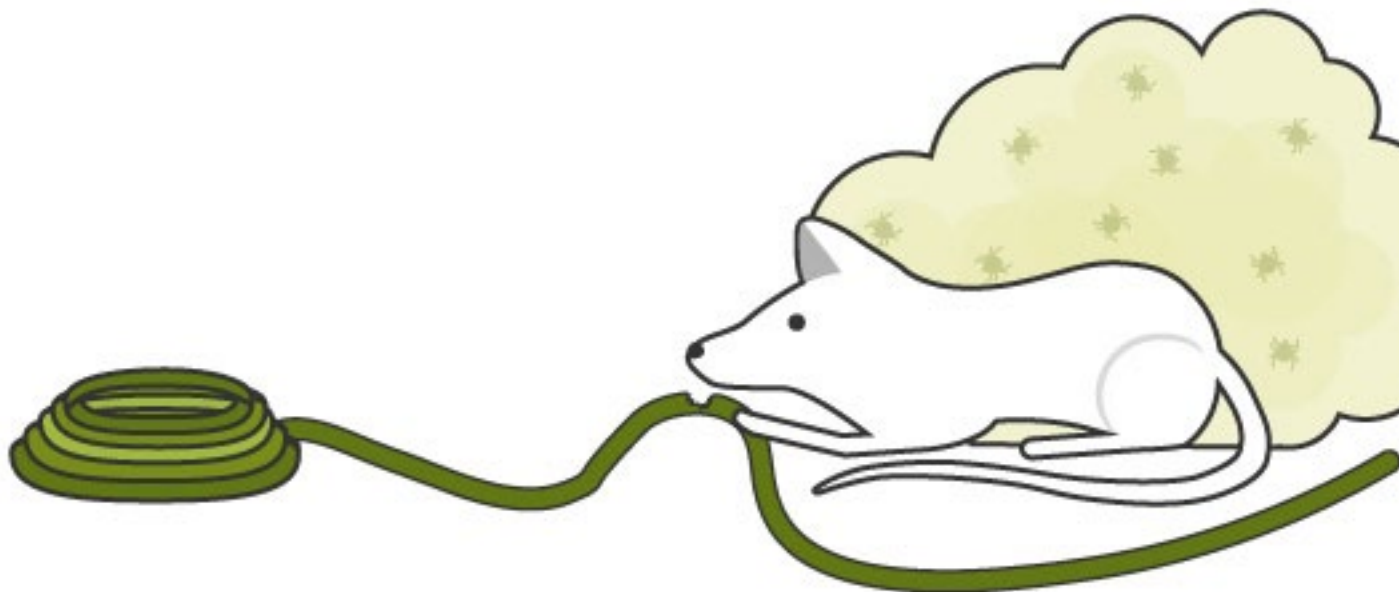


## The Damage They Cause

Throughout history, rodents have brought devastation to human populations through the diseases they carry. Between biting, scratching, defecating, urinating, and shedding fur, if there's a means to spread disease, rest assured that a rodent will do it.

If that wasn't bad enough, they also host fleas and other parasites that can carry even worse diseases. A high enough rodent presence can even lead to a secondary infestation from the parasites they're hosting.

Rodents' teeth are constantly growing, so they'll gnaw on anything they can find to file them down. If that means gnawing through wood, plastic, or wire, it makes no difference to them. In fact, rodents chewing on electrical wire is one of the leading causes of house fires, accounting for 30,000 fires a year.





## What You Can Do

The first step to preventing rodent infestation is to deny them a safe environment. Rodents love making nests in boxes, old clothes, and other junk in the attic and basement, so getting rid of clutter in the house gives limits their ability to nest and breed.

Clean the whole house. While particular focus should be placed on the attic and basement, rodents are attracted to any food sources they can find, so keeping the whole house clean of food and crumbs gives them less incentive to invade. Store food in airtight, pest-proof containers for the best results.

Inspect the whole house for small holes and seal them wherever possible.



## When to Call a Professional

If you even suspect that you may have a rodent problem, call a professional immediately. Just setting traps around the house isn't enough: rats and mice may not take the bait, and even if they do, it still won't solve the other health risks they pose.

Beyond offering further advice, a professional will also be able to identify exactly where and how rodents are getting in and seal any gaps. They'll also know exactly what types of traps to use and where to place them to get the most effect.

Once the rodents are removed and the entry points sealed, the professional will also be able to deploy poisons to the control area to prevent further infestations, but in a manner that doesn't endanger the people or pets living in the home.

