

Table 3. Identifying the main species of rats and mice

Sign	Brown Rat (Rattus norvegicus)	Black Rat (Rattus rattus)	House Mouse (Mus domesticus)
Head & body	220mm approximately	200mm approximately	90mm approximately
Tail	170mm approximately	220mm approximately	90mm approximately
Max. adult bodyweight	550 grams	300 grams	30 grams
Droppings	In groups but sometimes scattered. Spindle-shaped about 20mm long	Scattered. Spindle or banana-shaped about 15mm long	Scattered, rod shaped, 3-6mm long
Other signs	Gnawing at entrances to stores, packaging, wires and pipes. Greasy stains along walls where they run	Gnawing on tree bark, doors, packaging, wires and pipes. Greasy stains along walls where they run	Gnawing on packaging, wires, curtains and on insulation materials. Footprints in dust
Habits	Burrows, lives outdoors, in sewers occasionally indoors on intensive farms. Can climb, very good swimmers. Highly neophobic	Non-burrowing, nests in walls attics, vines and trees. Rarely in sewers. Excellent climber. Less neophobic than Brown Rats	Sometimes burrows, lives almost exclusively indoors. Generally nest within stored materials or walls. Good climbers, highly inquisitive
Activity	Predominantly nocturnal. Spends most of time on the ground	Predominantly nocturnal. Spends most of the time on and off the ground	Predominantly nocturnal. Spends most of time off the ground
Feeding	Habitually feeds at 1-3 familiar points per night. Average intake 25-30g/ day. Requires free water. Omnivorous, more likely to eat meat than Black Rat	Habitually feeds at 1-3 familiar points per night. Average intake 15-30g/ day. Requires free water. Omnivorous - mainly fruits, nuts, grains, vegetables	Feeds erratically at around 2-3 points but could be as many as 20 points per night. Average intake 3-5g/ day. Can utilise water in feed. Prefers cereals
Territory	Move widely between buildings. Typically roam 100-300m but can travel up to 3 km	Less likely to roam as far as Brown Rats, typical range 50-100m	Move widely within buildings. Rarely travel far between buildings
Breeding	4-8 young per female. Gestation 22-24 days. 7 litters per annum	4-8 young per female. Gestation 29 days. 6 litters per annum	Up to 8-10 young per female. 8 litters per annum