

THE BROWN RAT

RATTUS NORVEGICUS

A quick ID for the Norway, common, sewer or brown rat.

If in doubt, contact a trained and professional Pest Technician.



DESCRIPTION

Adults

- Variable in colour from grey/dark grey to almost black.
- Tail the slightly shorter than the head and body combined, and scaly (no fur).

LIFE CYCLE

Sexually mature	12-16 weeks
Gestation Period	21-24 days
Litter size	6-11
Weaning Period	3-4 weeks

MISTAKEN IDENTITY

- Field, House Mice.
- Water, Bank, Field Voles.

POTENTIAL ISSUES

- **Disease Spread:** Brown rats carry serious diseases like leptospirosis and salmonella.
- **Food Contamination:** They contaminate food and water with their droppings, urine, and fur.
- **Property Damage:** Rats gnaw through wood, wires, and pipes, causing fires and structural damage.

SIGNS OF INFESTATION

- **Sightings:** The surest sign of presence. If live animals are seen during the day, it may suggest that the infestation is large, or they have been recently disturbed. Not a definitive sign of an infestation.
- **Smell:** 'Stale' odours, which can be easily recognised.
- **Droppings:** On average 12mm long and are blunt at one end and tapered at the other. One rat produces about 40 droppings a day.
- **Urine:** Norway Rats produce about 15mm of urine a day. This is usually within the vicinity of the infestation as part of their communication methods.
- **Runs:** Outdoors, the runs of rats can appear as depressions in the grass or other low vegetation.
- **Footprints and Tail Swipes:** Footprints may be seen where rats have been moving over muddy or dusty surfaces.
- **Smears:** Norway rats can form smears along walls and surfaces. These appear from the continual use of routes or runs, with the grease and dirt rubbing off against the surface.
- **Harbourage, burrows:** Burrows outdoors are recognisable. Entrance holes are 70-120mm in diameter
- **Damage to goods:** Gnawing of packaging, hoarded food, or growing crops.

CONTROL

- **Integrated Pest Management:** Chemical controls, Physical Controls, Environmental Management, Proofing.
- **Direct population Reduction:** Professionals can use shooting as a method of direct population control. These are often best done at night when the rodents will be most active.

LES