

RODENT MANAGEMENT

Rodents are of great concern in urban pest management in Australia. Of all the species of rodents in Australia, there are three species that cause major problems in our homes and commercial buildings. They are the Roof rat, (*Rattus rattus*), The Norway rat (*Rattus norvegicus*) and the House mouse, (*Mus musculus*).

Pest Status

Rodents are responsible for causing serious damage through gnawing, nibbling, and contaminating food products with their droppings and urine. Their numbers have been known to grow to plague proportions if left untreated in rural areas when conditions are right. They also cause serious damage to stock in commercial properties, resulting in significant financial loss.

Effects on Humans

There are five major effects on humans.

- (1) Disease- Salmonella (food poisoning), Weil's disease.
- (2) Contamination- of human food by saliva, urine and faeces.
- (3) Destruction- of packaged goods, stock and product loss.
- (4) Physical Damage- Gnawing resulting in damage to property and fires.
- (5) Fear and Apprehension- The stigma attached to the presence of rodents



House Mouse
Mus musculus



Roof Rat
Rattus rattus

Identification and Life Cycle

The House Mouse is small, has rather large ears, a pointed snout and a tail that is as long as its body length and has hair that is fine, coloured brown to grey. They normally live for about 1 year and may have 6-10 litters per year with the average litter size of 5-6. They reach sexual maturity at about 6 weeks. The droppings are about 3-4 mm in length and pointed.

The Norway Rat has a thickset body, blunt snout, small close set ears and a tail shorter than its body length and fur that is coarse, red or brown in colour. They normally live for about 1 year, and have 5-6 litters per year with the average litter size of 8-10. They reach sexual maturity at 3-4 months. The droppings are about 18 mm in length and blunt on the ends.

The Roof Rat has a more pointed snout, large prominent ears and a tail longer than its body length and fur that is fine, coloured grey, black or brown and can be white underneath. They normally live for about a year and have about 4-5 litters per year with the average litter size of 6-8. They reach sexual maturity at 3-4 months. The droppings are about 12mm in length and pointed.

Where will I find rodents and what do they eat?

Rodents are found in a variety of different areas such as warehouses, supermarkets, roof voids, wall cavities, cupboards, boxes, furniture, stored foods and burrows in garden areas. Roof rats seldom burrow and can be found outdoors nesting in vines and trees. Rats and mice are omnivorous feeders. That means that they will feed on almost anything. For example they will feed on vegetables, fruits, cereals, grains and garbage. Rats and mice generally feed at night but have been known to feed through the day in secluded areas. When the population is quite large they can be seen throughout the day. Mice generally nest and feed within a range of 3-10 metres from their harbourage area, whereas the Roof rat and Norway rat have a range up to 50 metres.

What signs do I look for to determine if I have rodents?

Sounds.

Scratching and shuffling noises in the roof void.

Droppings.

Droppings found in and around the building.

Tracks.

Run tracks or rub marks (dark greasy marks) along walls or plumbing pipes.

Gnawing.

Damage to food packets in the pantry and stored stock in warehouses. Additional indicators would be holes in skirting boards or conduits, cables being stripped of insulation or cardboard/paper products being chewed.

Visual sightings

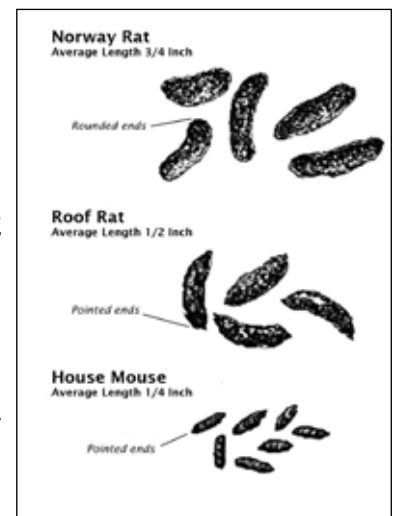
Sighting of rodents scurrying around the areas and sighting of rodents nesting material in stored boxes.

Excitement of your family pet.

If your dog or cat is acting strangely, for example excessive barking in a particular area of your home, they might be trying to tell you something.

Sensors / Alarms

Sensors/alarms being triggered, particularly within 1 or 2 specific areas of the premises, can be an indicator of rodent activity within an area.



General Information

Rodents are competent climbers and can scale rough walls, pipe work, trees, vines and cables.

- Rats especially Norway rats are very accomplished swimmers and hold no fear of water.
- Sensory perception of rats and mice is very keen (i.e. smell, taste, hearing and touch) although their eye sight is poor.
- Rats are creatures of habit and often utilise the same route to travel to and from a preferred destination.
- Mice are more random in their habit, but are highly territorial amongst themselves in their desired residence.

How do I Manage and treat a Rodent Problem?

Management and treatment of rodents is best achieved through an Integrated Pest Management approach and is individually tailored to suit the situation.

The main options are:

Sanitation – Reduction of food, shelter and water supplies for rodents. This is generally best achieved by removing any rubbish and debris from against structure. Storing rubbish in bins that have tight fitting lids. Clean up any spilt grain (eg. From around bird cages). Attend to any leaking plumbing pipes. Having the property clear from rubbish or debris will help minimise the risk of a rodent infestation.

Rodent Proofing – Alter the building structure to exclude entry by rodents; for example sealing up any holes with small gauge mesh, sealing the bottoms of doors with automatic weather seals or weather strips.

Trapping - Using non-chemical methods that may include snap traps, glue boards etc.

Chemical Control - Using a variety of different registered rodenticides including grain bait, pellets wax blocks etc.

Working as a Team

Management and treatment of rodents can only be achieved through a team effort between yourself and your Amalgamated Pest Control technician. Discuss other requirements with your local Amalgamated Pest Control branch.
(ie. what you can do to help with the management program.)

Acknowledgements & References:

Hadlington. P.1995. Urban Pest Control, UNSW, Sydney.

Photos:

www.myers-services.com/.../rodents_pests.php

www.amalpest.com.au

www.sdcountry.ca.gov

Why Choose Amalgamated Pest Control?

- With over 80 years of industry experience we can provide the solutions to your pest management challenges.
- Our customers come first - We provide prompt service. While the others are arranging, we're doing.
- After-sales service is a priority. Once a treatment is completed, we stand by our work with a free service warranty backup. Should the need arise, a prompt on-call service applies for the entire warranty period.
- Our field technicians carry the latest specialised equipment designed to achieve the safest and most effective application possible. Our treatment methods have proved to be the most successful control measures available.
- We are a quality assured company to ISO9001:2000.
- We are comprehensively insured for your peace of mind.
- An Amalgamated Pest Control Management Program means more than just applying pesticides. We have field supervisors and national technical support available for expert advice on pests and pest management.
- The pesticides used are environmentally friendly and the safest available. Continual testing and research ensures that the latest developments are implemented with your interests in mind.
- We have extensive industry involvement at all levels, and active working relationships with our industry association (AEPMA), State and Federal Government bodies covering Health, WorkCover, Forestry, Primary Industries and Employment and Training.
- We can provide your complete pest management solution.

Our services include:

- o All general household and commercial pests including rodents
- o Mosquito and biting Midge Management
- o Termites and other timber pests
- o Bird and fly management
- o Specialist compliance in HACCP and AQIS systems

Local Branch:



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