

FACT sheet

Rodents

EXODUS
PEST CONTROL

Rodents

Commensal rodents constitute a majority of the rodent problems in both commercial and residential properties. Commensal rodents consist of the Norway Rat, the Roof Rat, and the notorious House Mouse. The word "commensal" means these rodents live off man and return nothing of worth. The only possible category where they could be considered beneficial would be as garbage removal, and that is stretching it even for devoted animal activists.

These rodents are not native to Australia, they came from Europe with early explorers and settlers. Once they discovered the new environment they, like the early settlers, multiplied across the entire continent.

RODENT FACTS:

- All species of commensal rodents carry and spread various diseases.
- Rodents are often infested with fleas which they often share with those with whom they live.
- Rodents consume and contaminate significant numbers of the world's food supply every year.
- Rodents cause extensive damage to properties by gnawing on wood and wiring, often causing fires.
- Rodents cause some people to jump on chairs and scream, often falling and breaking bones.



Mice

There are species of native mice that occasionally invade houses, but the house mouse (*Mus musculus*) are the prominent species that invade houses and businesses. The House Mouse is found throughout Australia. They are omnivores, feeding on cereal grains, seeds, fruits, vegetables, and meats. Seed is the preferred food. They eat at multiple sites eating small amounts at each site. (20-30 sites per day). Mice are excellent climbers and are inquisitive. They explore their home turf daily and inspect any new object. Mice are prolific breeders and under ideal conditions will breed year round. The female will have an average of eight litters per season with an average of six pups per litter. At five weeks old, the pups are capable of mating. It is not unusual for a female to be lactating her young and pregnant with a new litter.

Rats

The two commensal rats are the Roof Rat and Norway Rats. The Roof Rat is best suited for tropical and semi-tropical zones. The Norway Rat is found throughout Australia. They eat meats, fish, flour, seeds, grains, fruits, vegetables, and anything a human will eat. They eat 30-60grams of food per day, and drink about 30mL of water per day. They must have water daily to survive. The Norway Rat is usually grayish-brown, but their colour varies. Some are pure gray some pure black, or any combination of the above. They explore their territory of 1-90 metres daily. They have neophobia, or new object fear, which makes them cautious, and any new object in their territory will take them several days before they will accept it. They, like mice, are colour blind, and see poorly. Their sense of smell and touch however are acute. Rats often live under houses, any dark area, or burrow under ground, often under front porches. They are nocturnal feeders.



Young Norway rats are capable of mating at three months. Females have an average of 3-7 litters per year with 6-12 pups per litter. After giving birth, the female goes back into heat in twenty-four hours. Adults live approximately one year.

Rodent Control

To keep rodents out of a structure, exclusion is always the first and most important step. Mice can enter a structure through any hole 7mm wide. Search your property and repair any holes.

Sanitation is also very important. If you have rodents, all food products should be stored in containers that can be sealed. Often dog food or bird seed is stored in bags which rodents can chew through. Cover garbage bins with tight fitting lids.

Kitchens need to be kept clean with no food products under sinks or in ovens. This is especially important in commercial kitchens.

Any water leaks must be fixed to take away a water source. Outside, especially around warehouses, should be weed free and kept clean around the perimeter of the structure.

Once a structure is rodent proofed as much as possible the existing rodents must be eliminated and precautions taken to avoid future infestation. Your EXODUS Pest Control Technician can develop an effective control strategy utilising a number of tools at his disposal to suit your circumstance.