

INVASIVE SPECIES ALERT!

NORWAY & BLACK RATS

(Rattus norvegicus & rattus)

HAVE YOU SEEN THIS ANIMAL?

DESCRIPTION

Distinguishing Features	Norway Rat (<i>R. norvegicus</i>)	Black/Roof Rat (<i>R. rattus</i>)
Body size	Large (average 21 cm long from head to rump)	Small (average 17.5 cm long from head to rump)
Tail	Shorter than the length of head and body combined	Longer than length of head and body combined
Body Shape	Stout	Slender
Ears	Small ears (can't fold over eyes)	Large ears (can fold over eyes)
Snout	Blunt	Pointed
Body Colour	Grey, brown, black	Grey to brown



Norway Rat (*Rattus norvegicus*)

Photo Credit: www.bayercropscience.co.uk

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www.gov.bc.ca/invasive-species

PRIMARY THREAT:

Norway and Black Rats contaminate food sources and damage buildings and property.

SPREAD

The Norway Rat is native to China and Mongolia and the Black Rat is native to India. Norway Rats are mostly found in man-made environments like sewer systems. They prefer semi-aquatic environments and ground level of buildings, as they are strong swimmers, but weak climbers. Black Rats are strong climbers, often found in trees or attics and ceilings in buildings of urban areas. In coastal areas with milder climates, they can be found in forested environments well away from urban areas.

Norway and Black Rats were originally introduced through European settlers' ships and can now be found almost anywhere humans inhabit on Earth. They can hitch a ride on various means of transport (sea freights, semi-trucks, etc.) where they hide away, undetected. Rat populations can increase rapidly as females are able to produce several litters per year. Being opportunistic feeders allows these rat species to invade a variety of habitat types. Local dispersal and growth are assisted by human development, creating more shelter and food resources to support larger rat populations.



Black Rat (*Rattus rattus*)

Photo Credit: H. Zell, Wikimedia Commons



NORWAY & BLACK RATS (*Rattus norvegicus* & *rattus*)

DISTRIBUTION & STATUS

Norway and Black Rats are well established in B.C.'s Lower Mainland and coastal islands, including Haida Gwaii. More recently they have become established in B.C.'s interior, including throughout the Okanagan Valley (Vernon, Kelowna, Penticton, Osoyoos), Kamloops, the Shuswap area, Revelstoke, and the Kootenay region (Nelson, Castlegar, New Denver, Creston).

LOOK-ALIKES:

Norway and Black Rats are most likely to be confused for each another, or for a mouse. The House mouse (*Mus Musculus*) is approximately half the length of either rat and has a more rounded silhouette. B.C.'s native Bushy-tailed Woodrat (*Neotoma cinerea*) has a distinctive long, bushy tail.

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WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- Do NOT transport and/or release Rats in B.C.
- Raise awareness to avoid further spread in B.C.
- Block off potential access points, such as cracks in foundations.
- Don't leave out attractants such as food or garbage.

DID YOU KNOW?

Norway Rats impact the survival of ground nesting seabirds; eating eggs, chicks, and even adults. This has been a contributing factor to declines in several seabird populations on islands off B.C.'s west coast.

For more information: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/environment/plants-animals-ecosystems/invasive-species>

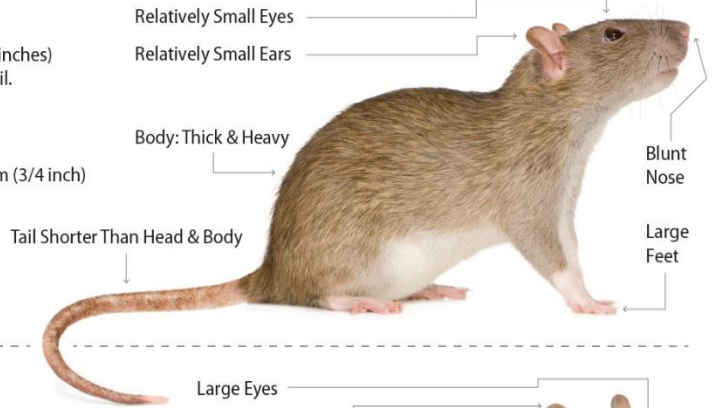
Rat and Mouse: Comparison

Norway Rat

Size: 30-45 cm (12-18 inches)
from nose to end of tail.

DROPPINGS:

Long, Rounded Ends
Avg. Length: 15-20 mm (3/4 inch)

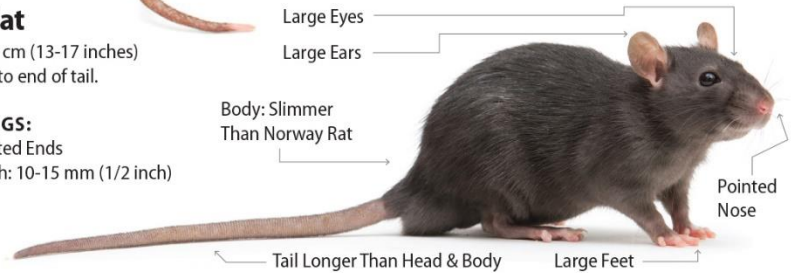


Roof Rat

Size: 33-43 cm (13-17 inches)
from nose to end of tail.

DROPPINGS:

Long, Pointed Ends
Avg. Length: 10-15 mm (1/2 inch)



House Mouse

Size: 15-17 cm (6-7 inches)
from nose to end of tail.

DROPPINGS:

Small with Pointed Ends
Avg. Length: 4-7 mm (1/4 inch)

