

Mice and Rats



Photo by USGS

Rodents most commonly seen in and around dwellings in the Bay Area include the house mouse, roof rat (black rat) and Norway rat (brown rat). These animals are not native to North America, cause millions of dollars in damage each year, and can cause food poisoning and spread diseases such as plague and typhus to humans.

In the Bay Area, we also have many native rodents such as deer mice, harvest mice, California voles (meadow mice) and dusky-footed woodrats (pack rats).

These native species are usually seen away from homes, but sometimes may be found close to or in dwellings when populations increase periodically.

You can make your home and garden less attractive to rodents:

- Keep leaf litter, lumber, trash, brush, wood and rock piles to a minimum to reduce hiding places. Ground cover such as ivy is commonly used by non-native rodents.
- Remove all sources of food. Fruit and vegetables should be promptly harvested and not allowed to accumulate or drop to the ground.
- Bird feeders should contain seeds and not allow them to drop to the ground.
- Seal all places where rodents may enter your house. Mice can get through an opening the size of a dime; rats can enter through openings the size of a quarter.

In your home:

- Do not use glue traps or poison. Glue traps are inhumane and can catch unintended victims such as lizards and birds.
- Poisoned rodents may secondarily poison non-target predators or pets. Snap traps are the most effective, humane method of control.
- If you hire a pest control operator, make sure they use traps and exclusion instead of poisons.