

Have a block meeting soon.

*Remember, if you have rats,
your neighbor has rats!*

An effective way to get rid of rats in your area is to work together with your neighbors. Organize and call the people on your block. As a group, you can make a commitment to make your neighborhood a place where rats cannot survive.

SAFETY PRECAUTIONS FOR CLEAN-UP

When handling rodents these precautions should be followed to avoid the possibility of disease transmission.

- Ventilate the affected area the night before clean-up by opening doors and windows.
- Use rubber gloves.
- Apply household disinfectants at maximum recommended concentration to dead rodents, rodent droppings, nest and surrounding area and allow for at least 15 minutes contact time before removal.
- Clean the affected area with paper towels or a mop. **DO NOT SWEEP OR VACUUM.** Double bag the disinfectant-soaked rodent and clean-up material securely in plastic bags and seal.
- Before removing gloves, wash in disinfectant, then soap and water. Thoroughly wash hands with soap and water and dispose of gloves and clean-up materials with other household waste.



WHAT YOU CAN DO

TO

PREVENT AND CONTROL

RATS

MARIN/SONOMA
MOSQUITO and VECTOR CONTROL DISTRICT
595 HELMAN LANE
COTATI, CA 94931
(800) 231-3236
(707) 285-2200
RAT01

GENERAL INFORMATION



ROOF RAT

Alias: Black Rat

Tree Rat

The **Roof rat** (*Rattus rattus*) is a problem species in Sonoma and Marin Counties. This rat is slender and agile, with a tail that is longer than the head and body. Roof rats will enter buildings if given the opportunity and often use utility lines and fences as runways. Roof rats prefer to feed on fruits, nuts, ivy, and pet food commonly found in residential areas.

NORWAY RAT

Alias: Sewer Rat

Brown Rat

Wharf Rat

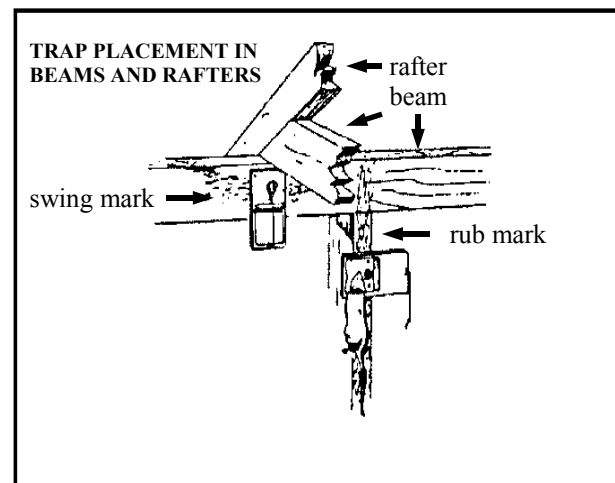


The **Norway rat** (*Rattus norvegicus*) is a common species in

Sonoma and Marin Counties. It is generally found in agricultural areas, creeks, sewers, and developed neighborhoods. The Norway rat is larger and more aggressive than the roof rat. The eyes are smaller than the roof rat's and the tail is shorter than the combined head and body length. This species usually lives in underground burrows, and feeds on garbage, pet food, cereal grains and vegetables.

TRAP PLACEMENT

Placement of snap traps is crucial to their effectiveness. Place traps in areas frequented by rats. Rats establish runways along fence tops, and next to walls. Look for the presence of rat droppings when placing snap traps. Place the narrow end of the trap containing the trigger against a wall or known runway. Snap traps can also be attached to pipes or studs with wire, nails or screws. Better results are usually obtained if two traps are set side by side. It is also a good idea to prebait, that is, use a baited but unset trap so that the rodent can become familiar with the trap. This requires only two or three days after which the traps can be baited and set.



CHEMICAL CONTROL

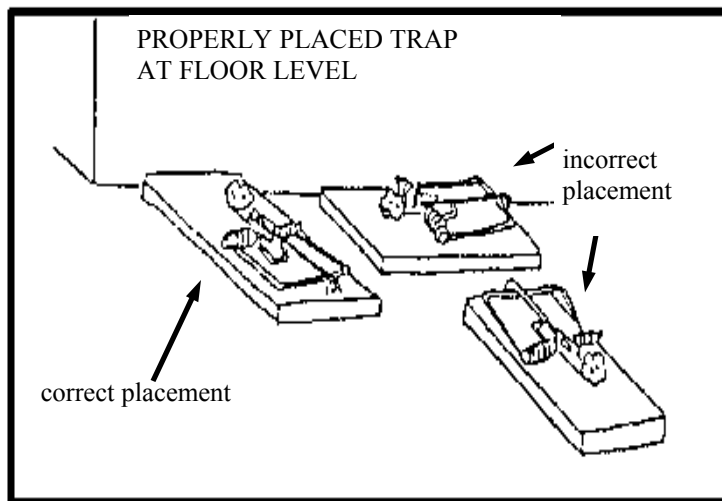
Homeowners may purchase rodenticides at nurseries, feed stores, and hardware stores. All rodenticides should be handled carefully. **Always follow all label precautions and recommendations.**

TRAPPING

Trapping rodents is an effective method of control. Trapping is especially desirable when poisons cannot be used near food, small children, or where domestic animals or livestock are present. **Traps should be used indoors to prevent the serious odor problems that can occur when poisoned rodents die in inaccessible areas.**

TYPES OF TRAPS

Rodent “snap traps” are inexpensive and are available in two sizes. The smaller trap is designed for mice and the larger is designed for rats. It is very important to choose the proper size trap. Several rat traps should be set to maximize trapping effectiveness.



DISEASE

Rats and their fleas are capable of transmitting a variety of human diseases including bubonic *plague*.

While there have not been any recent reports of plague in Sonoma and Marin Counties, the potential for an outbreak may increase as rat populations expand.

Leptospirosis may be contracted through contact with water or ingestion of food contaminated with urine of infected rats.

Salmonellosis is a bacterial food poisoning that may be transmitted when rodents contaminate foods.

ROOF RAT HABITAT

Roof rats may live or establish nests in:

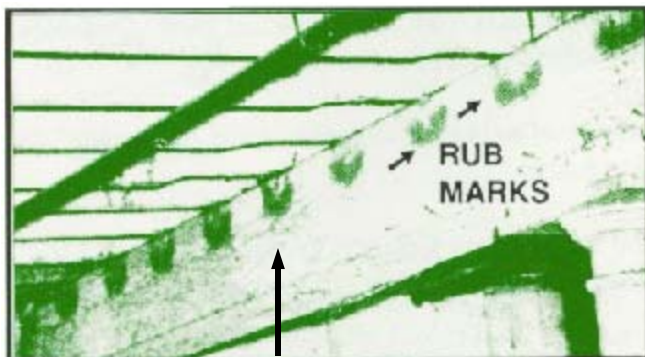
- ◆ Your home
- ◆ Algerian ivy
- ◆ Palm trees
- ◆ Yucca
- ◆ Pampas grass
- ◆ Honeysuckle
- ◆ Blackberries
- ◆ Italian cypress
- ◆ Juniper tams
- ◆ Star jasmine
- ◆ Other heavy shrubbery
- ◆ Wood and lumber piles
- ◆ Storage boxes
- ◆ Yard and garden storage

NORWAY RAT HABITAT

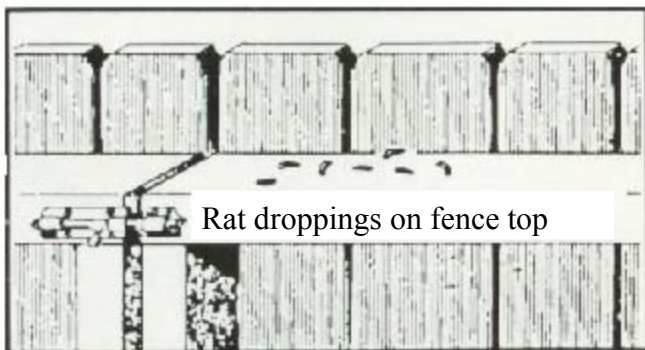
Norway rats may live or establish nests in:

- ◆ Burrows along outside walls of homes
- ◆ Holes under shrubs or vegetation
- ◆ Under the edges of sidewalks or patios

ROOF RAT ACTIVITY



Grease marks on beams caused by rat's oily fur



Rat droppings on fence top

The homeowner should be alert for these signs:

- ◆ Droppings found in forced air heaters, swimming pool heater covers, and water heater closets
- ◆ Sounds (gnawing) from attic, subfloor, and walls
- ◆ Visual sightings on utility cables, in trees or along fence tops
- ◆ Rub marks caused by the rat's oily fur

BUILDING MAINTENANCE

RAT PROOF YOUR HOME

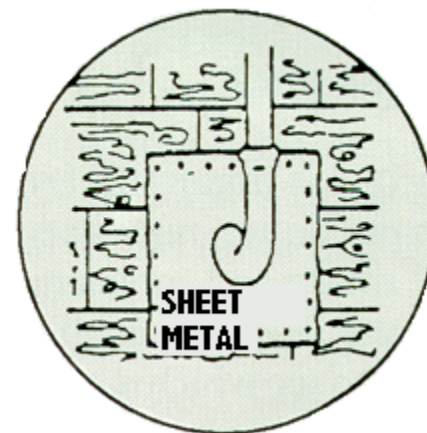
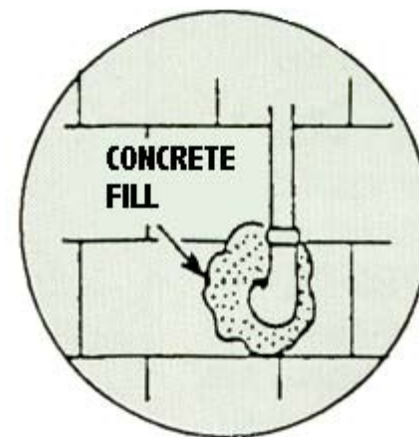
Rats can enter even small exterior openings of a home. Important steps a homeowner can take are inspecting and repairing: vent pipes and shafts, attic vents and louvers, basement windows and ventilation ports.

Openings should be screened with 1/4 inch hardware cloth and or steel wool.

Gaps around exterior pipes and electrical conduit should be sealed with concrete fill or sheet metal.

All repairs should be inspected at least twice a year.

Tree limbs should be kept at least 48 inches away from the roof and walls of the house.

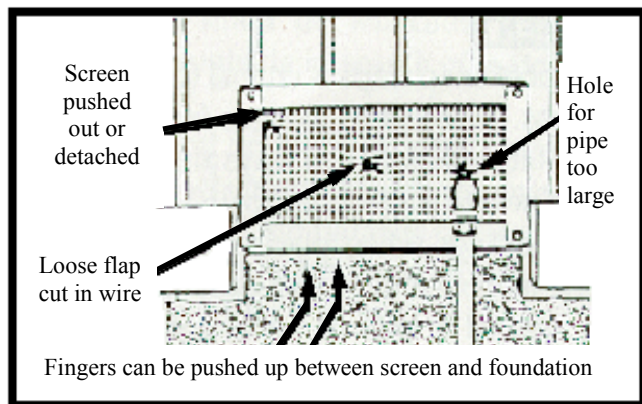
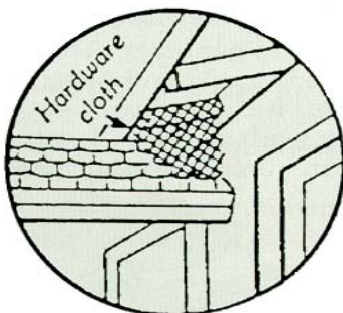


WHERE ROOF RATS COMMONLY ENTER HOMES

- ◆ Broken or missing foundation vent screens
- ◆ Attic vent screens broken or left off
- ◆ Space between heavy roof shakes
- ◆ Open wooden meter boxes (in older homes)
- ◆ Space between roof jack and vent pipe
- ◆ Under or on sides of garage door
- ◆ Brick chimneys which have settled away from house
- ◆ Tile roof

* **Close all openings**
larger than 1/4 inch to
exclude rats and mice.

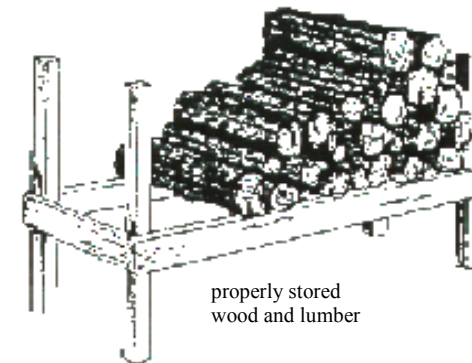
* **Repair or replace**
damaged vent screens.



RAT CONTROL ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

Rat survival and prosperity is dependent upon the existence of these three basic environmental conditions:

- ◆ Abundance of food
- ◆ Available source of water
- ◆ Access to suitable harborage



Good environmental management practices supplemented by the wise use of rodenticides and trapping are the most effective approaches to rat control.

- ⇒ Harvest fruit as soon as they ripen. Pick up all fallen fruit.
- ⇒ Never leave uneaten pet food outside overnight.
- ⇒ Algerian ivy, oleander, bougainvillea, and other thickly matted plants should be thinned and trimmed well away from roofs, walls, fences, utility poles, and trees.
- ⇒ Store wood and lumber piles on racks at least 18 inches above the ground and 12 inches away from the walls; clean up debris piles.
- ⇒ Repair leaky faucets and eliminate any other unnecessary standing water.