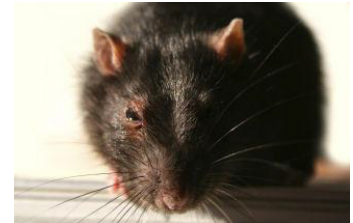


## The Rat

Rats are great aren't they? They come, uninvited, into our homes and businesses, chew up the place, pee and poo wherever they like, spread some pretty nasty diseases and frighten your family or colleagues. Now, who wouldn't want some of that?

We had a call a few months ago from a couple who had a rat trapped in the bathroom of their basement flat; it had been chased in there by their dog! Another call came from a family who had a rat chew through the cables of their burglar alarm and set it off in the middle of the night, disturbing not only their children but all of their neighbours! In another rat 'situation' a customer had a rat living in her dishwasher and only found out when it chewed a hole through the control panel!



In the UK we have just the two species of rat; the brown rat and the black rat. The black rat is now confined to just a few small areas and so it's the brown rat which we more commonly encounter with population estimates approaching 60 million.

### Preventing Rat Problems

Rats have just three basic needs; access to water, food and shelter. Deny them these and you can help keep your property safe and rat-free. Thanks to our wonderful climate, there's generally plenty of water about so there may be little you can do to remove that. Food, though, you possibly can do something about; if you feed the birds, try to lessen the amount of feed which ends up on the ground and clear it away regularly; if you have chickens then use a feeder which keeps the feed contained and put it away at night; ensure bins have lids and they are closed and pick up fallen fruit.

Rats like to be able to move about unseen so the removal of shelter around your property will help keep them at bay so; keep your grass short, remove vegetation against buildings and any piles of rubbish. Have a good look around, think like a rat, where can you hide as you scurry about your land?

### How to Get Rid of a Rat Problem

If you do hear the tell-tale sound above your head at night of something running around in your attic then you need to take action fast to prevent damage and greater infestation. Traps and baits work well if placed correctly, but for safe and effective treatment you should call a professional – just make sure that they're properly qualified, a member of the BPCA, and that they are insured.

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