



RODENTS

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Autumn is the time of year most people associate with an increase in rodent activity, and it is true that with Autumn's cooler weather, rodents are prompted to eat more, hoard more food, and find appropriate shelter to protect them from the oncoming winter cold. Rodents will make their burrows alongside foundations, under dog houses, and all too often, and if accessible, in our attics and crawlspaces. Yet, rodent activity actually fluctuates throughout the entire year, coinciding with the changes of the season. This is because each season brings a different environment.

Rodent populations are actually at their lowest in winter. Many rats and mice do not survive the freezing temperatures of winter, and natural food sources like vegetation and insects are hard to find. With their annual breeding cycle beginning in March, rodents become more abundant by late spring. The weather becomes warmer and the spring rains bring new vegetation, thus providing additional food sources and more breeding areas.

By summer, food and vegetation are abundant. Rats and mice are now common because of spring breeding and an abundant food supply; because of this, people tend to see more rodents from April to June. This time of year rodents may again try to re-enter homes because high populations are competing for habitat and a safe place to rear young. A female rat can have up to 84 young in her life span, which averages about a year in the wild. Another peak in breeding occurs in early September as temperatures begin to cool.

Technicians at Adept Pest Solutions understand how these seasonal changes affect rodent populations and how best to apply control practices. The prime objective of our rodent program is to create an environment, which will discourage

and prevent rodents from entering your home and to keep them out after an infestation has been removed.

The Norway rat, Roof rat, House mouse, and Deer mouse, are the rodents that enter our home most frequently in the Northwest. They are typically quiet, nocturnal animals (active at night). They'll come out when there is a less threat of predators and people. They'll forage, breed and collect nesting materials while we sleep. Often people are unaware they have a rodent problem until they venture into their attic to retrieve stored items, or call on a repairperson fix a leaky pipe in the crawlspace. Because rats are nocturnal, daytime sightings of rodent activity can mean that their nesting areas have been disturbed or, more likely, that there is overpopulation of them in the local area.

Primary Problems That Occur With Rodents

When rodents enter our homes they can consume and contaminate our food. Rats are known carriers of diseases such as rat-bite fever, typhus, salmonella, plague, typhoid and tapeworms. Because rodents chew and gnaw by nature, they sometimes chew through electrical wires, telephone wires, cables, alarm wires and PCP piping. When this type of damage occurs, the repairs can be costly and in some cases dangerous.

Deer mice can be found statewide. They are distinguished from other mice by their white bellies and furry tails. The Deer Mouse has been the most prevalent carrier of the deadly Hantavirus. Caution should be taken when handling these animals or their waste. Deer mice excrete the Hantavirus in their urine, saliva, and droppings. A person may be exposed to Hantavirus by breathing contaminated dust after disturbing or cleaning rodent droppings or nests, or by living or working in rodent-infested area. Although other species have been found

to carry the disease, the deer mouse is the only species known to transmit the disease to humans. According to the Washington State Department of Health, over twenty cases of the Hantavirus have been reported in the state since the first United States outbreak in 1993.

Secondary Problems That Can Occur with Rodents

Rodents are common carriers of fleas. Fleas are blood sucking parasites which have the ability to transfer from one host to another, allowing the possible transfer of pathogens including viral, bacterial and parasitic diseases. The Rat Flea is the most common cause for infection of the bubonic plague and murine typhus. The infection occurs when the flea feeds on an infected rodent, and then bites a human.

Not all bites are flea related. Rat Mites are parasites that also feed on the warm blood of the rodent. They seek out a host and feed at periodic intervals when they are ready to molt or breed. They can survive weeks or months between meals and leave behind very itchy bites that can worsen with time. Rat Mites are often a result of a rodent problem that is unchecked or untreated. Once rat mites penetrate the structure of a home, they can be very difficult to get rid of.

Dermestid beetles, like our common Carpet Beetle, will lay eggs on the carcasses of dead rodents so their larvae can feed. Once the beetles find a consistent and abundant food source they can spread rapidly throughout the home damaging other animal products such as wool, silk, leather and fur. Their larvae will also feed on stored products such as spices and grains. It is only the larvae that feed on animal products, the adult Carpet Beetle feeds on pollen and nectar.

Rodent Control Services

Adept Pest Solutions applies an Integrated Pest Management approach to rodent control. A technician will perform a free and thorough inspection of your home in order to identify, locate and determine the cause of the rodent ingress. The need for control will be assessed utilizing environmental, biological, mechanical and chemical methods along with the efficacy, cost and safety of your family and the environment. After careful consideration of all these criteria, our technicians'

will present to you the most appropriate control methods to be used.

Animal Clean-up and Decontamination

At times rodent ingress and rodent contamination can go beyond the need for basic rodent control. Adept Pest Solutions is a licensed, bonded and insured General Contractor who can provide customers with trained and properly equipped personnel to aid in the clean-up of rodent feces, urine, saliva, dead bodies or other tissues, including the removal and disposal of animal contaminated attic insulation, crawlspace insulation and vapor barriers. All exclusion work and newly re-installed insulation material is performed in accordance with Washington State Building and Energy Codes. This type of clean up work also requires the proper use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) such as HEPA filter respirators, protective clothing, and proper decontamination and disposal equipment.

Rodent Prevention Check List

- ✓ Remove and dispose of excess debris near your home.
- ✓ Relocate wood piles at least 25 feet from the structure and place wood on raised pallets.
- ✓ Prune all tree limbs and vegetation touching the home.
- ✓ Repair garage door gaskets; repair door threshold gaskets.
- ✓ Store all pet food in sealed metal cans with lids.
- ✓ Store personal items in garage in sealed containers off the floor.
- ✓ Clean up debris in garage and storage areas.
- ✓ Store garbage in sealed containers with tight fitting lids and empty regularly.
- ✓ Mow vegetation next to fences and fields to remove harborage.
- ✓ Fix leaks and moisture sources.
- ✓ Check roof vents and crawlspace vents and screen openings to prevent access.
- ✓ Seal pipe, wires and other utility entrances to the structure.
- ✓ Pick up dog droppings from yard regularly and dispose of in garbage can.