

House Mouse



Generally the mouse species that can cause problems in the UK is the House mouse. Other species such as the Wood Mouse and the Field Mouse sometimes enter houses, but are more common in sheds and garages.

Description

- The adult House Mouse is 3-3.75 inches (7-9 cms) long.
- They are grey, brown or black in colour.
- House mouse can live and breed in houses, buildings and other structures such as garden sheds, which give them protection from cold and wet weather, and where they can access food, water and harbourage.
- Although an abundant supply of food is preferable, house mice can survive on relatively poor diets.
- Mice share some characteristics with rats. Incisor teeth continuously grow and therefore their normal behaviour includes the gnawing of many materials so they can damage wiring. However, they are much smaller than rats, being able to squeeze through a gap of only 6mm. This makes it easy for them to spread throughout a building. They are extremely good climbers and can climb walls, pipes, cavities and ducting.
- They are **not** associated with sewerage systems.



Lifestyle

- In urban areas, house mice are able to breed throughout the year, and can produce anywhere between 5 and 10 litters – each consisting of about 4-8 young.
- They can live for up to two years but their average lifespan is 10 months.
- On average a mouse eats one tenth of its body weight each day, but it does not depend on a water supply, so long as moist food is available. It will eat almost anything, but prefers cereals.
- Their daylight vision is very poor and although their senses of hearing and touch are very good, the sense of smell is the most important.
- They not only mark their territory, but continually leave streaks of urine wherever they go.

Like many other rodents, the House Mouse is a normal part of English nature which means that we should be extra vigilant when feeding birds and other wild creatures. Once mice find a suitable food source, then an infestation will develop. The size and extent dependent on the type and amount of food available.

Significance

- Mice can **spread disease**, particularly salmonella and other food poisoning organisms mainly as a result of their indiscriminate feeding habits.
- They **damage and contaminate** food with their droppings and urine
- Mice cause **property damage**, particularly by gnawing timber, plastic pipes and electrical installations with resultant risks of flooding and fires. Mice nests have also been responsible for blocking drains.

Control

It is a legal requirement that the owner/occupier of any land or property takes all reasonable measures to ensure any infestation is eradicated.

The essential requirement of any infestation by mice is a food supply and therefore it is important that all food is properly stored, refuse properly contained until disposal and that a good standard of housekeeping is maintained.

Patience

Mice do not eat their fill at one point, but will nibble small amounts of food at many different places. Although quite potent, they will need to consume the bait more than once which means that an infestation may not be cleared up until several visits have been made. You should notice a reduction in numbers by the second visit.

Spelthorne Borough Council provides a service for the treatment of domestic premises infested with mice at a subsidised rate. Should you require a treatment, please contact Spelthorne's Customer Services on 01784 451499 or e-mail customer.services@spelthorne.gov.uk