

TRAITS

Other Names:

brown rat, gray rat, common rat, house rat, wharf rat, sewer rat, barn rat and water rat.

Norway Rat

Ears. Ears are close to the body and won't cover the eyes if bent forward.

Eyes. Eyes are small. Rats are color-blind and have poor eyesight; primarily seeing light, shadow and movement.

Body. Body is heavy and thick, 7 to 10 inches (18 to 25 cm) long. Average weight is 10 to 17 ounces (284 to 482 g).

Teeth. The gnaw pattern of rats is 1/8 inch. Rats are able to gnaw through wood, lead, aluminum, copper, cinder block and uncured concrete.

Whiskers. Whiskers on the face and guard hairs on the sides and back help an animal with poor eyesight stay safely against walls, under objects, and in burrows. Whiskers are also used to detect motion and test surfaces, e.g., glue traps, before stepping on them.

Food Preferences and Consumption.

Omnivores. Meats, fish, flour, cereal grains, fruits and vegetables. Eats almost any human food. Rats visit fewer food sites than mice, but eat more at each site. Consumes 3/4 to 1 ounce of food each day. Requires water daily to survive – drinks 1/2 to 1 ounce of water daily.

RAT FACTS

Rats explore their territory of 100 to 300 feet daily.

Rats can survive a fall from up to 25 feet onto a hard surface.

Rats can swim up to a mile.



(approximate size)

Tail. Tail is shorter than head and body – 6 to 8½ inches (15 to 22 cm) long. Tail is dark on top with a lighter underside.

Color. Usually grayish-brown, but color may vary from a pure gray to a blackish- or reddish-brown. The underside is gray to yellow-white. Norway rats are often completely black.

Nose. Nose and muzzle are blunt. Norway rats have an acute sense of smell.

Droppings. Droppings have blunt ends and are about 3/4 inch (2 cm) or less in length. Fresh droppings are soft and dark in color. A Norway rat averages 30 to 180 droppings per day.

Geographic Range

Due to their excellent adaptability, Norway rats are found throughout the United States and most of the urban and agricultural areas in Canada.

Habits. Norway rats burrow extensively in soil and are excellent swimmers and good climbers. They usually nest in basements and lower portions of buildings. Nocturnal. Most activity and feeding takes place between a half hour after sunset and a half hour before sunrise. Very strong social hierarchy – the biggest and strongest Norway rats get the best food and harborage.