




National Pest Technicians Association

A photograph of a brown rat in a cluttered area, possibly a storage room or basement. The rat is positioned on the left side of the frame, facing left. It is surrounded by wooden planks, plastic bags, and other debris. The lighting is somewhat dim, highlighting the texture of the rat's fur and the surrounding environment.

# **NATIONAL RODENT SURVEY REPORT 2007**

**PUBLISHED JANUARY 2008**

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# NATIONAL RODENT SURVEY - 2007

## Introduction

Welcome to our **eighth** consecutive **National Rodent Survey Report** undertaken by the **National Pest Technician's Association (NPTA)** based upon facts and figures provided by sixty two percent (**62%**) of local authorities within the United Kingdom (**UK**).

This year's report is based upon comparing the years 2006 to 2005 or in the special case of local authorities who keep their statistics as per their financial year, the years 2006/07 to 2005/06.

From a rather quiet beginning in 1999 when the NPTA started undertaking the very first Annual Survey Report<sup>1</sup> of Rodent findings throughout the whole of the UK, we now find that in 2007 many people from all walks of life, organisations, institutions, learned bodies and the media look forward to the publication of these our latest findings. For all eight surveys we have kept the questionnaire short, easy to follow and of the same design so that local authorities can quickly extract the important statistics from their own computer records.

Obviously this has to rely upon them programming their computer accordingly. Certainly without the help and assistance of the Councils who respond within the timescale set it just would not happen and for this we say publicly a '**big thank you**'.

An innovation for this Report is that we are now able to include the actual Regional and National numerical number of requests for treatments and complaints about rodents as well as the normal percentage increase or decrease. This decision came after much deliberation and upgrading of our database and follows the request, particularly from members of the media (**TV, local and national radio and newspapers**). We believe this innovation makes the Report more credible as well as understandable?



## What are the important headline news within this years' Report?

That the extraordinary increases reported upon in the first seven Reports. This this year shows that statistically we may at last have reached a maximum level and for this period we are able to show a reduction of both rat and mice numbers. Good news on the whole. **Although we feel there are underlying reasons which may have influenced these figures.**

That the year on year increase notified in six of the seven Reports for **Brown Rats** (with the exception of 2004) and in five of the seven Reports for **Summer Rats** (with the exception of 2000 and 2004) has reduced remarkably to a 23 per cent (**23%**) reduction in **Brown Rat** treatments and a seventeen per cent (**17%**) reduction in **Summer Rat** treatments.

In addition, this year we also see a huge reduction in **mice** treatment numbers giving an average percentage reduction for the UK of 30 per cent (**30%**). Hopefully good news!

Bearing in mind the innovation mentioned within the fifth paragraph of the Introduction, as one example for **Rats** we can now report Councils in the Midlands Region had a total of **38,359** requests for treatments in 2006, a **30%** reduction compared to a huge **49,638** requests in the previous year. Another interesting example is for **Mice** in that Councils in the North Western Region had a total of **21,010** requests for mice treatments in 2006, a **28%** reduction compared to the huge **25,427** requests received in the previous year. **Almost certainly due to charging policies as most Councils now charge for this service.**

The more one listens to the observations of Pest Control Technicians (PCT) it becomes clear that the findings of (*Mus domesticus*) are not thought to be solely due to the house mouse! They are finding that many mice infestations in homes were due to the field mouse, also known as the wood mouse (*Apodemus sylvaticus*)! Very interesting observations and one perhaps we should investigate further in next year's Questionnaire?

\* The North Western Region indicates that they have the largest concentration of house mice of **21, 010** in

the whole of the UK – for example-triple Yorkshire’s treatments and double the Northern Region treatments.

\* The total for Rat treatment requests in Northern Ireland is surprisingly very low at only **2,751**

\* The most surprising figure is that for the whole of Scotland that only shows a grand total of **6,061 brown rat** requests for treatment.

Taking all the figures for the UK regions and adding them together gives us a total number of initial visits when a treatment took place of 261,807 treatments to control brown rat infestations. One could assume that for every request made for treatment or complaint about rats where a successful treatment took place (say with the minimum death of only 1 adult male and 1 adult female rat) the potential population rise was significantly reduced.

Within the UK pest control industry it is considered that the average UK brown rat litter number is seven to eight (7-8) pups per litter. Females breed on average five (5) times per year, this can vary considerably due to many factors:- so for example say our original **261,807 adult pairs of brown rats now dead**, if they remained untreated, they could have generated a total population of over **9 Million** given ideal conditions. **Surely a sound reason for environmental health departments to continue to protect our public health.**

It has to be noted that Local Authority pest control budget cuts from Central Government are posing immense pressures on pest control managers. The option many authorities adopt is to charge for the pest control service, rather than reducing the number of pest control officers, an option that should not have to be taken to protect public health. Many Institutions and Organisations believe that local authorities having the power to use both legal and enforcement action within their jurisdiction and being unbiased are the only independent body capable of representing the general public’s interest regarding public health.



National Pest Technicians Association

## Who supplied the figures plus facts and information for this year’s survey?

Included at Appendix D, part 1, is a complete list of every local authority in regional order that assisted the NPTA in providing full and meaningful figures.

**Following on from the initiative of our last Report we again include details in part 2 to Appendix D firstly of those Counties who provided either a 100% return rate or a high response rate of 80% or higher. These listed Counties are to be congratulated for achieving such a high return.**

As already said on the Introductory Page we here at NPTA House would like to place on record our thanks to all those who took part for their help, support and assistance. It is pleasing to say this eighth report is based upon a sixty two percent (62%) overall return. *However, why thirty eight percent (38%) of Councils, approximately 161, cannot send in their returns has always puzzled the Association? Do they not keep their records on a computer?*

A copy of our letter of invitation to take part in the survey, which was sent out in the last week of July 2007, is shown at Appendix B and the actual questionnaire is shown at Appendix C. For the record, for newcomers to this Report, except for removing the statistical questions used in the very first survey <sup>1</sup> about Black Rats (*Rattus rattus*) page 1 of the questionnaire has remained the same.

## Alternate Weekly Collection (AWC) systems

It will be remembered that within the 2006 Rodent Report <sup>2</sup> we highlighted that “household refuse stored within black plastic bags and overflowing wheelie bins causes another 24/7 source of rodent food” this is a statement we still support. Unfortunately, a few national press reports quoted us out of context and created the illusion that we, the NPTA, were totally against AWC. The point they failed to make was that we were against AWC where they were not properly managed and supervised at grass roots level.

As a consequence of this problem we included in this year’s Questionnaire a few questions about AWC and these comments from those taking part within the Survey are included this year at Appendix A – Part 2.

Let us dwell a while on Alternate Weekly Collection,

(AWC) systems<sup>3</sup> which are a means of restricting the volume of space available for householders to put out "residual" (non-recyclable) waste. There is clear evidence that capacity restriction (either through AWC or providing smaller containers) boosts recycling rates significantly. For the main types of material collected by UK local authorities, recycling or composting has overall carbon footprint benefits compared with disposal to landfill or energy recovery. Any local issues associated with AWC or other activities such as home composting need to be seen in the wider context of tackling climate change and also the increasing cost to the community associated with waste management.

AWC systems are sometimes made out to be a reduction in service. AWC should only be introduced alongside a comprehensive kerbside recycling service. In most areas residents are provided with a variety of receptacles for different materials and receive at least one collection a week; frequently more. Kerbside collections of food waste (usually weekly) are helpful in that they reduce the amount of putrescible material in the residual waste bin.

Fly/maggot problems in the summer can be avoided with care over wrapping of putrescible material. Local authorities should communicate with residents about how to avoid such problems. They should also take into account areas where management of residual waste is difficult, for example if facilities are shared and there is insufficient ownership of the receptacle provided.

Households on AWC should be provided with a rodent proof container (a wheeled bin is sufficient to prevent access to rodents provided that the lid is kept closed). The size, or number, of containers should be appropriate to the number of persons in the household. Policies about keeping the lid closed and presentation of side waste should be clearly communicated to householders and appropriate advice given or action taken where issues arise.

If it is not possible for the householder to keep such a container due to either the nature of the dwelling or accessibility problems, then consideration should be given to maintaining a more frequent collection. As with most things, clear communication with residents about why AWC is being introduced and advice on how to avoid any issues is an essential part of introducing and continuing with any scheme. Advice should be disseminated before, during and after roll out of any changes. This should also apply to advice about the use of home composters or food digesters.

Further advice on the introduction of AWC is available in guidance from WRAP. See full reference in Appendix E.

From the hundreds of replies we have received this year we have again created our "TOP SIX FACTORS CAUSING MAJOR PROBLEMS" which are listed on pages eight and nine. We have also summarised other less understood problems that PCT's have expressed. These latest comments are included within Appendix A and we hope, as always, they make for an "interesting read".

## **A few thoughts on the development of "Charging Policies"**

In last year's Report for 2006 we asked questions about whether or not Councils were charging for their service to exterminate rats and/or mice. This found that charging was undertaken by a growing number of them and was at an approximate level of sixty two percent (62%) at the time of publication.

For this year we decided not to ask this same question but interestingly there appear to be a consensus within Councils who charge for their service that the number of sightings of rats and mice reduces and yet everyone agrees this does not mean the number of rodents is lower. We therefore have what we believe to be a hidden reservoir of rats and mice that are not being counted at the moment. It is wondered whether this is a potential time-bomb waiting to explode?

Whilst we definitely view this change to charge for clearing up domestic related rodent infestations as a step in the wrong direction, it should be mentioned some Councils have seen the light and after a couple of years of experience cancelled their charging policy believing it is not looking after the public's health.

It has to be reported that a few Councils (at the moment) have closed down their Pest Control sections and placed the necessary work to an outside Pest Control Servicing Company. From the overall UK pest control industry's point of view this can be an opportunity for many businesses to expand and take on more staff. Our only concern is that obviously it is essential that whoever is chosen to do the work have PCT's fully trained and experienced and that the company itself is a full member of a professional membership body. This ensures the work is undertaken in a full and professional manner.

As already mentioned we, the NPTA, and many involved bodies believe that an independent unbiased body such as a local authority which is not revenue driven but has legal and enforcement powers to be the only suitable body to undertake these duties.

# The Actual Number of Requests for Treatment and/or Complaints

In the Introduction to this 2007 Report we said we had an innovation, namely the individual Regional and total UK number of requests for treatments and/or complaints that had been made for the two years of the Survey and made to each local authority.

Region	Rats 2005/06	Rats 2006/07
Eastern	26545	16684
East Midlands	25473	16991
Isle of Man	3124	-----
London	20117	16939
Midlands	49638	38359
North Western	43105	41947
Northern	20505	14470
Northern Home Counties	19166	12754
South East	21129	16173
South Western	19874	17380
Southern	27664	17766
Yorkshire	22961	18578
Northern Ireland	3053	2751
Scotland	6529	6061
Wales	31194	24954
<b>Total Rat requests</b>	<b>340,077</b>	<b>261,807</b>

Region	Mice 2005/06	Mice 2006/07
Eastern	7371	3790
East Midlands	10824	6604
Isle of Man	841	-----
London	19219	15822
Midlands	13111	8076
North Western	25427	21010
Northern	13374	10037
Northern Home Counties	6791	3766
South East	6953	3914
South Western	4965	3498
Southern	8250	4281
Yorkshire	9380	6863
Northern Ireland	1844	1713
Scotland	12585	10619
Wales	7860	5835
<b>Total Mice requests</b>	<b>148,795</b>	<b>105,828</b>

These tables show how the reductions found during this latest survey are consistent over the whole of the UK.

# Outline National Percentage findings and Statistics of the National Rodent Survey 2007

The total number of Infestations reported during the previous two years (2005 and 2006) and dealt with by local authorities is divided into:

**BROWN RATS** We have to announce that we show a twenty three percent (23%) decrease. This means that taking the figures for the past 8 years we have now had a year on year increase totalling sixteen (16%). These regional figures can easily be seen in the table entitled "Regional Findings" on page 6.

## Summary Statement

Deleting this year's 23% decrease onto previous years overall percentages makes a reportable total increase of 16% for the years 1998 to 2006 covered by our eight reports.

**HOUSE MICE** We have to announce that we show a thirty percent (30%) decrease. This means that taking the figures for the past 8 years we again show a minus totalling seventeen and a half (17.5%). These regional figures can easily be seen in the table entitled "Regional Findings".

## Summary Statement

Deleting this 30 per cent (30%) decrease to the previous overall figures means that in the years 1998 to 2006 covered by our eight reports we have now found that we have again gone below the zero mark and show a minus seventeen point five percent (17.5%) figure for House Mice reports and treatments.

**SUMMER BROWN RAT FINDINGS** Like the total all year round Rat figures, Summer Rats show an overall decrease for the summer of 2006 compared to the summer of 2005 with a massive overall UK average decrease of seventeen percent (17%).

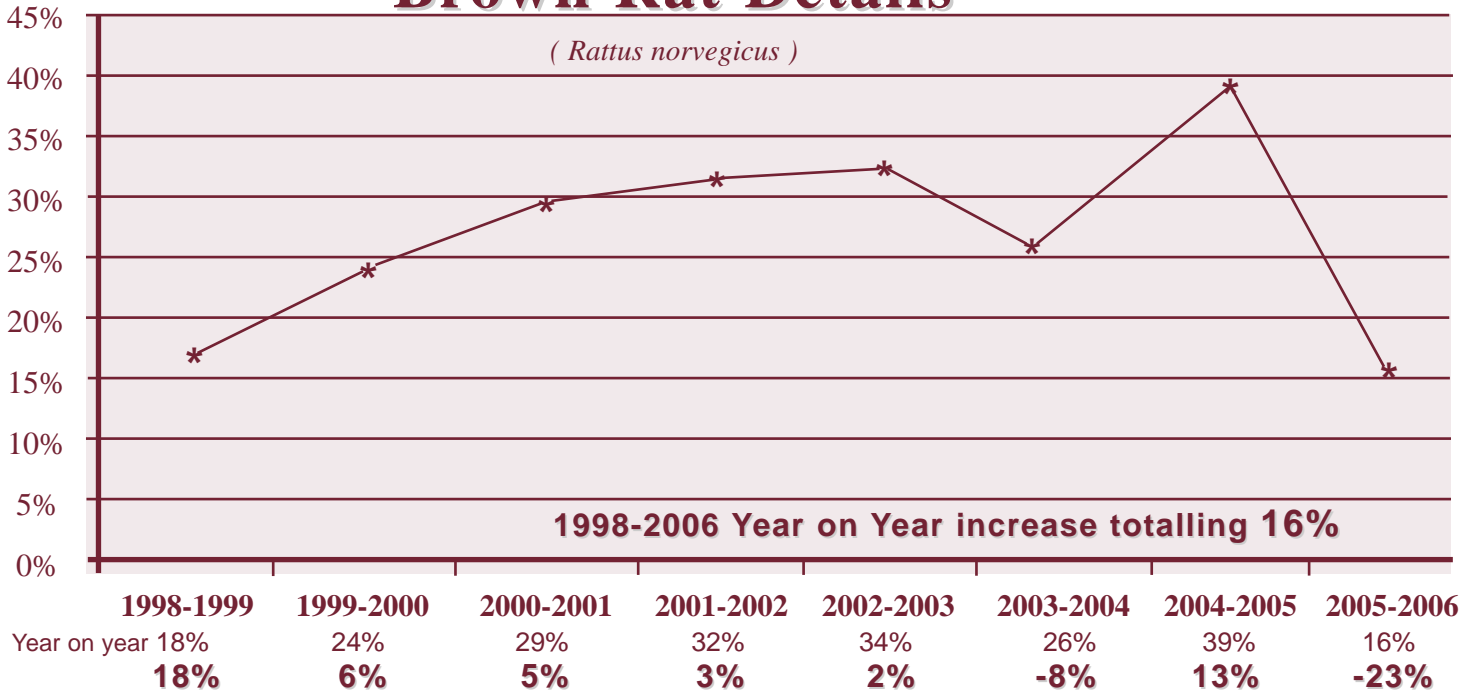
Regional figures are shown in the table headed "Regional Findings".

## Summary Statement

Deleting this 17% decrease from the previous years overall figures means in the years 1998 to 2006 we have now experienced a total overall increase of 52% in Summer Rat reports and treatments covered by our eight reports. A far better picture than that we had to report upon for last year's figures.

# Brown Rat Details

( *Rattus norvegicus* )



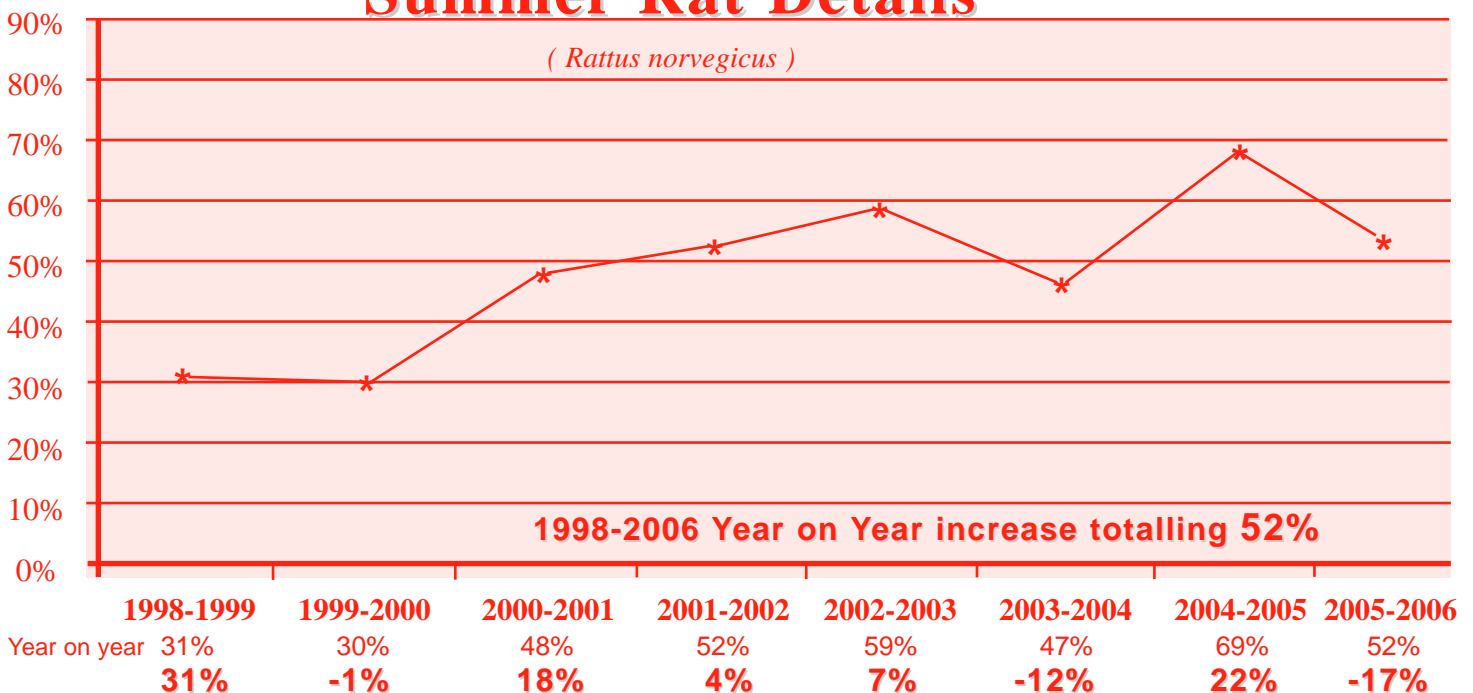
# House Mice Details

( *Mus domesticus* )



# Summer Rat Details

( *Rattus norvegicus* )



# Regional Findings

The map opposite on page 7 also summarises the survey findings region by region. The table below of the 15 regions details these same findings:

Region's Name	Brown Rats	House Mice	Summer Rats
Eastern	39%decrease	72%decrease	47%decrease
East Midlands	36%decrease	44%decrease	29%decrease
Isle of Man	No returns	received to be	able to compare
London	3%decrease	17%	3%decrease
Midlands	30%decrease	37%decrease	28%decrease
North Western	5%decrease	19%decrease	8%
Northern	40%decrease	28%decrease	7%decrease
Northern Home Counties	33%decrease	41%decrease	33%decrease
South East	20%decrease	38%decrease	17%decrease
South Western	17%decrease	30%decrease	19%decrease
Southern	38%decrease	43%decrease	27%decrease
Yorkshire	20%decrease	29%decrease	3%decrease
Northern Ireland	10%decrease	7%decrease	6%decrease
Scotland	7%decrease	16%decrease	7%decrease
Wales	20%decrease	26%decrease	19%decrease
<b>U K TOTALS:</b>	<b>23%decrease</b>	<b>30%decrease</b>	<b>17%decrease</b>

**Note:** This table summarises an amazing national trend, in that except for 2 regions (London 17% mice increase and North Western 8% summer rat increase) the number of infestations treated by local authorities in 2006 compared to the figures treated by local authorities in 2005 all showed a statistically LARGE decrease.

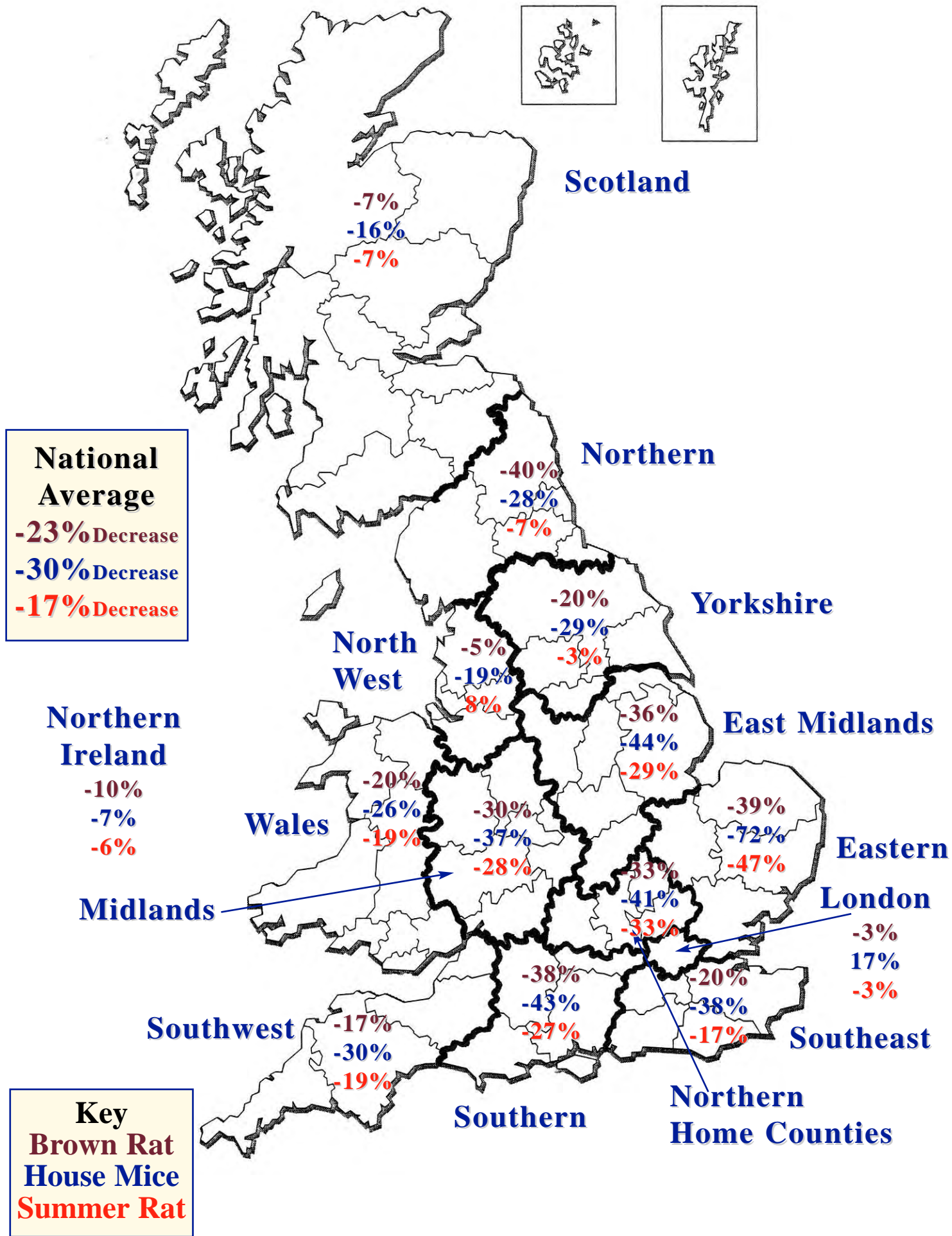
## Information

We believe new readers need to be aware why the NPTA invented this term of “**Summer Rat**” which was carefully explained in the very first report<sup>1</sup>.

The term relates to those brown rats (*Rattus norvegicus*), which were the subject of a request for treatment to the various local authorities for the summer of 2006 compared to the summer of 2005 (**Summer being from April 1st until September 30th each year**).

One has to appreciate that way back in 1998 and again in 1999 (prior to the Annual Survey starting) reports were coming back to the NPTA from both our members and local authorities that they were getting much busier in the “summer months”, more so than had been their normal experience for many decades. It should be appreciated that as far as local authorities had been used to in both the 1980’s and 1990’s, the summer had usually been a comparatively much quieter time for requests for rat treatments from the public.

# National Pest Technicians Association



# Water UK and the Rats in Sewers Protocol

Last year we reported upon a most interesting development regarding the UK Sewers Protocol, in that commencing in 2004 the Association of London Environmental Health Manager's (ALEHM) had met with Thames Water and preparing to take unilateral action and developed their own London based Sewer Protocol.

From contact made with the Secretariat <sup>4</sup> we understand that Thames Water have brought in new pest control contracts for their sewers. Preliminary reports are that good progress is being made and positive results are forthcoming. We certainly approve of this London initiative and together with the improvements already being noted with Yorkshire Water <sup>5</sup> the future is looking far better.

## Anticoagulant Resistance in rodents

This year we asked specific questions on whether or not Councils were perceiving there to be Anticoagulant Resistance. From the returns, it has been suggested potential Resistance has occurred in a few areas, the professional approach to this seems to quickly overcome the problem by ensuring PCT's receive good practical advice within their professional training on good techniques or know how to change their techniques.

## SIX FACTORS THAT ARE STILL CAUSING MAJOR PROBLEMS

Despite the overall reductions we believe it is essential that any survey findings need interpretation and whilst it is not the intention of the NPTA to point the finger at any one factor or to any one industry for the trends in the Brown Rat and House Mice population, we feel able through the experiences of our members and that of local authority officers, to indicate again several key factors that are playing a vital part in their survival.

This year we again wish to highlight six (6) factors which are identified by those involved in pest control.

## Private Water Companies –

With the exception of Yorkshire Water and Thames Water the current “UK Rats in Sewers Protocol” is said by many not to be working as it was supposed too! Fortunately the two aforementioned Water Companies are already rewriting the rules for their particular areas and reports appear to be favourable. However, we firmly believe more needs to be done by both Water Companies and their respective local authorities to develop better liaisons and establish far better working relationships.

## Charging Policies –

This trend is said by many PCT and officers alike to be the cause of a growing reduction in requests for treatments or complaints and consequently making under-reporting a hidden problem that only creates a ‘time-bomb’ effect and reservoir of rodents for possible future years.

**This also impacts on the use of professional services causing amateur use products to be used and subsequently non-target species to be affected by secondary poisoning.**

## Litter and discarded food

Litter and discarded food and containers from fast food outlets and Fly Tipping, – We are hearing that despite the Keep Tidy Group's special campaign against litter, rubbish from fast food premises in some areas is still a bad problem. In addition, larger ‘fixed penalty’ fines under the new Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005 can be given to both people littering and Fly tipping. All Councils should consider taking this new legislation on board, particularly as fly tipping continues to grow and some parts of local authority areas are being blighted by such actions by a very small minority of the public.

**Three separate problems being found in domestic gardens:**

## Overfeeding of wild birds –

The continuing overfeeding of wild birds causing a 24/7 supply of easy food pickings for rats and mice;

## Composting –

The composting of rubbish including food scraps in a bad manner, without proper advice and guidance by the suppliers of the bins;

## Badly designed decking –

The increasing trend to fix badly designed decking which does not allow easy access to remove food wastes, harbourage and nesting sites for rats and to some extent mice;

To stem criticism from readers of the Report we wish to emphasise that the NPTA are not condemning any of these three very worthwhile schemes. What we are criticising is:

- a. the excessive supply of wild bird food on bird tables and by using feeders that allows food to fall onto the ground below providing a ready source of easy food for rats.
- b. badly sited plastic compost bins placed straight onto earth or material which rats and mice can easily burrow through. It is important that all compost bins are sited directly onto concrete or solid slabs or their bottoms covered with a fine builder's/welder's strength wire mesh.
- c. the fact that decking is often provided without any easy access for householders to ensure food scraps, rubbish and rat nests are not allowed to develop and can be cleaned out easily;

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** Readers must appreciate that these highlighted six factors are not in any order of priority or the only causes of rodent problems.

Comments included in Appendix A from the PCT's undergoing actual 'hands on' pest control within the UK should also be taken into account.

## Our Conclusions

1. This 2007 report has identified a year of reductions for both "All year round rats", "summer rats" and also "house mice". Because, we feel, changing policies have significantly influenced returns this year, we feel the knock on effect may be seen in forthcoming Reports;
2. That AWC properly managed and supervised at grass roots level is working fairly well, however some LA's, because of lack of adequate communication with their residents, have created individual problems;
3. That LA's must not lose sight of and should continue to remember their original mission statement, dating back to the middle of the nineteenth Century, that they are there to safeguard the public's health. If this happens we believe we shall progress healthily;
4. That readers of this report should start considering and then perhaps asking questions over the fact that both Yorkshire Water and Thames Water and their respective local Councils have both taken unilateral action against the official Water UK and Local Government Association (LGA) "Rats in Sewer Protocol". We ask why are the other privatised Water Companies and their respective local authorities not taking heed of this trend. The main point is that between us we could improve the many Water Company areas where liaison is just not happening at the right levels?

Main Author (on behalf of the Management Board)  
**J. Barrie Sheard FCIEH**  
**Current Chairman of the NPTA**

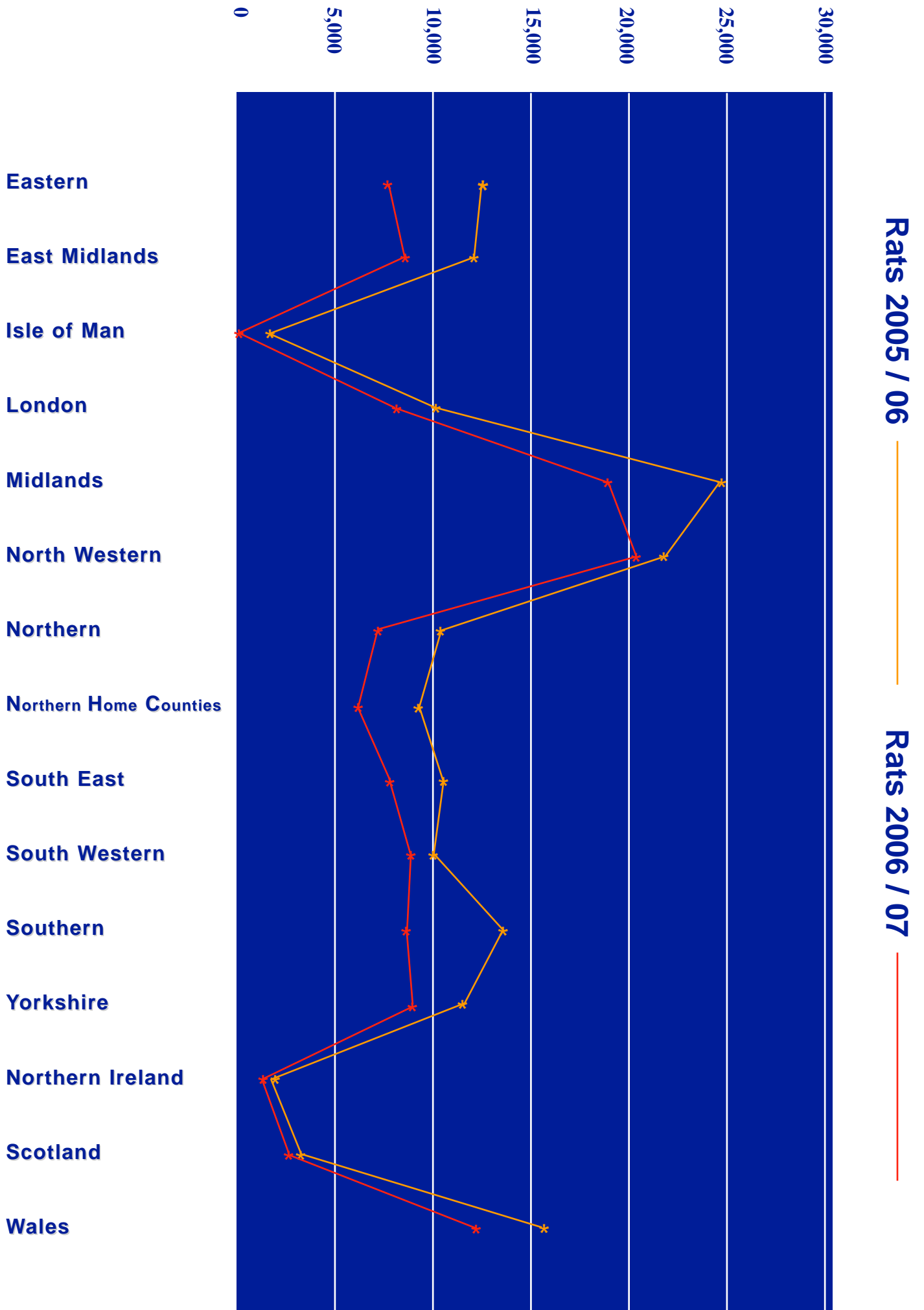
John Davison – Chief Executive of the NPTA  
and Editor of "Today's Technician"

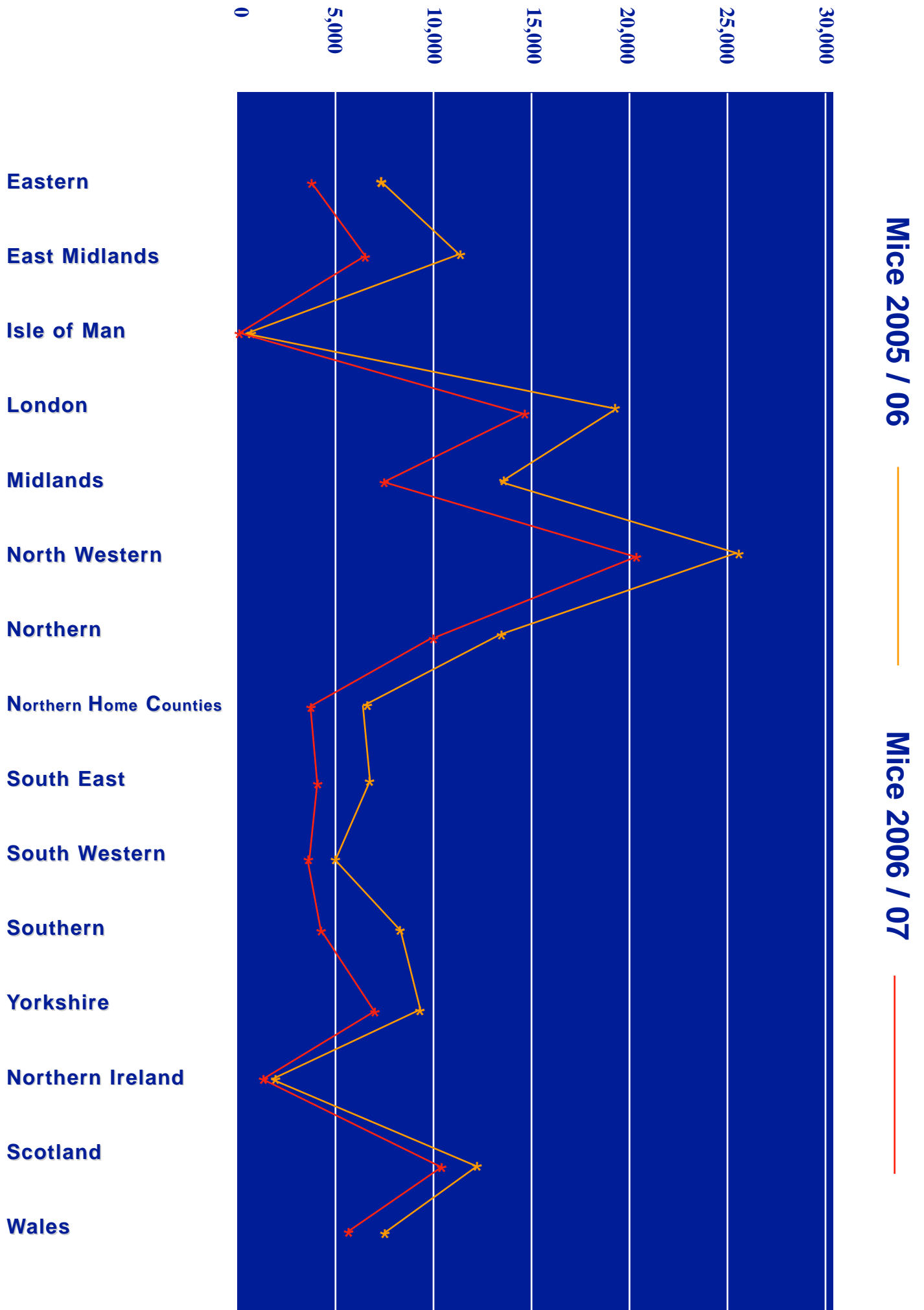
supported by

Neil Barnett - Management Board Member  
Julie Gillies – Administrative Manager  
Margaret Coleyshaw – Administration Officer

Photographs –  
Courtesy of John Powell-Management Board Member.

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**Re Rodent Resistance we find that cereal base is not good for mice. They take wax bait readily, particularly when baiting in old town housing. Recently tried pasta base with good results. This authority continue to have problems with irresponsible dumped waste, particularly in alleys. We also continue to have poor proactive communications with Northumbrian Water for sewer baiting purposes.**

The majority of rat treatments are linked to the feeding of wild birds. We are currently considering charging for repeat treatments where bird feeding continues.

**Apparent reduction in complaints results from an insistence on proofing, housekeeping measures and educating the complainant in the use of traps before treatment. This has resulted in higher successful treatments in domestic and commercial properties – we therefore get less call outs when these properties become re-infested.**

**In reality the nature of complaints is changing – We are experiencing more public sightings of rats in open spaces, fly tipping related rat sightings and harder to control domestic and commercial infestations due to faulty drains – both private and privatised Water Company sewers.**

**Surface rat infestations fuelled by thoughtless public disposal of unwanted fast food and such like, onto private land are proving difficult to deal with and result in repeat reports of rats throughout the recorded year. Control of these ‘high profile’ sightings requires other Council Departments and private landowners to co-operate with Pest Control, co-operation which has been seldom forthcoming.**

The decrease in the number of treatments for mice may have been linked to the fact that a fee was introduced for this service on 1st April 2006.

**Activity decrease due to Council’s ‘in depth’ free service.**

Bait shyness an occasional problem over the years but more marked recently.  
Rats not taking / hesitating to consume bait from plastic or metal bait boxes.

**A charge was introduced of £15 for both rats and mice treatments in April 2005, previously treatments were free.**

Decrease due to commencement of charging for rat and mice treatments.

**Our pco’s seem to be encountering worse infestations in domestic gardens which are directly linked to excessive wild bird feeding, another thing which is being reported back to our office is amateur use products being sighted in some bizzare places such as on bird tables because that was where the rat was sighted and after all nothing else will eat rat bait because it’s for rats.**

Increase in numbers due to Water Company no longer baiting drainage systems.

**Although sighting and reports are above normal, the outcome seems increasingly to be to self treat because of our charging policy.**

Incorrect sighting of compost bins and the overfeeding of wild birds seems to be causing most problems.

**The policies enforced on local government officers in the present climate make it impossible to deal with the problems encountered with the funds available without introducing some form of charging policy.**

Wild bird feeding and compost bins on soil bases make an ideal food source in many gardens.

**The overall view in our area is that there is a large increase in rodent activity although complaints are down.**

**Dramatic drop in mouse complaints is more than likely due to the introduction of charges from April 2006.**

Following the introduction of charges the trend of complaints to the LA has shown a downward trend.

**Increases due to over feeding of birds. Rats increasingly reluctant to enter bait stations (boxes).**

Introduced payments for rat/mouse treatments in April 2006 – requests dropped by 60-70% initially; still only 55-60% former level.

**The Council are talking about ceasing the service not improving it, it comes down to money, they are so short sighted!**

Increase due to Council removing fees for rodent treatments end of 2005.

**No explanation for decrease other than natural cycle. Looking at rat figures from 01/04/07 to date shows slight increase compared to 01/04/06-06/08/06.**

Figures are fairly constant but from 01/04/07 we now no longer treat for mice outside. We began charging for treatments for rats and mice from November 2004.

**Although we now have better relations with Thames Water it is still an uphill battle to get them to bait areas that need treatment. Rail Network, who now bait on a re-active basis rather than pro-active basis.**

The London Sewer Baiting NEW Protocol is working – Thames Water is responding to requests for re-active baiting; Increasing rats in ‘out of town’ retail parks that attract large numbers of visitors who indiscriminately deposit food litter in the landscape shrubbery; All night rubbish collections introduced in the town centre to respond to the 24 hour economy; Increased enforcement activity – more fixed penalty notices being issued.

**Long term ‘block treatments’ regarding mice have been a problem to resolve. It may be they avoid bait boxes as we have very little ‘takes’.**

There is certainly a perception in the public's eyes that AWC's has led to an increase in rat infestations and it may just be that existing infestations are becoming more obvious as rodents are attracted to overflowing bins/piles of rubbish. On going problems with poor levels of household hygiene

**1. Campaign to stop the public feeding birds; 2. The current partnership with United Utilities Water Company appears to be proving effective. However, I have been informed that this may change next year?**

**Please note when considering number of complaints / requests for service in this city during the period 01/04/05 – 31/01/06 ALL treatments for rats/mice were chargeable. A FREE service resumed on 01//02/06.**

Decrease may be down to PCT's targeting known hot spots and annual contracts set up with businesses so not recorded as visits. Charges for mice/rat treatments began 06/06/06 (was previously free for residents).

**Still ongoing issue of limited/if any pro-active sewer baiting being carried out by Northumbrian Water.**

Introduction of charging for rat treatments plus increase in cost equals lower requests. More Prevention of Damage by Pest Act notices

**Whilst number of treatments have remained relatively stable our PCT's have reported that the infestations they are treating are more severe. This could be a reflection of increasing rat numbers overall or because householders have tried to ‘self treat’ using readily available proprietary products before calling us in if their treatments fail.**

**Regarding Rodent Resistance – Had cases where poison is taken and doesn't seem to have any effect. So changed to another poison. Cases not actually proven as poison resistance though. Found a big increase in people feeding the bird's seed and of course the compost bins with no base sat on grass is a common problem.**

Regarding Rodent Resistance – Rat resistance being noted and anecdotally to the Central Science Laboratory at York. But cases are limited to a few farms, but no pattern or general area is clear i.e. not widespread! I believe a national study is required asking LA's to report suspected resistance.

**Increases in our opinion is mainly down to Fast food outlets and the Water Company baiting drains badly.**

Regarding Rodent Resistance - Within our area Warfarin will still kill rats providing you want to allow the manpower for the extra visits and time required.

**Our figures seem to be decreasing but this could be because of our charges – people seem to do their own treatments more nowadays. We also seem to have more private companies in the area.**

As you will see the number of treatments in this LA area is dropping and it is very difficult to come to a conclusion as to why this is! We are very pro-active in our approach to rats in particular and this hopefully is the real reason why numbers are falling, but there may be other reasons.

**With effect from November 2007 this LA will be re-introducing a FREE service to domestic ratepayers.**

I am unable to comment regarding rodent resistance in this Council – as baiting is not carried out by this Department. This Council offers an advisory service only to complainants seeking assistance.

**This Council only provides an advice and insect identification service. With regard to all other aspects of pest control the householder is advised to contact our preferred contractor with whom we have a formal agency agreement awarded after a tendering process. The cost of treatment is borne by the householder. A new contractor was appointed 01/04/06 and the cost of a treatment had increased substantially over previous years which may be a factor contributing to the decrease in the number of treatments this year.**

We carry out a lot of pro-active work in areas where rats have been reported in the past. Many more premises in the centre of the town have been issued with wheelie bins due to the seagull problems, this may have an effect on the rats.

**Please note that within our city as of 1/04/07 we no longer charge for rat treatments. The 2008 report may or may not reflect this change in policy. It will be interesting to see that comes out of next year?**

The summer rat increase noticeable in 2005 was caused by Scottish Water replacing a sewer pipe in one area of this LA.

**More people tend to be coming more ECO friendly so people are against killing any form of animal life inclusive of rats and mice. Also the introduction of compost bins which are great for rodents to live round.**

Routine surveys of high risk areas are no longer carried out due to high demand for our service. No sewer treatments are carried out. Low staffing levels make revisits difficult. Block treatments are no longer carried out.

**Decrease possibly due to tighter control of fly tipping and litter. Also, we have been working with our Water Company in high activity areas to bait sewers.**

Increase in rats in my opinion due to the severe lack of sewer baiting and funds not made available for this practice.

**Anecdotal evidence that bird feeding is increasing demand for our rat service.**

**Same old things – excessive bird feeding and improper waste storage. Why do shops sell garden bird seed that contains wheat and barley? Unless to want to attract pigeons and doves!**

The decline in mouse treatments in 2006 may not be significant – numbers in 2007 appear to be returning to previous level. Rodent Resistance perceived with both rats and mice, but not proven as yet.

**Since the introduction of charging there has been a steady increase in complaints associated with the ‘normal rat scenario’ which has resulted in an increase in survey / enforcement action.**

We have not noticed locally any sign of the alleged national increase.

**There was dramatic decrease in number of treatments when we imposed charges about 5 years ago. Although number of treatments has shown a slow increase, the number remain very low in comparison to previous. Increase in rodent sightings, particularly in parks, due to ready food source from littering.**

Decrease due to public awareness for properties. Increase due to new builds on Greenfield sites and conversions and the removal of hedges rows etc.

**Possible reasons for changes: 1. Members of the public are more aware of rodent issues because of recent national media coverage 2. Milder winter weather.**

Introduction of charging for rat treatments plus increase in cost equals lower requests. More Prevention of Damage by Pest Act notices, Bird feeding and Composting.

## **Part 2 Comments that relate to Comments that relate to Alternate Weekly Collections (AWC)**

More complaints of people seeing rats in gardens – possibly media driven. Perception of rats moving further afield looking for food as not readily available with no bin bags lying around.

**No problems because we still have ability to collect food waste weekly.**

Yes has affected pest control service in some areas where bins are not used how they should or they need more than one bin and leave bags outside bin.

**AWC's has no effect on Pest Control. We still insist on all rubbish in closed wheelie bins. Families of 5 or more can get a supersize wheelie bin.**

**No special safeguards taken – Education is all that is required. I think AWC problems are occurring mainly where Councils don't have wheelie bins.**

Difficult to quantify but increase in fly tipping and side refuse is certainly an issue.

**The introduction of wheelie bins during the past 12 months has helped.**

Yes we have an increase in pest control as this LA use plastic bag collection (due to high density flats etc.) and not wheelie bins, which are easily opened by rodents etc.

**We have just changed to AWC's. – too early to tell if there is any impact, but we feel we'll have less rodent problems as wheelie bins will replace plastic bags for storage.**

Food waste will still be collected weekly.

**There has been a slight increase in certain areas, which I think is down to the lack of education given to the influx of migrants from Eastern Europe in regards to AWC's.**

AWC's introduced in 2006, population reacted negatively. The change of Council April 2007, bin collections then reverted to weekly.

**Re AWC's we are shortly reverting back to weekly collections. This is in no way due to rat complaints.**

Since the introduction of AWC's we have introduced concealed bait stations in target public open spaces e.g. parks and town centres.

**Since introduction of AWC's we have created advice sheets for disposal of food waste and fly control.**

When trial scheme rolled out would include weekly collection of food waste which can be placed either in the green bin or residual waste bin.

**We have introduced educational approaches with advice to householders regarding hygiene / storage of waste in warm weather.**

Early days yet but the current expectation is that the Council would only introduce AWC if a weekly collection of biodegradable materials made possible.

**We are changing to AWC's in 2009-2010 and have already decided that food waste is to be collected weekly.**

Whilst this has been introduced we have no problem with extra pest control – more of a problem here is excessive bird feeding.

**We have had no adverse effect except where occupiers are not following advice correctly.**

This city still provides a weekly collection on food and recycling waste. General waste (wheelie bin) is collected fortnightly.

Some issues have been encountered where bins cannot be supplied due to access issues or the public are not using the bins correctly. Small amounts of fly tipping has been encountered.

**We would suggest the use of compost bins has had more of an effect than AWC's.**

Good education, well complemented, good resident participation. No real side waste allowed. – no concern of evidence with any rats or mice.

**AWC's programme currently being rolled out. This may lead to an increase in fly-tipping which could have an effect on pest numbers. However, no information is available at the moment to prove this.**

This LA has changed to AWC's and we have noted an increase in both insect and rodent pest problems.

**From June 2006 a phased programme is in process of being rolled out - completed in 2010. There has been no effect on pest control services what so ever! However, we are closely monitoring the situation.**

No effect noticeable regarding the effect of AWC's on pest control matters. However, my Council are considering reverting back to weekly collections due to public pressure.

**A strict approach has been taken by my Council towards bin presentation i.e. lid must be closed and no excess waste will be uplifted. Any excess waste must be removed promptly or fines will be issued.**

# APPENDIX B

## COPY OF LETTER THAT ACCOMPANIED THIS YEAR'S QUESTIONNAIRE

Date as postmark

Chief Environmental Health Officer for all District & Borough Councils and  
Unitary Authorities within England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales  
(or the officer responsible for Pest Control duties within the Authority)

Dear Colleague,

### THE EIGHTH NPTA NATIONAL RODENT SURVEY 2007

Please take part in the only UK recognised Annual Survey of Rodent Control matters and help make the published Report more meaningful with more statistics and more official comments?

Following the unprecedented media interest following the publication of the last 2006 Report early in January this year, may we again ask you to complete the attached questionnaire? This will be for the years 2005 and 2006 or if you keep your statistics as per your financial year the years 2005/2006 and 2006/2007.

If you now employ an outside contractor would you please pass the questionnaire directly on to the business concerned, asking them to take a copy for your own records as well as posting same direct to NPTA House.

We have again retained the same basic questionnaire so all we need from you are your latest figures for 2005 and 2006 (or for the financial years 2005-2006 and 2006-2007)

We believe our extensive media coverage helped get over to both the general public and to those administrators in areas of decision making that rodent control is still a major health preventative measure that assists the public's health. In other words getting back to basics!

May I remind you that we believe that part of the great success of the previous Reports has been the inclusion at Appendix A of officer's and PCT's comments, both good and bad, of the current pest management situation. May we ask again this year please?

This year we particularly wish to spend some extra time on two important matters:

\* the public anxiety that appears to exist throughout the UK upon the vexed problems associated with what is termed AWC's. (Alternate Weekly Collections).

\* Whether or not there are areas within the UK where (a) Bait resistance is being perceived or (b) bait shyness experienced, so as to possibly plot these areas on a map of the UK within the Report.

Many thanks in advance for your assistance in this matter and we look forward to receiving your response within the next six to eight weeks and by the last day of September at the latest.

Yours sincerely

John A. Davison – Chief Executive

# APPENDIX C

## NPTA NATIONAL RODENT SURVEY 2007

PLEASE NOTE THIS SURVEY ONLY RELATES TO RODENT COMPLAINTS AND INITIAL TREATMENTS

Please give annual totals from **January 1st to December 31st in 2005 and in 2006**

However, if your statistical year is April 1st to March 31st please delete line below \*

**\*Figures cover January 1st – December 31st each year\***

**OR April 1st 2005 – March 31st 2006 and then April 1st 2006 – March 31st 2007**

<b>Brown Rat</b> ( <i>Rattus Norvegicus</i> )	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>
Total number of complaints/ requests for treatments where a treatment was carried out		

Figures cover January 1st – December 31st each year\*

**OR April 1st 2005 – March 31st 2006 and then April 1st 2006 – March 31st 2007**

<b>House Mouse</b> ( <i>Mus domesticus</i> )	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>
Total number of complaints/ requests for treatments where a treatment was carried out		

### SUMMER BROWN RAT ACTIVITY

Whilst in the two Survey years 2001 and in 2005 we had a reduction in Summer Rat infestations the other five year's Reports confirmed that there had been an increase, now giving a year on year 69% total increase since 1998 of Brown Rat activity within the United Kingdom in the summer months. We wish to investigate if this trend has continued during the Summer of 2006.

April 1st – September 30th 2005 and April 1st – September 30th 2006

**(NOTE: The summer months ONLY)**

<b>Brown Rat</b> ( <i>Rattus Norvegicus</i> )	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>
Total number of complaints/ requests for treatments where a treatment was carried out		

In the last five Reports many useful and professional comments were added by local authority officers along with their statistics.

May we again seek everyone's views (both good and bad) for this year's report?

Please see overleaf for a few special questions about your Council's charging policy for both rats and mice in dwelling houses

#### **SURVEY ON EFFECTS (if any) OF CHANGING TO ALTERNATE WEEKLY COLLECTIONS (A.W.C'S)**

1. Has your Council changed to AWC's? YES / NO Date changes took effect?
2. Are your Council considering changing to AWC's? YES / NO. Date of proposed introduction
3. Have your Council decided against introducing AWC's? YES / NO
4. If you have said YES to question 1, in your professional opinion, has this had any effect upon the pest control service (Both Rodent and Insect pests)?
5. If you have answered YES to either questions 1 or 2, are the Council proposing or already have in place any special safeguards relating to Pest Control?

#### **SURVEY ON RODENT RESISTANCE WITHIN THE UK**

1. Do you believe there is perceived to be Rodent Bait Resistance to the use of Anti-coagulants in your Council's area? Rats YES/NO Mice YES/NO
2. Has this perceived suspicion been proven YES/NO If answer YES please state by whom? Especially relating to Mice Does this relate only to cereal based bait? YES/NO Is it just the fact they will not go into boxes? YES/NO Do you have to use any special mice bait base? YES/NO If YES please detail, OTHER COMMENTS

# APPENDIX D                      PART 1

## LIST OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES WHO RESPONDED TO 2007 NATIONAL RODENT SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

**ENGLAND – 221 Council Returns out of 355 – 62%**

### **Eastern Region**

Babergh, Basildon, Braintree, Breckland, Brentwood, Broadland, Castle Point, Cambridge City, Colchester, East Cambridgeshire, Great Yarmouth, Huntingdonshire, Maldon, North Norfolk, Rochford, South Norfolk, Southend, Suffolk Coastal, Waveney,

### **East Midlands Region**

Amber Valley, Ashfield, Bassetlaw, Bolsover, Broxtowe, Charnwood, Chesterfield, East Northamptonshire, Erewash, High Peak, Hinckley & Bosworth, Kettering, Leicester City, Mansfield, Newark and Sherwood, Melton, North Kesteven, Nottingham City, Oadby & Wigston, South Derbyshire, South Kesteven, Wellingborough, West Lindsey.

### **London Region**

London Boroughs of Barnett, Camden, Croydon, Ealing, Enfield, Hammersmith & Fulham, Harrow, Havering, Hounslow, Kensington & Chelsea, Lewisham, Merton, Newham, Redbridge, Richmond upon Thames, Sutton, Wandsworth and the Corporation of London.

### **Midlands Region**

Birmingham, Cannock Chase, Cotswold, Coventry, Dudley, East Staffordshire, Forest of Dean, Newcastle under Lyme, North Warwickshire, Rugby, Sandwell, Shrewsbury & Atcham, Solihull, South Gloucestershire, South Shropshire, South Staffordshire, Stafford, Staffordshire Moorlands, Stratford upon Avon, Stroud, Walsall, Wolverhampton, Worcester City, Wychavon, Wyre Forest.

### **North Western Region**

Blackburn with Darwen, Blackpool, Bolton, Bury, Chester, Chorley, Crewe and Nantwich, Fylde, Halton, Knowsley, Lancaster City, Liverpool City, Macclesfield, Manchester City, Pendle, Preston City, Ribble Valley, Rossendale, Salford, Sefton, St. Helens, South Ribble, Trafford, Vale Royal, West Lancashire, Wigan, Wirral, Wyre.

### **Northern Region**

Alnwick, Barrow in Furness, Berwick upon Tweed, Blyth Valley, Carlisle, Castle Morpeth, Chester le-Street, Copeland, Durham, Hartlepool, Middlesbrough, Newcastle upon Tyne, Sedgefield, Stockton-on-Tees, Sunderland, Tynedale, Wansbeck, Wear Valley.

### **Northern Home Counties Region**

Aylesbury Vale, Cherwell, Dacorum, East Herts, Hertsmere, Luton, Oxford City, South Bedfordshire, South Buckinghamshire, South Oxfordshire, St. Albans, Three Rivers, Vale of White Horse, Watford, West Oxfordshire, Wycombe.

### **Northern Ireland – 5 Council Returns out of 11 – 46%**

Ards, Belfast City, Castlereagh, Fermanagh, Omagh. Note: Newry & Mourne District Councils no longer provide a pest control service).

## **Scotland – 20 Council Returns out of 32 – 63%**

Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire, Angus, Clackmannanshire, Dumfries and Galloway, Dundee City, East Ayrshire, East Dunbartonshire, Edinburgh City, Fife, Highland Council, Midlothian, Moray, North Ayrshire, North Lanarkshire, Renfrewshire, Shetland Islands, South Ayrshire, Stirling, West Dunbartonshire, West Lothian.

## **South East Region**

Adur, Ashford, Canterbury, Chichester, Crawley, Dover, Eastbourne, Epsom & Ewell, Gravesham, Guildford, Horsham, Lewes, Maidstone, Mid Sussex, Reigate & Banstead, Rother, Runnymede, Sevenoaks, Shepway, Spelthorne, Tandridge, Tunbridge Wells, Wealden, Worthing.

## **South Western Region**

Bath & North East Somerset, Bristol City, East Devon, Exeter City, Kerrier, North Somerset, Penwith, Plymouth, Restormel, Sedgemoor, South Somerset, Taunton Deane, Teignbridge, West Devon, West Somerset.

## **Southern Region**

Basingstoke, Bracknell Forest, East Dorset, Eastleigh, Fareham, Havant, New Forest, North Dorset, Poole, Rushmoor, Salisbury, Slough, Southampton,, Swindon, Test Valley, West Dorset, West Wiltshire, Weymouth & Portland, Winchester, Wokingham.

## **Wales – 15 Council Returns out of 24 – 63%**

Blaenau Gwent, Bridgend, Cardiff, Conwy, Denbighshire, Flintshire, Isle of Anglesey, Merthyr Tydfil, Monmouthshire, Neath Port Talbot, Newport, Pembrokeshire, Swansea, Vale of Glamorgan, Wrexham.

## **Yorkshire Region**

Barnsley, Calderdale, Doncaster, Hambleton, Harrogate, Kirklees, Leeds City, Rotherham, Ryedale, Selby, Sheffield City, Wakefield.

<b>England</b>	<b>221</b>	<b>Council returns out of</b>	<b>355</b>	<b>= 62%</b>
<b>Northern Ireland</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>Council returns out of</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>= 46%</b>
<b>Scotland</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>Council returns out of</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>= 63%</b>
<b>Wales</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>Council returns out of</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>= 63%</b>

## **Total Council Returns**

**261 Council returns out of 422 = 62%**

## APPENDIX D PART 2

### INTERESTING FACTS FROM THE RETURNS

Many Councils found themselves unable to complete their return for this Report due to other pressures being placed upon them by central government. Bearing in mind that Councils were originally developed way back in the middle of the nineteenth Century to look after the public's health, with pest control as a major part of those duties, this is to be regretted and one can only hope that soon they will be allowed to get "back to basics"?

However, we still believe it very appropriate to bring to your attention to the fact that certain Counties within the twelve English Regions had managed to provide an excellent response rate; we believe these counties need to be highly commended.

**Those with a 100% response rate are:**

- \* Merseyside within the North West Region
- \* Oxfordshire within the Northern Home Counties Region
- \* Northumberland within the Northern Region
- \* South Yorkshire in the Yorkshire Region

**Those Counties who achieved a very high response rate are:**

- Somerset an 87.5% response rate
- Lancashire an 85% response rate
- West Sussex an 85% response rate
- West Yorkshire an 80% response rate

**The NPTA would like to congratulate the above for their outstanding commitment in helping to make this annual report worthwhile**

### APPENDIX E- REFERENCES

- 1 NPTA National Rodent Survey 2000 – published - November 2000**
- 2 NPTA National Rodent Survey 2006 – published - January 2007**
- 3 NPTA communication with Somerset Waste Partnership plus WRAP  
[http://www.wrap.org.uk/downloads/AWC Revised Final Report -130707.33e9236f.PDF](http://www.wrap.org.uk/downloads/AWC_Revised_Final_Report_-130707.33e9236f.PDF)**
- 4 NPTA communication with Secretary of the ALEHM.**
- 5 NPTA communication with Yorkshire Water Company and attendance at a Yorkshire Water Company special seminar.**

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