

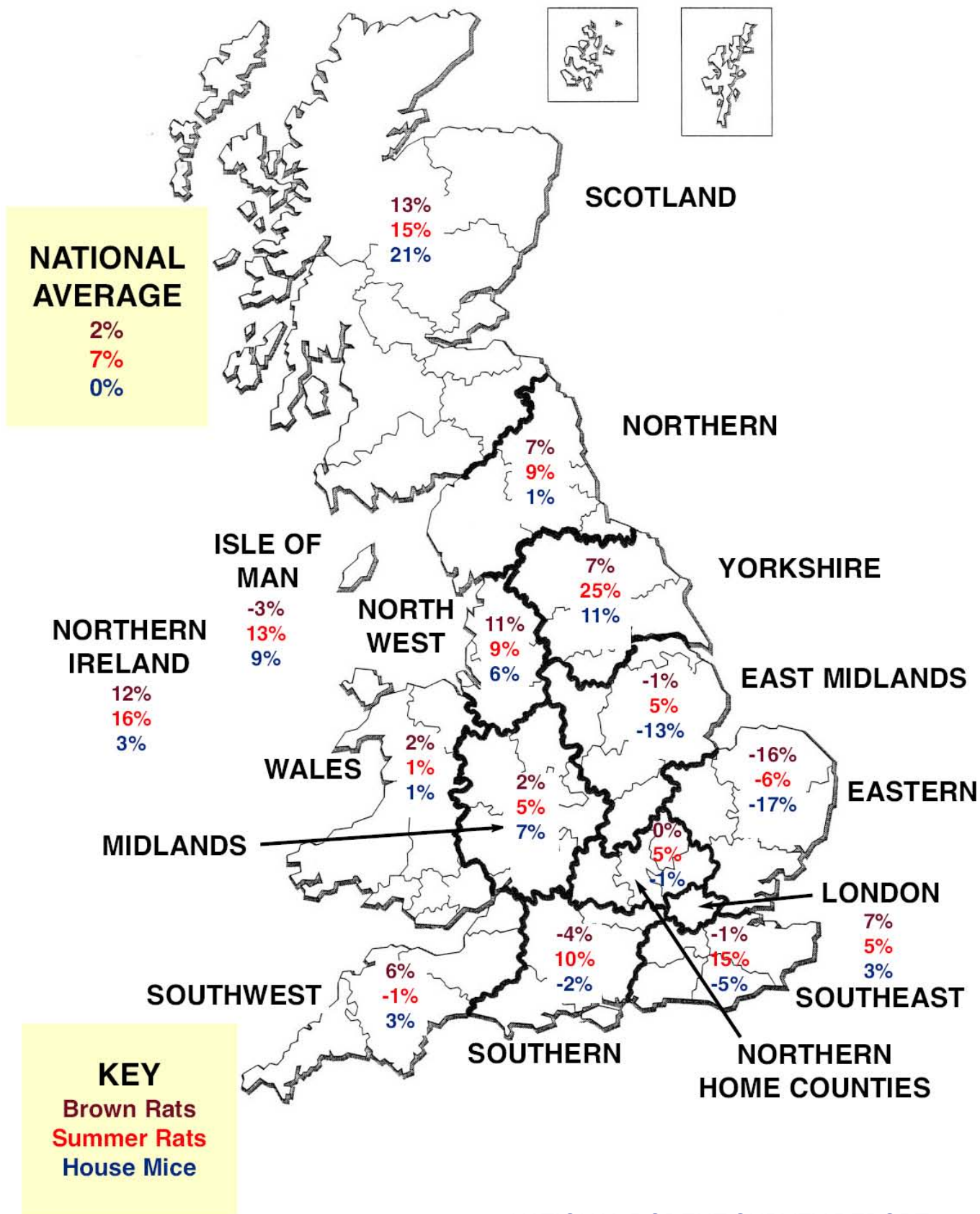
Regional Findings

The map accompanying the report summarises the survey findings region by region. The table below also details these same findings:

	BROWN RATS	SUMMER RATS	HOUSE MICE
Eastern	16% decrease	6% decrease	17% decrease
East Midlands	1% decrease	5%	13% decrease
Isle of Man	3% decrease	13%	9%
London	7%	5%	3%
Midlands	2%	5%	7%
North Western	11%	9%	6%
Northern	7%	9%	1%
Northern Home Counties	0%	5%	1% decrease
Northern Ireland	12%	16%	3%
Scotland	13%	15%	21%
South East	1% decrease	15%	5% decrease
South Western	6%	1% decrease	3%
Southern	4% decrease	10%	2% decrease
Wales	2%	1%	1%
Yorkshire	7%	25%	11%
Average for UK	2% increase	7% increase	0%

Note: In the columns where no word follows the percentage sign this indicates an increase in infestation treatments in 2003 compared to the figures found by local authorities in 2002.

NATIONAL PEST TECHNICIANS ASSOCIATION



Our 'TOP TWELVE' factors for this continuing increase

Results from any survey findings need interpretation and whilst it is not the intention of the NPTA to point the finger at any one reason or to any one industry for the continuing increase in the Brown Rat 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. Because of the overall interest in this particular part of the report last year; this year we are highlighting our top twelve reasons for this continuing year on year increase:-

* **Charging Policies** – This alarming trend seems to be spreading through Local Authorities within the UK, whose senior officers seem to be revenue driven.

* **Climate Change** - Whilst avoiding the current controversy over whether climate change is man-made or nature driven the fact is that in the UK we are currently experiencing on average far warmer winters, thus enabling the rat breeding cycle to continue all the year round.

* **The reduction of pro-active baiting of sewers**- Despite what a recent survey report(5) undertaken on behalf of the Water Companies recommended, we believe the general reduction in funding for routine pro-active annual sewer surveys and treatments, by the privatised water companies in a majority of regions, is a very serious and retrograde step. Furthermore not undertaking pro-active work is against what is known, by experienced and professional people with an environmental and medical background, as a very good and worthwhile public health prevention measure;

* **The overfeeding of birds** - More and more local authorities are reporting the close association between “the overfeeding of wild birds” and also “the overfeeding of all waterfowl on ponds and lakes in parks”. This results in a steady and abundant food source for rats.

* **The knock on effect in private sewers and drains** - Obviously this reduction in pro-active treatments in public sewers is having a knock-on effect upon the many tens of thousands of kilometres of private sewers on the majority of housing estates (public or private) built since the nineteen sixties and their connections to both house and commercial property drains. This is allowing rats in to escape where drainage faults occur;

* **Fast food outlets** - Fast food outlets in both town and city areas associated with either litter or insufficient waste disposal which enables a plentiful supply of food for rodents;

* **Crumbling sewers** - A new organisation calling themselves CROSS (CAMPAIGN for the RENEWAL of OLDER SEWERAGE SYSTEMS), reported upon in the October '04 issue of “Today's Technician”. These public health campaigners have been warning for years that the state of Britain's public and private sewers is a time bomb waiting to go off. They have publicly stated “out of site, out of mind” characterises the government's attitude to the crumbling Victorian and Edwardian sewer infrastructure and that urgent action with major investment and replacement of the systems is needed to avert a crisis;

* **Neglect by land owners** - The neglect by certain large landowners, particularly of railway embankments, waterways and watercourses, in certain areas of the UK, allows large numbers of rats to reside near both residential and commercial properties”

* **Old drains and old private sewers** – The redevelopment of brown field sites in both towns and cities without all the old drains / old sewers being permanently cut off from the existing public sewer in the nearest highway”, enabling rodents to escape to the surface;

* **Derelict properties** - Local authorities who continue to allow neglected and derelict properties to exist within their area without involving their Town and Country planning powers, thereby increasing rodent harbourages;

* **Composting** – The current trend to recycle compostable materials including foods is contributing to the available food supply for rodents. Compost bins must be used sensibly;

* **Low maintenance borders** – The current trend from land developers and architects with the proliferation of low maintenance ground cover plants and shrubs is contributing to ideal harbourage conditions for rodents.

Regarding the overfeeding of birds, we wish to emphasise that the NPTA are not killjoys and are fully in favour of wild bird feeding, particularly during the colder autumn and winter seasons when insects are not so prolific – what worries us is when the feeding becomes excessive and surplus food scraps are left lying around, this becomes an attraction to the resident rodent population. The twelve factors given within this year’s report are certainly not the only causes of this general increase or in any order of priority, nor individually the reason for the continuing rat population increases. We believe it is their combined effects along with perhaps other unspecified factors that are together creating an obvious serious problem within the UK. NATIONAL RODENT SURVEY 2004 11

Final Views

What cannot be ignored is that since the NPTA started this annual survey we have had a slow but steady reduction in the annual increases, from an 18% increase in 1999 down to a 2% increase in 2003. However, what must not be lost sight of is that it has given us a total year on year increase amounting to 34% for the five years of reports.

Similarly, with the “summer rat” problem, with just one exception when in 2001 we reported a 1% reduction, we have had a total year on year increase amounting to a staggering 59% for the five years of reports. Can the UK wait anymore years before decisive action is taken by us all?

Fortunately mice have continued to show a decrease giving an overall year on year decrease for the same five years of 8.5%. Good news for thousands of homeowners. However, a word of caution in this year’s returns we have noted that in two thirds of the regions local authorities have started experiencing an increase in requests for mouse treatments.

We are now in the fifth year of the twenty first century and what we are finding? A continuing growth in rat numbers. Surely in the UK with its greatly developed infrastructures originally put in place to protect the public’s health since the middle of the nineteenth century when we had the first Public Health Act of 1848 something is wrong? We will leave readers of this report to ask questions within their own offices and departments of their current working practices including liaison functions and also within their boardrooms if there is anything that could be changed for the better? Perhaps if this is done and we go back to some long established good practices, between us we could reverse this trend?

We shall also publish these results throughout the whole of the UK and also include a summary within our quarterly Journal entitled “Today’s Technician”, on the Association’s website at www.npta.org.uk and through the kind co-operation of some of our Pest Control Industry colleagues on their pestcontrolportal.com website.

Authors (on behalf of the Management Board)

J. Barrie Sheard FCIEH Current Chairman and Promotions Officer

John Kilby - Management Board member.

January 2005

Should you wish to obtain a copy of the full report please contact NPTA House.

NPTA Ltd
NPTA House
Hall Lane
Kinoulton
Nottingham
NG12 3EF

Telephone – 01949 81133

Fax – 01949 823905

Email – officenpta@aol.com