



National Pest Technicians Association



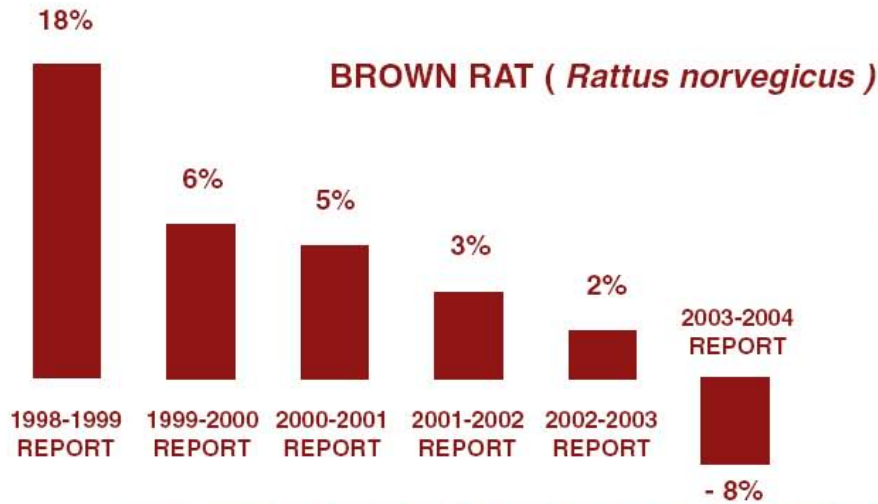
NATIONAL RODENT SURVEY REPORT 2005

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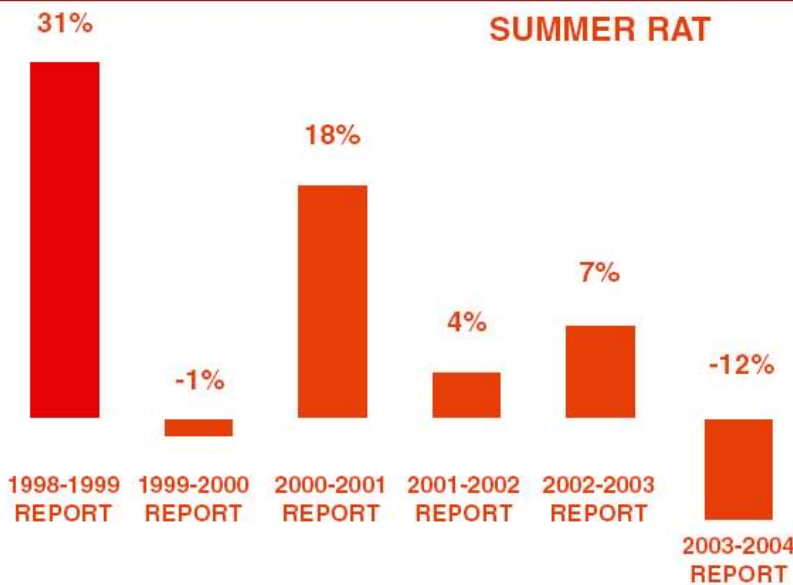
NATIONAL RODENT SURVEY REPORT 2005
Overview Version

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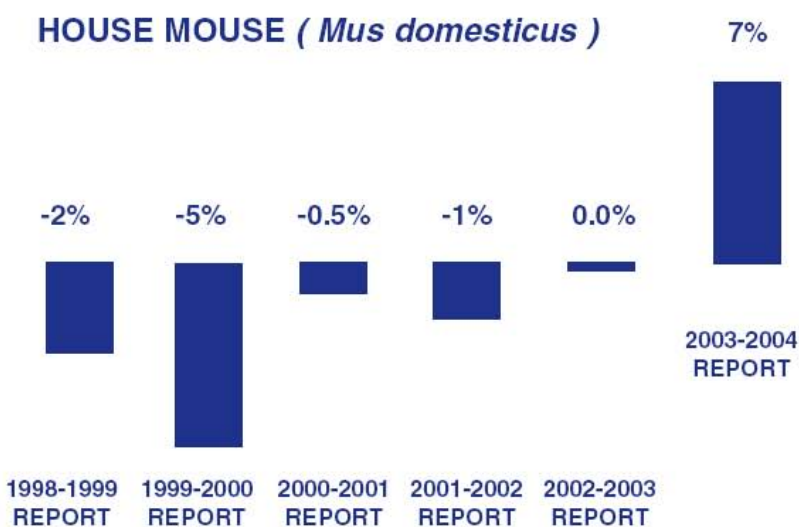
**1998 to 2004
YEAR ON YEAR
TOTTALLING 26%**

NATIONAL AVERAGE PERCENTAGE BROWN RAT FINDINGS



**1998 to 2004
YEAR ON YEAR
TOTTALLING 47%**

NATIONAL AVERAGE PERCENTAGE SUMMER RAT FINDINGS



**1998 to 2004
YEAR ON YEAR
REDUCTION OF
MINUS 1.5%**

NATIONAL AVERAGE PERCENTAGE HOUSE MOUSE FINDINGS

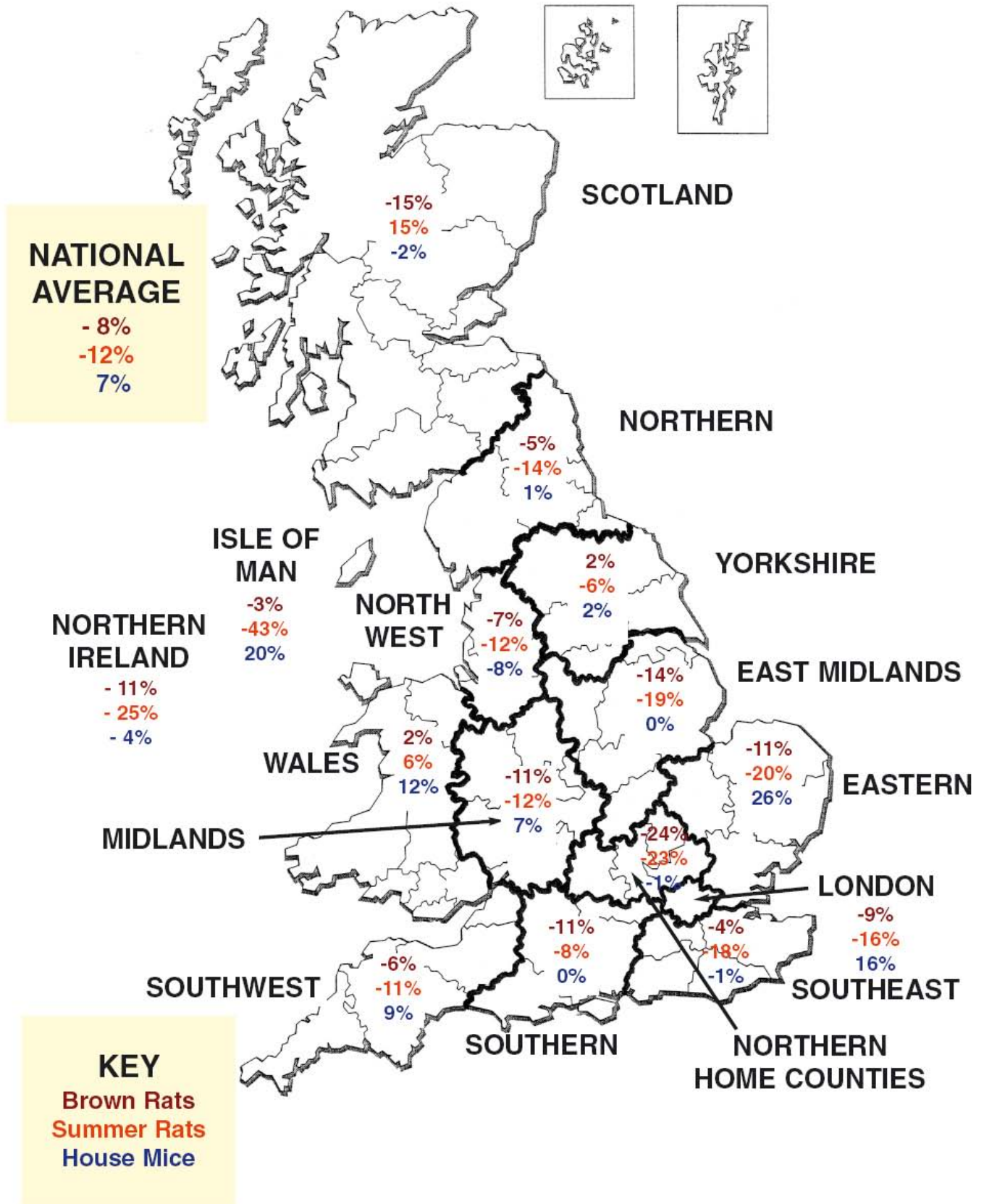
Regional Findings

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	11% decrease	20% decrease	26%
East Midlands	14% decrease	19% decrease	0%
Isle of Man	3% decrease	43% decrease	20%
London	9% decrease	16% decrease	16%
Midlands	11% decrease	12% decrease	7%
North Western	7% decrease	12% decrease	8% decrease
Northern	5% decrease	14% decrease	1%
Northern Home Counties	24% decrease	23% decrease	1% decrease
Northern Ireland	11% decrease	25% decrease	4% decrease
Scotland	15% decrease	15%	2% decrease
South East	4% decrease	18% decrease	1% decrease
South Western	6% decrease	11% decrease	9%
Southern	11% decrease	8% decrease	0%
Wales	2%	6%	12%
Yorkshire	2%	6% decrease	2%
Average for UK	8% decrease	12% decrease	7%

Note: In the columns where no word follows the percentage sign this indicates an increase in infestation treatments in 2004 compared to the figures found by local authorities in 2003.

NATIONAL PEST TECHNICIANS ASSOCIATION



Final Views

It is this Association's view that although the annual returns from local authorities this year tend to show a small reduction in brown rat numbers both annually and in the summer months, these figures may not give a true picture of the current problems facing pest control managers within the public sector who have to implement pest control services on a diminishing budget.

The budget restrictions these pest control managers face are unrealistic and are a direct result of central government cuts and increasing pressures in other service areas. Unfortunately, as can be seen in the letter on page three which was forwarded to the Association by a concerned member, these are not our views alone. The approval of budgets within an authority is the direct responsibility of the elected members under the guidance of the Finance Director or the Chief Executive, and neither of these officers are likely to have an affinity for, or understanding of, day to day pest control issues in their boroughs. It is our view that in future years these short sighted cuts will manifest themselves into serious problems and may result in the figures shown in the past six years being merely the tip of the iceberg.

Water authorities also work to tight budget constraints and are accountable to their shareholders who again are mainly concerned with the bottom line figure. This you may think is only human nature and a person or company who invests needs a financial reward for this investment, but at what cost? Should the "bottom line" be the most important factor or should they be looking to long term investment towards sustaining a well maintained and fit for purpose sewerage system?

It is apparent from comments returned with the questionnaire that water authorities are still only engaging with officials at local authorities in an adhoc manner in connection with drainage problems, faults and routine sewer baiting programmes in many areas of the UK.

Many readers of this report may question why the NPTA, which also represents individual members, sole traders and larger pest control businesses, should be so concerned. The facts are that in some areas of high unemployment, be it inner city, or large housing estates, the occupants will often see the problem as someone else's and not act to prevent this situation worsening, offices within that borough have legal powers which can be enforced on land owners, businesses and private landlords to eliminate sources of infestation.

Let us not get complacent. Even after subtracting the eight percent reduction in this report 2003-2004, from our first report in 1998-1999, Brown Rat (*Rattus norvegicus*) numbers have risen by twenty six percent. Similarly, Summer Rat (*Rattus norvegicus*), after subtracting the twelve percent reduction in the 2003-2004 report, has risen by forty seven percent.

Despite clear evidence of under reporting it is alarming to note that the total number of house mouse infestations reported and treated by local authorities within the UK has risen by seven percent in this report and is now only one and a half percent lower than it was in our first report in 1998-1999. We shall as always publish these results throughout the whole of the UK and also include a summary within our quarterly journal “**Today’s Technician**” and on the Association’s website at www.npta.org.uk

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Photographs courtesy of
Dr Steven Havers

Our ‘TOP TWELVE’ factors for this continuing problem

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 continues to spread through Local Authorities within the UK, whose senior officers seem to be revenue driven.

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

* **The reduction of pro-active baiting of sewers** - We believe the general under funding for routine pro-active annual sewer surveys & 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 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** - 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 majority of housing estates (public or private) built since the 1960s and their connections to both house and commercial property drains. This allows rats 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** - An 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;

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

*** 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;

*** 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;

*** 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;

*** Low maintenance borders** – The 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 seed and 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 a high rodent population, or in any order of priority, nor individually the reason for the sustaining high rodent populations. We believe it is their combined effects along with perhaps other unspecified factors that together are creating an obvious serious problem within the UK.

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

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NATIONAL RODENT SURVEY REPORT 2005
Overview Version Page 7