

Rats & Bird Feeders

Myths, Truths & IPM Strategy for Norway & roof Rats

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Does the practice of urban bird & squirrel feeding increase invasive Norway & roof rat populations?

Observations made during routine pest management for Norway and roof rats suggest that access to high-protein exterior food sources like bird seed or peanuts not only attracts rats but may allow them to breed more successfully.

We compiled data from 37 residential rodent services in the Portland OR area between May and December of 2021. The number of rat traps set at each house was compared to the number of captures to determine a capture rate. Also the amount of rodenticide bait applied was compared to the

approximate amount recovered at the end of the service.

Then, the data from homes with exterior bird and/or squirrel feeders were compared to those without.

More rats were captured at houses with exterior feeders, with about 1 in every 4 traps capturing a rat, as opposed to homes without food, where about 1 in every 10 traps captured a rat.

At houses with exterior feeders, about a quarter of the rodenticide bait that was applied, was consumed by rats. At houses without feeders, less than a tenth of the bait applied was actually consumed by rats, and 92% was safely recovered at the end of the service.

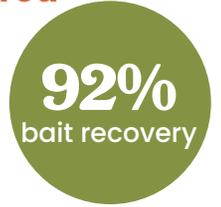
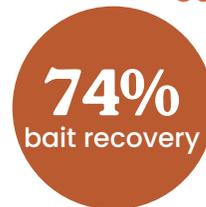
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Homes with feeders

Homes without feeders

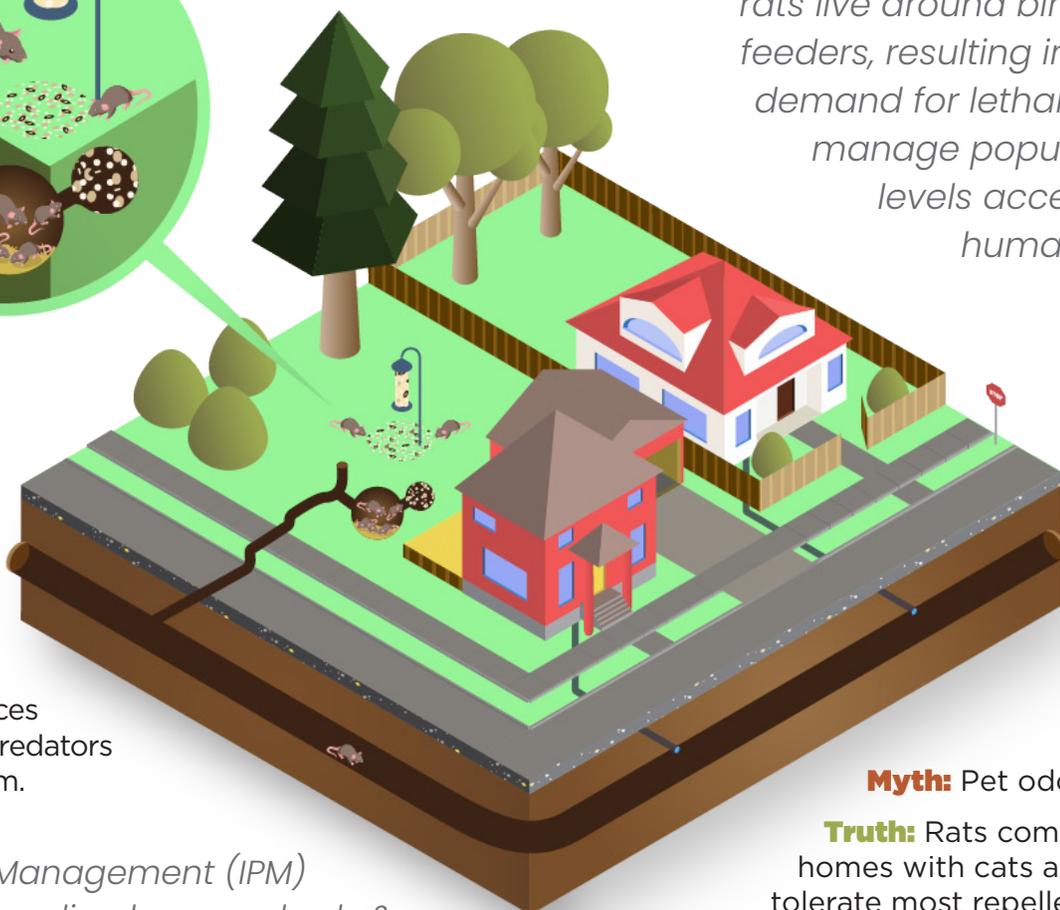


14% more rats captured



18% more bait consumed

This evidence suggests more rats live around bird & squirrel feeders, resulting in increased demand for lethal control to manage populations to levels acceptable for human health & safety.



Myth: Predators like cats, raptors can effectively control rats in urban areas.

Truth: Rats nest in cavities in underground burrows, crawlspaces and attics where predators cannot access them.

Integrated Pest Management (IPM) for rats requires sealing houses, sheds & garages, removing all exterior food sources, and clearing vegetation with 1' of the ground, fence lines & buildings. In order to prevent the need for lethal control, IPM should always be used to manage Norway & roof rats.

Myth: Pet odors repel rats.

Truth: Rats commonly invade homes with cats and dogs, and tolerate most repellent products.

For more information on IPM for rats, please visit our website at www.pestandpollinator.com/category/rodent-control