

## **HOUSE MOUSE**

*(Mus Musculus)*

## **FIELD MOUSE**

*(Apodemus Sylvaticus)*



### **OCCURRENCE**

British homes, offices, shops and public buildings are regularly host to the two common species of mice; the long tailed field mouse which enters buildings usually to escape autumnal farming practices and the ensuing winter weather, and the house mouse which as its name suggests is very keen to establish in our own built environment.

### **APPEARANCE**

The house mouse is between 75mm and 100mm (3-4") long with a trailing tail of similar length. The fur is usually a grey/brown top coat with light grey under parts, the ears are large and both the hind and fore feet are small. The eyes, which are bright and self coloured black, detect movement only, not detail or colour.

An adult mouse of both species may weigh up to 30g (1oz). The field mouse differs from the house mouse in colour being a

nutty brown on its upper parts and creamy white on the under parts.

### **LIFE CYCLE**

Mice become sexually mature at 2 months of age. Mice breed throughout the year but the availability of food always limits the timing and number of litters. The average litter size is 6 but litters of 8 - 9 are not uncommon. Mice are born pink skinned, blind and wholly dependant on their mothers.

### **FEEDING HABITS**

Mice are sporadic feeders eating small quantities from many sources usually at night. They generally prefer cold foodstuffs but they will consume many kinds of foods of animal and vegetable origin. A healthy mouse needs to consume about 10% of its own body weight daily to maintain good breeding conditions.

Mice have a very limited feeding range sometimes of only a few square metres and have the ability to sustain themselves on the moisture derived from their food, often taking little or no water directly.

### **SIGNS OF INFESTATION**

The presence of a mouse in a building is often first noticed by an actual sighting which might only be a fleeting glimpse due to its speed and agility. Even where minor infestations exist, large quantities of droppings will be evident and a musty urine smell will be apparent due to mice being incontinent.

Smear marks from grease on the mouse's coat will be noticed on regularly trafficked routes being particularly noticeable on light coloured surfaces.

### **DAMAGING EFFECTS**

The mouse is a small rodent, and therefore needs to gnaw on hard materials to limit the growth of its teeth.

Damage may therefore occur to packaging and foodstuffs but it is the sporadic nature of feeding which causes widespread damage and loss of whole commodities due to urine and faecal contamination. Damage to skirting boards and other property fixtures might occur although the most worrying aspect is the gnawing of electrical cables with the obvious potential risk of fire.

### **CONTROL**

Mice can be considered a serious public health pest particularly when associated with food preparation for human consumption. Mice damage packaging rendering goods unsaleable; they eat and contaminate food, and have the potential to carry food poisoning bacteria.