

# House mouse

## *Mus musculus*

### What does it look like?

House mice are small, omnivorous generalists that reach approximately 30 g in weight and measure around 115 mm in length (without tail). They have a dull grey-brown back and a uniform grey belly with a very thin, grey-brown tail and large black eyes.

The House mouse is common throughout mainland Southland but may be absent from Stewart Island/Rakiura. They can be found from the coast to altitudes up 1,300 m, predominantly in temperate forest (native and exotic), croplands and pasture, and subalpine tussock. They also occur in various urban habitats. House mice are very well adapted to dry conditions due to their ability to concentrate their urine, and as most of their water requirements can be taken from the moisture of their food.



### Why is it a problem?

Since being introduced to New Zealand, mice have had significant impacts on native flora and fauna. Caterpillars, spiders and weta are a major part of the mouse's invertebrate diet. Additionally a range of seeds, including hard beech, mountain beech, kauri and rimu are consumed. Consumption of seeds can prevent regeneration of these species. A reduction of invertebrates may also have secondary effects on the vegetation due to changes in ecosystem processes.



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### Control methods

As with other rodents, options for controlling mice include:

- Poisoning
- Trapping
- Prevention

#### Poisoning

Poisoning can be an effective method to control a House mouse infestation or to achieve control over a large area. Most rodent poisons are anticoagulants and following a lethal dose (often a from single feed), mice generally die within 7 days.

It's recommended poison baits are placed within purpose built bait stations to protect bait from the weather and protect non-target animals (like pets and birds) from feeding on bait directly. Placing bait in bait stations will help prevent mice removing bait and storing in other locations. Check bait stations regularly, if all the bait is gone within the first night of baiting, more bait stations are required. Remove any mouldy bait and replace with fresh bait.

#### Care with poisons

- Always read the label before using poison. Make sure you follow instructions and understand the symptoms of accidental poisoning and how to treat it.
- Put baits in secure places away from children, pets and stock.
- In case of accidental human consumption, contact the:

#### National Poisons Centre on 0800 764 766 for advice.

- Rodenticides can be extremely harmful to dogs and cats. Symptoms can take several days to appear. They may include lack of appetite, lethargy, bleeding from the nose or mouth and pale gums. Vitamin K can be used as an antidote. Call your vet immediately if an animal accidentally eats rat bait.

There are a wide range of baits and bait stations available for purchase from local retail, garden and farm supply stores or from online suppliers.

#### Trapping

Trapping is best suited to small mice infestations in and around buildings. It is particularly suitable in buildings, where using poison and having mice die inside is not ideal. Trap covers can be made out of coreflute (the material that real estate signs are made of). These keep the lure dry and prevent other animals being caught. These should be blocked at one end and tall enough that your traps can operate properly. Traps need to be checked and lured regularly, peanut butter works well as lure.

#### Prevention

There are some simple ways to make an environment less appealing to mice:

- Remove any cover that mice can live in, including long grass or rubbish.
- Get rid of potential food sources or store them in rodent-proof containers.

### Related links

Predator Free NZ - Pest Control Suppliers Information <https://predatorfreenz.org/resources/where-to-buy-equipment/>

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### Summary of rules

#### **Stewart Island/Rakiura Only:**

You can not possess, keep, hold, enclose or otherwise harbour House mouse on Stewart Island/Rakiura or any other island within the site-led area (see map).

You cannot take House mouse to Stewart Island/Rakiura or any other island within the site-led area (see map)

For full rules please see the [Southland Regional Pest Management Plan](#) (Rule 25).

#### **Stewart Island/Rakiura Only:**

If you detect or suspect the presence on Stewart Island/Rakiura or any other island within site led area of House mouse, you must immediately report its presence and location to Environment Southland.

For full rules please see the [Southland Regional Pest Management Plan](#) (Rule 26).

### Request info

<https://eservices.es.govt.nz/online-services/new/BiosecurityRFS/step/1?Subject=AnimalPests&Species=177>

### Management programme

Site-led programme

Organisms of interest