

Eeek! Beware fresh invasion of RATS this autumn



A brown rat

Pest control experts are urging residents to be on their guard against a new invasion of rats this autumn.

They fear the rodent population could swell in the coming months thanks to cooler temperatures and increasingly wet weather.

It comes after residents of Winn Street and Cannon Street in Lincoln have been plagued by rats over the summer - with the pesky vermin climbing drainpipes and even running into houses.

The British Pest Control Association (BPCA) warns that sightings could rise as the onset of colder conditions prompts rodents to abandon summer habitats and seek food and shelter indoors.



Residents were finding dead rats outside their homes

Dee Ward-Thompson, BPCA technical manager, says residents should be doing all they can now to protect their properties.

She said: “Rain washes rats out of sewers and other nesting places and, inevitably, they go looking for shelter in higher ground.

“They’ll try to find some sort of dwelling and that could be lofts, garages or sheds.

“Our members report the number of calls to deal with infestations often rises in the Autumn when the temperature drops often quite dramatically and we’re expecting a similar pattern this time.

“So it’s important for homeowners to do as much as they can to ensure they’re not among those affected.”

Bridgend County Borough Council was named top of the list for rats in 2015/16 with almost 3,000 call-outs per 1,000 residents making up 93 per cent of its total number overall.

A typical home may have more than a dozen potential entry points for the rodents. They get through gaps as small as 15mm, often using plumbing pipes and unscreened vents or gaps in the eaves and roof edges.

However, BPCA does emphasise that higher numbers could illustrate local authorities working proactively to manage any issues.

Mrs. Ward-Thompson added: “The first evidence of rats in a home is often noises under the floor, in the walls or loft as that’s where most will head to once they’re inside.

“Quite apart from the health risks, they’ll foul water tanks and chew on wood or electrical wires which can cause a lot of damage and poses a fire hazard.

“They’ll also do their best to find sources of food, which means they can soon move to other areas of the house occupied by humans.