

Rats are swarming over this Brooklyn park's playground

By Anna Sanders November 25, 2017

It's a little park with a giant rat problem.

Carroll Park has had more rodent complaints phoned into the 311 hotline than any other park or playground in the city so far this year.

Its 49 reported rat sightings — or 26 per acre — dwarfed its much larger Brooklyn neighbor, Prospect Park, which logged seven. In fact, the 1.8-acre refuge in Carroll Gardens nearly doubled that just this month, with 13 complaints.

“They are all over the place, exactly where the kids play,” fumed Diellza Kasimi, a 36-year-old Brooklyn mom who said she’s called 311 twice since August. “They were even climbing the playground equipment!”

A Parks worker was overhead telling another concerned parent who found a dead rat there on a recent morning that Carroll Park has as many as 70 burrows with hundreds of rats living in them. Later, the worker swept up two of their carcasses.

“It’s disgusting,” Kasimi said.

The city spread rat poison in one of the park’s play areas earlier this month. Adults chased after curious kids trying to pry open the locked gate with a sign warning about the toxic blue pellets on a recent morning.

Mayor de Blasio recently announced a \$750,000 effort to eradicate Upper West Side rats from Hippo Playground. A veterinarian told the West Side Rag that a deadly rat-spread bacterial disease called Leptospirosis is infecting dogs in the area.

“What is unacceptable is to have the quality of life of people in our neighborhoods undermined by rats,” de Blasio said at a Sept. 28 press conference.

Carroll Park has a history of rodent infestations — one in 2005 was so bad advocates held a “rat festival” to spur action from the city. The Parks Department claimed in September 2009 that there weren’t any “active holes” there in response to more local complaints.

Agency spokeswoman Crystal Howard said “aggressive action” was taken about seven weeks ago after locals complained, and the city has “already begun to see positive results.”

The city baits the park with poison and collapses rat holes more often, the agency said. Trash is also now removed from the park daily, open cans were given lids and leaves and other debris are cleaned regularly.

Of 794 rodent sightings across nearly 200 Parks Department facilities through Nov. 14 this year, a little under a third occurred in “unspecified” parks and playgrounds, a Post analysis of 311 hotline data showed. The system logs locations as unspecified if a caller doesn’t know the exact facility name.