

R A T S

and their destruction

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SIXPENCE NET

*"Great rats, small rats, lean rats, brawny rats,
Brown rats, black rats, grey rats, tawny rats"*



DEATH TO ALL RATS

Cymag when exposed to air or soil moisture at once gives off gas which is fatal to every rat within reach. Cymag (which must not be used inside buildings) can be pumped or 'spooned' into rat runs, rubbish dumps and tips, ditches, etc.

'CYMAG'



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MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES

BULLETIN No. 30

RATS

AND THEIR DESTRUCTION



LONDON: HIS MAJESTY'S STATIONERY OFFICE

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FOREWORD

THE introductory section comprising pages 1-4 of this Bulletin is reproduced mainly from an article contributed by the late Professor Sir J. Arthur Thomson, M.A., LL.D., of the University of Aberdeen, to the Ministry's JOURNAL for May, 1925, but some necessary alterations have been made in the light of more up-to-date information. The remainder of this 7th edition has been prepared by Mr. C. D. Hornby, Technical Adviser for Land Pests Destruction of the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, in consultation with Mr. Charles Elton, Director of the Bureau of Animal Population, University of Oxford, and his staff. It is hoped that the information brought together will prove of value to all who are concerned in the task of rat destruction.

The attention of readers is directed to the Orders made under Defence (General) Regulations, 1939, a summary of which is given on page 15.

Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries,

September, 1945.

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RATS AND THEIR DESTRUCTION

WITH NOTES ON HOUSE MICE, VOLES, FIELD MICE AND GREY SQUIRRELS

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" 2. The "Brown" rat (<i>Rattus</i> <i>norvegicus</i>).	" 5. Rat-proof fowl house, built clear of the ground.
" 3. A defective ventilator.	" 6. Gassing rats in a bank.

INTRODUCTION

One of the most injurious animals in Britain is the rat, and in spite of the energetic measures taken to reduce its numbers it remains a very serious menace. Rats destroy enormous quantities of stored food, and spoil much more than they destroy; they do great damage to property by burrowing and gnawing; and they are vehicles of several formidable diseases.

The Black Rat. Neither of the two varieties of rats now represented in Britain can be called a native: both are aliens from the East, the first to come being the Black Rat (*Rattus rattus*), the arrival of which in this country dates from the time of the Crusades. In the Mediterranean region and in the East it is represented by varieties of a much lighter colour. Thus the Alexandrine variety, frequenting Asia Minor and North Africa, is brownish-grey on the back, and the Roof Rat of the Mediterranean region has the same part of its body yellowish- or reddish-brown. It seems that the black dress was acquired after the originally light-coloured *Rattus rattus* got a footing in colder countries, but all three varieties occur in this country. It must be borne in mind that many of the "Black Rats" (*Rattus rattus*) in Britain are actually brown, and occasional "Brown Rats" (*Rattus norvegicus*) are black. This is a source of frequent confusion, and shows that little