

It's not too uncommon to notice a solitary rat at night in Hong Kong. However, to see a handful of rats rapidly circling, running, jumping or even swimming about in a drain if there's one there, is a sure sign that you've just come across a hygienic black spot.

Rodents, or rat and mouse, are social, nocturnal animals with an average lifespan of just 1 year.

The common species of rodents in Hong Kong are:

*Rattus norvegicus*, sewer rat; also known as Norway rat. (That's one downside of globalism)

*Rattus rattus*, house rat; also known as roof rat because he's a very good climber.

*Mus musculus*, the common mouse mouse.

Most rodent-borne diseases spread via the fleas that live on diseased specimens of rats, either through the flea bites or food contaminated with the excreta of fleas. This goes for the plague, the plague, urban typhus, and spotted fever.

So help out the government and note down any hygienic blackspots you come across.