

DEER MOUSE



DESCRIPTION

The deer mouse has a bi-coloured appearance: the upper portion of the body and tail is medium to dark-brown, while the underside of the tail, feet and stomach area is white. The eyes, ears and body of a deer mouse are slightly larger than those of a house mouse. They measure between 5 to 8 inches long.

HABITS

Deer mice are active all year round. They produce three to four litters, each having three to six young; which can create a rapid population growth. They normally produce their largest litters in the spring, depending on climatic conditions. They are nocturnal and are rarely seen in their outdoor habitat. They often construct nests in hollow logs and tree stumps, under logs and stones and occasionally in bird nests and shallow burrows. Deer mice are rarely a major problem in residential areas; however, housing in rural and agricultural areas may have more of a problem. In the fall and winter, deer mice frequently enter homes, garages and outbuildings and occasionally campers and other infrequently used vehicles. Once in these areas they can cause significant damage to furnishings and stored materials as they search for food and construct their nests. Their typical diet consists of nuts, seeds, berries and insects. They often store food in their nests for the winter months.

CONTROL

The best solution for problems with deer mice is exclusion. Seal entry holes with $\frac{1}{4}$ inch of hardware cloth, sheet metal or soffit, or copper wool. Pay particular attention to any hole approximately the diameter of a pencil. In some situations, exterior perimeter trapping may prevent a population from becoming established indoors. In addition, avoid storing pet foods and other food products in accessible areas such as garages and eliminate any water sources that may also prove attractive.

Once deer mice take up residence indoors, virtually any techniques used to control house mice are effective, including baited and un-baited windup multi-catch mouse traps, snap traps and glueboards, or anticoagulants and rodenticides. Their inquisitive nature makes them easy to trap. Due to increased concern over Hantavirus, deer mouse populations in structures should be eliminated as quickly as possible. Do not clean deer mouse droppings. Dead rodents, their nests and droppings should be removed immediately by properly trained individuals.

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