

CAPTURING A CLEVER NORWAY RAT.

CASE STUDY



SNAPSHOT



INDUSTRY
Food retail



TARGET PEST
Norway rat (*Rattus norvegicus*)



OVERVIEW
A Norway rat found food, warmth, and refuge in a grocery store. We implemented a successful plan to capture the clever rodent, prevent food contamination, and restore peace of mind.

SITUATION SUMMARY

A supermarket noticed signs of rat activity around their coolers. Managers identified chewed snack boxes and rodent fecal matter, raising immediate concerns about contamination, inventory loss, and regulatory compliance.

A Norway rat had entered the store where it found a smorgasbord of food and an undisturbed area for warmth and refuge. The rat was clever and evasive. The store contacted our team to develop a strategy to successfully capture it once and for all.

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INSPECTION FINDINGS

The team inspected the ceiling above the coolers, where they found rat droppings and signs of nesting. The low ceiling height and rolled insulation allowed the rat to easily conceal itself while harboring near its favored packaged goods. Its proximity to wiring, which rodents often gnaw on, created a fire hazard.

Upon inspection of the exterior doors, the team found that most were in disrepair and not properly rodent-proofed. Additionally, several of the doors, including the loading dock out back, were left open during long delivery windows, providing effortless entry points for rats and other nuisance animals. Rat activity was also noted around the perimeter of the store and on nearby properties.



SUCCESSFUL SOLUTION

Our team conducted daily visits and placed numerous traps on top of the coolers and other areas with suspected activity. To ease the rat's reluctance to approach traps, we pre-baited them using various foods, including sardines, chicken nuggets, bacon, crackers, and other snack foods it had been feeding on.

Unfortunately, these initial efforts failed, so we took a new approach—installing security cameras and using cornstarch as a tracking powder to monitor activity.



GNAWING AWAY AT FOOD SAFETY.

20% of the world's food supply is estimated to be contaminated by rodents.¹ Each day, rats can leave behind over 50 fecal pellets and thousands of urine droplets that may harbor harmful pathogens.²

1 Mannes, Cindy. "Food Processing Facilities at Risk for Rodent Infestation." Food Safety Magazine. December 2022/January 2023 issue.

2 Corrigan, Robert M. "Rats and Mice: Rodents and Human Disease." Mallis Handbook of Pest Control. 9th edition, pages 15 - 16. 2004.

However, the rat's movement was obscured by the boards placed on top of the cooler, allowing it to avoid both traps and cameras.

Our third strategy was a success. We placed traps baited with moist cucumbers inside low-walled cardboard boxes. Because the traps were hidden under a lining of pet bedding, the rat finally felt comfortable approaching.

Once the rat was captured, we turned our focus to the exterior. In addition to placing bait stations along the supermarket perimeter, our team partnered with the city to coordinate trapping and burrow baiting in neighboring areas. To avoid attracting new rodents, we also emphasized the importance of keeping dock and entry doors closed.



SUMMARY

Our experts determined that a Norway rat had infiltrated the supermarket and was harboring in the ceiling insulation. Chewed packaged goods and rat droppings were found near the coolers, raising urgent contamination concerns. Through troubleshooting, strategic trapping, staff education, and collaboration with the city, we successfully removed the nuisance rat, restored the safety of inventory, and helped minimize the chance of future rodent infestations.

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