

### Water vole

Head and body length up to 24cm. Tail no more than 2/3 length of head and body.  
Adult weight 225-380g.



Features: face rounded, small ears, rich brown fur, hairy tail.

When swimming: swims 'doggy paddle' style, holds its nose clear of the water and creates a distinctive V-shaped wave.

Usual habitat: Water side locations such as rivers, streams, ditches, canals and ponds. They need soft natural banks in which to burrow and prefer banks that are open to light and have a good growth of vegetation.

### Droppings

size: 8-12mm long, cylindrical with rounded ends. Coloured green, brown, purple or black, formed of fine chopped vegetation, odourless. Can be found singly but more often at regularly used 'latrines' near to the water's edge.



### Burrows

These are found very near to the water's edge. Entrances are 4-8cm across often with a 'slide' going straight into the water. During the summer months entrances may be found further up the bank and these often have a neatly cropped 'lawn' around them.



### Signs of feeding

Water voles are almost entirely vegetarian. They often feed at regular locations near to the water's edge here they will leave lengths of grass stalks and plant stems (5-10cm in length).

The stalk ends are often diagonally cut and occasionally show incisor marks



### Rat

Head and body length usually up to 29cm. Tail more than ¾ length of head and body. Adult weight up to 500g.



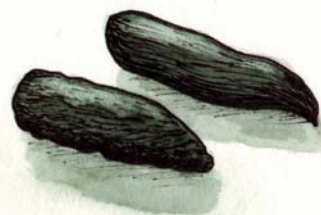
Features: long pointed face, noticeable round ears, grey-brown fur, tail appears scaly.

When swimming: the rat's ears are clearly visible.

Usual habitat: Typically found on or near refuse tips, sewers, urban waterways, warehouses, farms and hedgerows and commonly associated with areas where there is a food source as a result of human activity.

### Droppings

size: 15-20mm long, coloured grey or black. They have a soft paste consistency and a foul musty smell. Usually found singly or scattered



### Burrows

Rat burrows are found on and up the bank. They are similar in size to those of the water vole but they commonly have well-used runs travelling out from them and along the bank – not into the water. There is often a heap of spoil outside the entrance.



### Signs of feeding

Rats are opportunist feeders and will eat a variety of foods. Remains of meals such as broken snail shells or human refuse can sometimes be found on the banks.

### Footprints

water vole Hind foot 25-42mm in length, Front foot – star shaped.

Rat Hind foot 40-44mm in length, Front foot outer toes point forward.

In practice the footprints of water vole and rat are so similar that they are rarely used for identification purposes