

# Controlling Rodents After a Flood

**F**looding displaces many rodents from their natural habitat. As a result, these animals are seeking areas that can provide food and shelter, such as homes, sheds, barns and other buildings.

Structures damaged by the floods are particularly attractive and provide easy access to rodents. The unwelcome pests can damage property and, in extreme cases, pose a potential health problem.

## Rats and mice

- As soon as possible, remove all debris that could provide protective cover for rodents from around homes and buildings.
- Keep lawn and field vegetation mowed low to eliminate protective cover.
- Remove potential food sources, such as household trash, waste grain or other foods.
- Close openings into buildings, such as around water pipes, electrical wires, vents and doors, with 1/8-inch mesh hardware cloth or sheet metal.
- Use bait stations and registered toxicant baits to control large rodent populations.
- Use snap traps baited with bacon rind, peanut butter and oatmeal or oatmeal paste to capture nuisance rats and mice. Check traps daily.

## Squirrels

- Trim trees to prevent squirrels from jumping onto roofs.
- Prevent squirrels from traveling along wires to houses and buildings by installing 2-foot sections of lightweight plastic pipe 2 to 3 inches in diameter. Slit pipe lengthwise, spread open and place over wire. The pipe will rotate on the wire and cause traveling squirrels to fall.
- Close openings to attics and eaves with heavy 1/2-inch wire mesh or sheet metal.
- In closed attics, naphthalene (mothballs) may work as a temporary repellent. Use 1 to 2 pounds spread evenly throughout the attic; greater amounts may be needed for large spaces.

Traps, including No. 0 or 1 leghold traps, box traps and cage traps, can be used to catch squirrels. Regular rat-size traps will catch flying squirrels. Good baits are: apples, cracked corn, pecans removed from the shell, peanut butter and sunflower seeds. Because squirrels are game animals, check with wildlife conservation agents in your area before placing traps for squirrels.

For more information on controlling nuisance rodents, contact the MU Extension center in your county.