

What rat is that?

How to tell the difference between rodents found in the Pacific islands region

KEY FEATURES

Species	HOUSE MOUSE <i>Mus musculus</i>	KIORE <i>Rattus exulans</i>	SHIP RAT <i>Rattus rattus</i>	NORWAY RAT <i>Rattus norvegicus</i>
Adult weight	Up to 28 g	Up to 187 g	Up to 215 g	Up to 450 g
Maximum Head-Body Length (HBL)	101 mm	185 mm	230 mm	275 mm
Tail length relative to Head-Body Length (HBL)	Slightly shorter or longer than HBL. Uniformly grey brown	Slightly shorter or longer than HBL. Thin and uniformly dark	Much longer than HBL. Uniformly coloured	Clearly shorter than HBL. Thick with pale underside

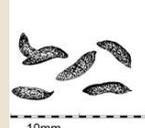
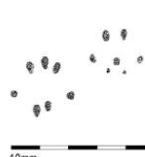
Dorsal (back) images



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Ears	12.0-15.0 mm	15.5-20.5 mm, cover eyes when pulled forward. Fine hairs do not extend beyond edge of ear	19.0-26.0 mm, cover eyes when pulled forward. Fine hairs do not extend beyond edge of ear.	14.0-22.0 mm do not cover eyes when pulled forward. Obvious hairs extend beyond edge of ear
Adult back foot	15.0-21.0 mm, small and thin	24.5-31.0 mm	28.0-38.0 mm	30.0-41.5 mm
Colour of upper side of back foot	Uniformly grey	Outer edge dark near ankle, rest of foot and toes pale	Uniform colouring over whole foot, usually dark	Always completely pale
Fur on back	Dull grey brown	Brown	Brown or black	Brown
Fur on belly	Uniformly grey	White-tipped grey giving irregular colour	Uniform monotone of grey, white or creamy-white	White-tipped grey giving irregular colour
Habits	Mainly ground dwelling though capable climber; nests in small holes	Good climber; digs small holes, nests and feeds on ground or in trees; infrequent swimmer	Very good and frequent climber; rarely burrows; nests mainly in trees and shrubs; infrequent swimmer	Burrows extensively; climbs much less frequently than other rats; strong swimmer; nests underground; very wary
Length of droppings	3.9-7.6 mm 	6.4-9.0 mm 	6.8-13.8 mm 	13.4-19.1 mm 
Footprints				

INFORMATION SOURCES (click links for more)

[Guide to the identification and collection of New Zealand rodents. 1996. Cunningham and Moors. Department of Conservation Pacific Invasives Initiative. 2011. Resource Kit for Rodent and Cat Eradication Pest Detective. Hosted by Bionet.nz. Rodent dorsal images](#) [How to identify rodents. Kiwicare Pest Detective. Hosted by Bionet.nz. Rodent droppings](#) [Pest Detective. Hosted by Bionet.nz. Rodent footprints](#)

