

Floods and mouse control

Mice and voles are often most numerous in lakeshore vegetation where they find lots of natural shelter and food. With the loss of natural habitat due to flooding, mice and other small mammals may try to find refuge in your home. Below are a few tips from the Yukon Department of Environment for keeping mice and voles out of your home:

- Excluding mice and keeping a clean uncluttered home is the key to keeping mice out of your house, not trapping alone.
- In general, all openings greater than 1/4 inch thick should be sealed for mice. Make sure to check for particularly troublesome areas like cracks and spaces around vents, wires and pipes. Screen necessary openings, like fans and chimneys with 1/4" wire mesh. Doors and windows should be screened with tight-fitting metal screens. Seal or cover all openings, since mice can jump 12" high, run up the sides of buildings and cross cables and wires.
- Recent studies in Montana have shown that removing mice from your house, without sealing the entrance points, does not result in having a mouse-free home as other mice quickly move in, with some traveling long distances to do so. (Department of Environment biologists have documented deer mice in the Yukon traveling greater than 3 kilometres).
- Once your house is effectively sealed, trapping is effective, with both live-trap and snap-traps work well for Yukon species. Wood-based snap traps are inexpensive and work well. These can be purchased at most hardware and department stores. Place them anywhere you think mice are living. Setting traps in pairs works best. Set traps at right angles to the wall, with the trigger end touching the wall. Put them about 6 to 10 feet apart, since mice tend to travel very short distances. Mice tend not to cross large open spaces. Bait the trap with foods attractive to mice, like peanut butter or sunflower seeds. Check traps daily. If nothing happens in a couple of days, move the traps to a new location. Be careful to keep traps out of the reach of children and pets!
- Mice can also be live-trapped and released outdoors unharmed. Live-traps, those that don't kill the mice, can also be bought at hardware and department stores. Follow the instructions as per snap-traps above for placement; you only need one live-trap at each location, however. To ensure trapped mice are kept alive add a slice of carrot, potato or apple to the bait for moisture, and check the traps several times a day. Captured animals should be released at least 4 km from other residents, lest they simply take up residence in your neighbor's home or return to yours. Live-traps should be cleaned with a disinfectant (as per below) after use.
- Commercially available poisoned baits are not recommended as they are dangerous to children, pets and non-target wildlife. Also, poisoned mice often die in hard-to-reach places and can cause an unpleasant odor.
- Small rodents may be hosts to viruses and caution in handling them or their feces is important. When cleaning up any dead rodents or their droppings, be sure to:
 - o Wear rubber gloves

- o Make a disinfectant by mixing detergent plus 1 1/2 cups of bleach for each gallon of water.
 - o Using a spray bottle of disinfectant, thoroughly spray dead rodents, traps, droppings and the areas where you found them.
 - o Do not sweep or vacuum mouse droppings in your home until you have wet the affected area with detergent, bleach and water. Dry sweeping or vacuuming might put dust containing viruses into the air.
 - o Place the sprayed rodent and/or droppings in a plastic bag and seal it. Then place the bag into a second bag, seal and dispose of with the trash.
- Keeping your house and outbuildings clean of food items and effectively sealed is key to keeping mice and other small mammals in the great outdoors.