

- ▶ Uwaga na kursy dla pletwonurków
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Wyklej sobie letnie

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NAGRODY

NOWOŚCI



Dziś Teleprzewodnik.

- ▶ Wiele stron, wywiady, recenzje, ciekawostki

Lubią nie tylko kanały.

W Toruniu, zwłaszcza na starówce, widać więcej szczurów ▶ strona 3



Motoare

To będą j...
w historii

Toruń, piątek, 17 lipca 2009

MAGAZYN

We have plenty of rats here

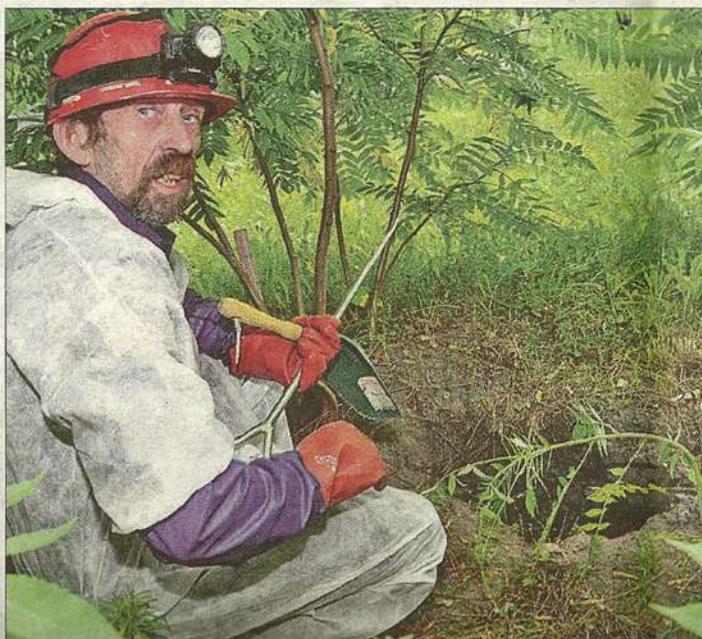
Scared away by the machines, they look for shelter and food. Beware! They stay where they come across garbage.

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"For the last three weeks not a day has gone without a call to the Old Town. It is us, humans, who have disturbed rats' territory. They just defend themselves," – says Zygmunt Jeszka.

Jeszka has been in the disinfestation business for 20 years. He can see that something is not right. Usually, after the mandatory wide-spread disinfestation in April, there should be far fewer calls. Instead, their number is growing, especially in the Old Town.

"Where can you see them? They have been running across the façade in broad daylight. And they are big too," says Teresa from Królowej Jadwigi Street with disgust. The elderly woman cannot recall a time when the rodents were this bold. Recently, Marzena Browińska experienced quite a shock during a walk with her daughter. "We were in the Gingerbread Town on Podmurna Street. It was the first time I saw rats there, running along the walls during the day," she says.



: Andrzej Berndt shows a hole dug by rats, hidden in the bushes. It leads into their underground tunnels. He also checks the drain on Gagarina Street.

There are repeated calls about the rodents near Rapackiego Square in the Dream Valley Park. There have also been new ones from stores and hotels. These last ones are the least keen on publicizing the problem. Why risk scaring the guests away?

Rats protect their territory

The specialists emphasize that the increased activity of the rats is caused by humans. Statistically speaking, every inhabitant of Toruń has their own rat – the number of rodents is close to that of people. “Rats have their own world beneath the streets of Toruń, their own underground city. They live here divided into families and casts, each in their own zone. The renovation of the promenade and other streets has disturbed some of their zones. It is us who are invaders,” says Zygmunt Jeszka. “The families protect their zones and do not allow strangers to enter. That is why the homeless rats climb up from the beneath the ground. They search for shelter and food. This phenomenon can also be observed in other quarters where the construction work has disturbed the animal world. Where do the frightened rodents find shelter? Dumpsters, garbage, dark nooks and crannies – they like all of these. Internal yards typical for tenement buildings are a perfect spot. Dark, moist and often dirty. Add to that a good Samaritan regularly leaving food for the cats and you have a rat paradise.” Probably, when the construction is finished some part of the rat families will find their way back to their underground homes. “They will stay in the Old Town as long as the old sewage system exists. Old lead pipes are no challenge for the rats – they can chew through them in a flash,” assesses Jan Stromidło, who has been in the disinfection business for 26 years.

It won't attack

The Sanitary-Epidemiological Station reminds that every building owner and administrator is required to implement disinfection. The City Council orders city-wide disinfection twice a year, in the spring and in the fall, and everyone should at least place rat poison. However, immediate response is also important.

“It is especially crucial where stores and restaurants are concerned. Rats are vermin that contaminate with their droppings and can spread parasites and diseases,” reminds Joanna Biowska from the Sanitary-Epidemiological Station. Zygmunt Jeszka advises that in one on one confrontations with rats we should keep our heads. “In truth, rats scare easily. It cornered by a human, it often dies from a heart attack,” he adds. “The stories about rats going for the throat are a fantasy. The maximal height of their jump is 70-80 centimeters. They don't usually attack. Only when they defend themselves. If we encounter a rat at our doorstep, the best option is to give it some stale bread. It will eat it and go away.”

Bydgoskie, Mokre, Rubinkowo...

For years rats have also been a problem in other quarters, like the Bydgoskie Przedmieście, the Jakubskie Przedmieście and the concrete-covered Rubinkowo. “We've just been in an apartment building in Rubinkowo, where there were more rats than people. Recently, we've had ten calls to Gagarina Street alone. Rusted cast iron pipes are what attracts the rodents. The situation isn't any better in the Mokre quarter,” enumerates Jan Stromidło.

BROWN RAT

- **Length of the body with the head: 19-30 cm. Tail length: 13-23 cm. Weight: 240-550 grams. Brown-grey back with yellowish shade; whitish, yellowish or grey belly. Stocky build, blunt snout, short ears.**

- **Females reproductive readiness at 3-4 months of age. In one litter, of which there are four in a year, there are seven young on average.**