



Dozens of Rats Spotted in Gated Section of Corona Plaza

By Ruschell Boone, May 11, 2016, USA

A popular public plaza in Queens has become overrun with rats, and some residents are blaming their neighbors and the city. NY1's Ruschell Boone has the exclusive report.

People are used to seeing rats, but not like this: dozens of them darting back and forth inside the gated section of Corona Plaza.

It's a popular hangout for residents and their children, but on Monday, the rats seemed excited to be here, too.

They were everywhere. Like, by where the bushes are. Just coming back in, running in and out. It was just nasty, said Leslie San Martin, who shot cellphone video of the rats.

San Martin was walking to the 7 train at 103rd Street and Roosevelt Avenue on Monday when she heard the squeals.

"At first, I thought I saw a squirrel, and I was really kind of going crazy," she said.

It's not uncommon to see rats in this community, but people were surprised to see them so brazenly out in the open.

"A lot of families. It was entire families, kids around, because yesterday was nice weather and the rats were right there. Like, it was daytime. So this is incredible," said one woman who saw the rats.

The women said they called 311, but got the run-around.

"They said 10 or 20 days," one of the women said.

Two men took matters into their own hands after that, shoving dirt into dozens of holes to clog up the burrows. But it was clearly a temporary fix. They were back at it on Tuesday, and that's when NY1 reached out to the city.

The Parks Department referred the matter to the Department of Health, where a spokesperson said the problem would be addressed.

On Wednesday, there were inspectors and exterminators on hand for an emergency baiting.

The Health Department says it takes the infestation "very seriously." In a statement, the agency added, "In partnership with NYC Parks we have been baiting Corona Plaza regularly; the most recent baitings at this location were conducted on April 30, May 1 and yesterday."

It also said that workers would "continue to bait and monitor the area."

Some residents also want the city to crack down on people who litter.

"The people eat over here on the street. They throw inside," said one man who help plug up the holes.

"There are food vendors who shouldn't really be on the street because once they're done selling everything that they brought, they throw all the litter on the floor," San Martin said.

After NY1 reached out to the Sanitation Department, they told us they would send an officer to the area as well.