

Kidwelly Quay rat infestation leads to calls for public to stop bird and 'water vole' feeding

By Llanelli Star, Posted: March 02, 2016, Wales



Rats have been spotted in the car park at Kidwelly Quay.

ACTION is to be taken over an infestation of rats at a Gwendraeth Valley beauty spot which attracts thousands of visitors.

Kidwelly Quay's car park has been hit by an increase in vermin roaming around the tourist attraction — which acts as a popular tourism area due to its beautiful views of the upper Gwendraeth estuary.

The town council has stated its intention to discourage the public from feeding birds and rats, mistaken for water voles.

And the RSPCA has provided a comprehensive list of actions which will detract rats from roaming the area.

Town councillor Dena Lloyd-Waterford called for quick action to be tackle the issue.

She said: "I have seen them running around down there, it's horrendous. I was sat in my car and could see other people coming in saying 'what a beautiful place' and then a little girl said, 'Mam, look there's a rat there'.

"There could be 90 in a couple of days, and then a thousand in a week. We need to act quickly to educate the people in the town that they are rats and not water voles.

"It is the beginning of Spring and people will be coming to visit here soon, and won't come back if they see something like this. I think now is the time to stamp on it and get rid of them.

"It is a major problem and the sooner we can get it stopped the better because it will stop people coming down here."

A spokeswoman for the RSPCA confirmed the charity had received an advice inquiry regarding rats roaming around the public car park at Kidwelly Quay.

"Rats and/or mice can be found in gardens and parks in the UK. Often this is due to bird feeding or the availability of other food sources," she said.

"The problem with feeding wild birds is that even if you are using a feeder or table (i.e. you are not scattering the food on the floor), seeds and other foods scraps will be scattered when the birds come and feed. Compost heaps can also be a major attractant to rodents as they offer both a food source and shelter and warmth.

"Other things which attract them include improperly stored rubbish bags, cat, dog or other pet food (particularly outside pets like rabbits or guinea pigs) and food left out for wildlife such as hedgehogs.

"There are some easy non-lethal steps you can take in deterring rats such as reducing any accessible food sources and ensure bins are rodent-proof; and cropping grass, and shrubs and other greenery and keeping it short, neat and tidy.

"The RSPCA recommends that while you can relax this as the rats stop appearing, it is important to ensure it remains a refuge for other wildlife.

"If you encounter any rat tunnels, or you know where they are, try uncovering them and leaving them open (make sure these are not tunnels used by other mammals, such as hedgehogs).

"The RSPCA is opposed, in principle, to killing or taking wildlife — in circumstances where there is a proven case for controlling wild animals, we advocate the use of non-harmful methods of deterrence where possible.

"The RSPCA does not advocate the use of glue traps as they are inhumane and indiscriminate. We would advise anyone considering these measures to employ a reputable pest control agency."