



Mid-Missouri pest control experts warn mice want indoors

By Steve Dawson, 30 December 2015, KOMU 8 Reporter

COLUMBIA - As the weather gets colder, outdoor critters may try to head indoors. This is the time of year when pest control agencies get the most calls from mid-Missouri residents about rodents and bats nesting in their homes.

The Missouri Department of Conservation said birds regularly migrate long distances to escape the cold, but smaller animals like mice and rats don't have that option. Instead of heading south for winter, rodents will migrate to the nearest warm place they can find--in a tree, under a rock, or inside a nearby house.



Some common entry points for rodents, experts say are through utility pipes, or cracks in the home's foundation. Sean Chase of Atkins Pest Control says it's important for homeowners to check for holes and cracks in the exterior of their homes.

"They can get into areas that are small, just about the size of a dime," Chase said.

Animal experts say small mammals are built for getting into tight places. The Missouri Department of Conservation's John George says if mice can't squeeze into an existing hole or crack, they can get inside a home with just a little effort.

"Most small animals can contort their bodies to fit through really small spaces. And things like rodents, you have to keep in mind, if the hole's a little too small, they can chew it bigger," George said.

Mice and other rodents can easily chew through plastic and cardboard, so Chase advises homeowners to keep bagged food in sturdy, see through-totes. He said residents should keep firewood piles away from the house, another popular spot where rats and mice go when temperatures drop.

There are a few tell-tale signs a mouse is in the house. Droppings, gnawed holes in bags of food or birdseed, or a pet who is paying extra-close attention to a dark closet or a corner in the kitchen. There are a variety of kill and no-kill traps a homeowner can buy to deal with a mouse problem. George said the best solution is stopping the problem before it starts.

"The key is finding places they might be getting in already and sealing them up. That way you won't have to buy traps," George said.

Along with mice, George said snakes and bats are other culprits.