

Rats, Mice and Chipmunks – spring is here and so are they – what to do?
Dave deCalesta – Reprinted from the 6-09 KLA Newsletter

As cottage owners open their summer homes, they often come across signs of unwanted visitors. **Chipmunks**, which are active in daylight and are often seen darting about, burrow in yards and gardens, and rob bird feeders.



Chipmunks are not protected by New York law, but the only control measures are shooting, trapping, or poisoning with pesticides that may be applied only by licensed pesticide operators. Shooting in heavily populated neighborhoods along the lake is dangerous and it is hard to get licensed pesticide operators to come for chipmunks. *Common poisons used against rats and mice, such as Havoc or D-Con, are not legal for use against chipmunks.* Rat traps may be used to kill chipmunks—baited with peanut butter and sunflower seeds. Rat traps should be placed inside small boxes or short sections of PVC pipe to avoid catching and killing birds. Small live traps, sold by hardware stores and baited with peanut butter and sunflower seeds, are the best and safest control measure. Release any captured chipmunks at least five miles away in a wooded area.

The other unwanted visitors, **rats and mice**, are active at night and secretive so we rarely see them. Rather we see indirect evidence: their little

pellets scattered about, or damages. Rats often pull out insulation for nesting and their pellets are scattered around the insulation.



Rats and mice often chew insulation on electric wires, setting the stage for fires within homes.



Mice are more often detected by their smallish pellets—the size of rice kernels—scattered about on kitchen counters and on the floor along walls. Rat pellets are much larger and the same size as chipmunk pellets, which are almost never seen inside homes.



Mouse feces



Rat feces

The story on rat and mouse control is prevention—keep them from getting inside the home. This is best done by sealing all cracks larger than ¼ inch with