

People often mistake similar species for Norway rats. Here are some similarities and differences to look for when attempting an identification:

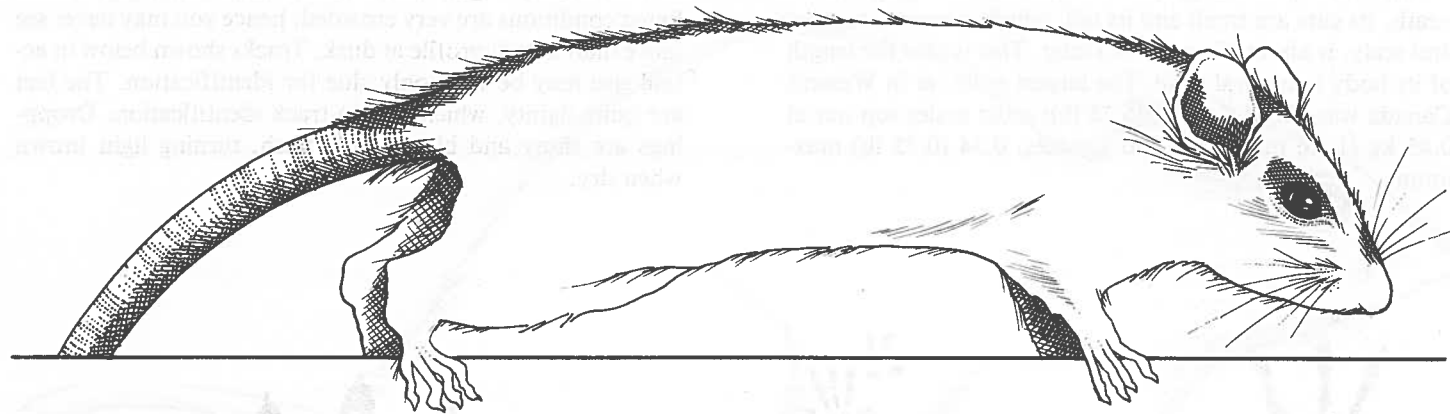


Figure 4. The roof rat or black rat

The **roof rat** (also known as the black rat) is sometimes introduced into the province with freight shipments. Slightly smaller than the Norway rat, it is darker in color and its tail is longer than its body. The roof rat usually lives in attics and the upper levels of buildings. It is common in seaports and coastal areas. Its destructive potential rivals that of the Norway rat. Trapping this species is preferred to baiting, as it can be difficult to find the individuals in the building after they have died.

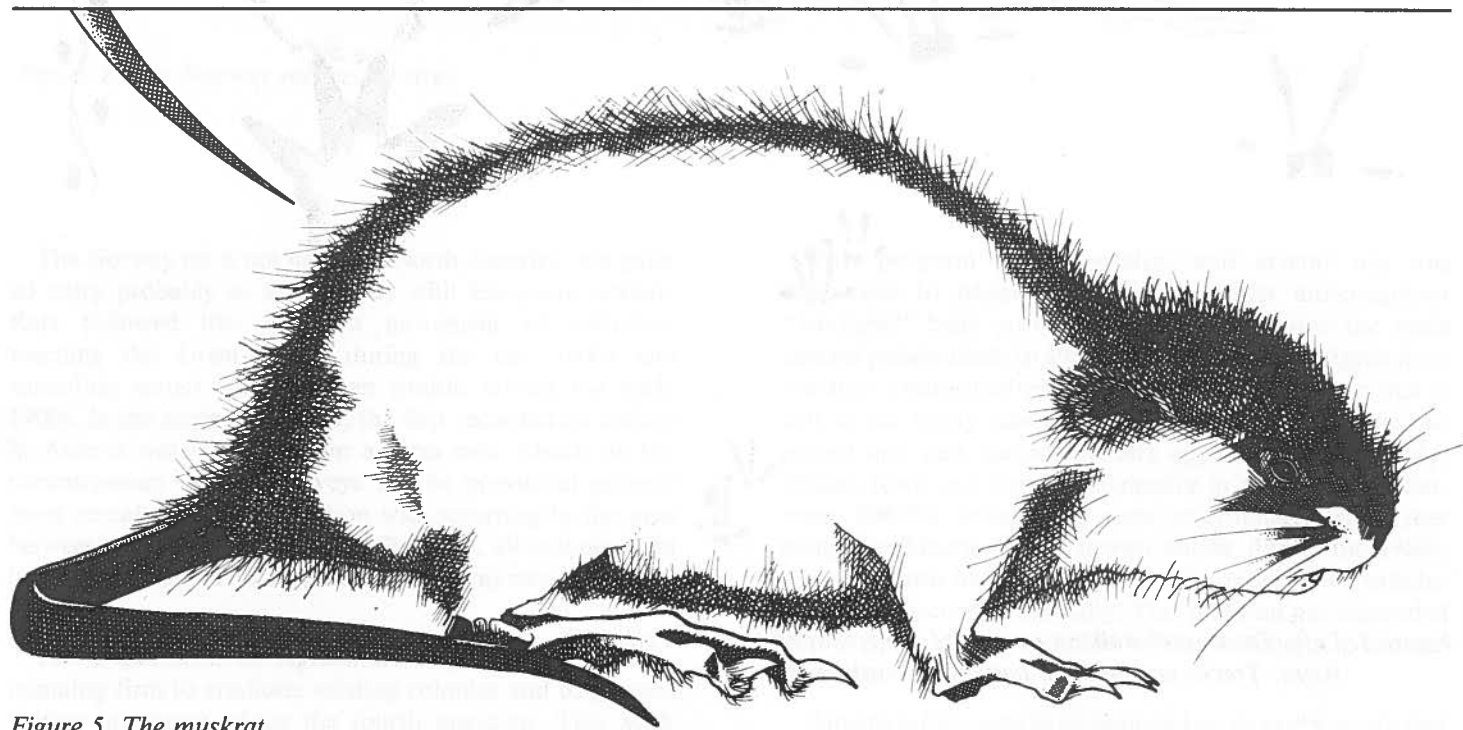


Figure 5. The muskrat

The **muskrat** is sometimes mistaken for a rat when it wanders into town, as it often does during spring and fall dispersal. Unlike the quick, stealthy movements of the Norway rat, the muskrat's gait is more like a waddle. It is active during the daytime as well as at night. Muskrats are larger than rats with a body length of 25 cm (10 in.) and a tail of 22 cm (9 in.). Muskrats weigh up to about 1.4 kg (3 lb) and have longer fur and darker feet and tail. Their feet are relatively large, with coarse hairs between the toes which aid in swimming. Tracks differ considerably from those of Norway rats. The tail is dragged when moving which leaves a mark in soft ground. Note also that the hindfoot is larger than the forefoot.

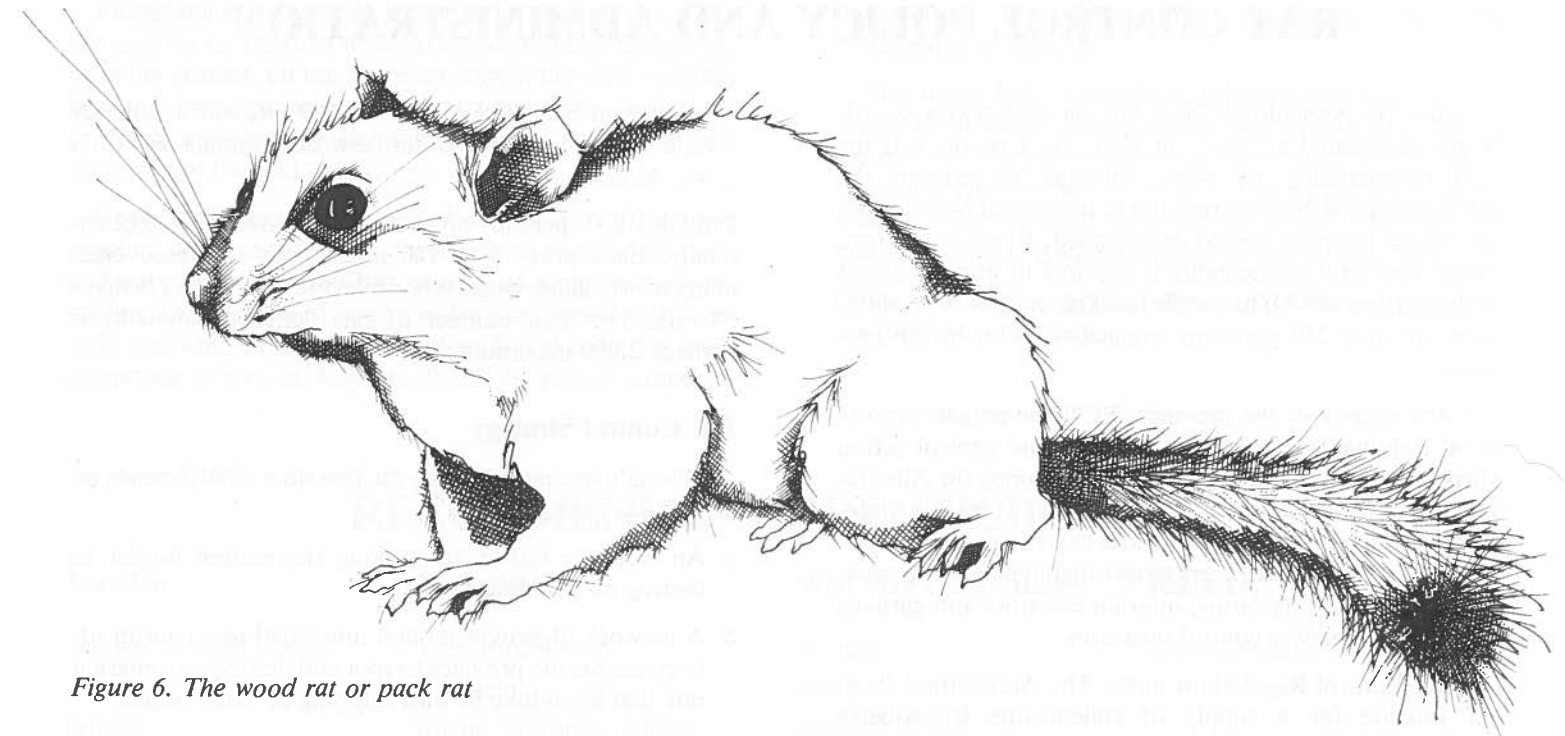


Figure 6. The wood rat or pack rat

The **wood rat** or pack rat has large ears, long fur and a bushy tail. It builds large stick nests, often in caves, abandoned buildings, or on rocky ledges. Wood rats do not form colonies or cause agricultural damage, although they may damage interiors of buildings. In Alberta, they occur primarily in the foothills and mountains and the extreme southern edge of the province.

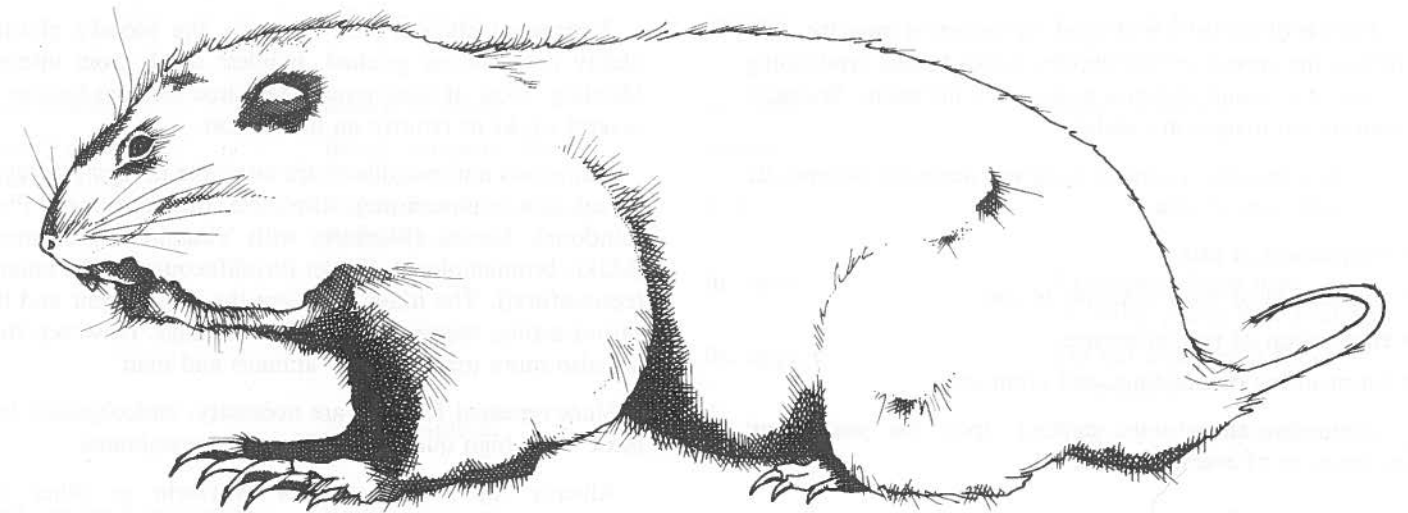


Figure 7. The pocket gopher

The **pocket gopher** is seldom seen, as it spends most of the time in underground burrows. It is misnamed a mole. (Moles are not found in Alberta.) The pocket gopher can be recognized by its blunt nose, silky brown fur, short tail and fur-lined cheek pouches. There may be white on the chin, throat and chest regions. Pocket gophers are approximately 22 cm (9 in.) long and weigh 0.15 kg (0.33 lb). They are vegetarian and do not inhabit buildings.