# Birmingham faces rat infestation as bin strike leaves waste uncollected



In Birmingham, the city is grappling with a significant rat infestation amidst a backdrop of a prolonged bin strike that has left an estimated 17,000 tonnes of waste piling up on the streets. The strike, which commenced on March 11, resulted from disputes over the removal of the role of waste recycling and collection officer, leading to widespread complaints from residents affected by the unpleasant odours and rising numbers of rodents.

The current conditions have transformed Birmingham into a hub for urban wildlife, particularly rats, which pest control expert Will Timms has referred to as "running riot" along a makeshift "super highway" formed by the rubbish. This situation has prompted Birmingham City Council to declare a major incident due to escalating public health concerns, a decision made on Monday.

Local residents have expressed their disgust at the visible rat problem. Some have reported seeing rats that they claim are "the size of cats." This alarming development has been corroborated by Timms, who noted that he recently encountered a rat measuring 22 inches in length, not including the tail. He explained that the uncollected waste, which includes food remnants like kebabs, has been a significant factor in the growth of the rat population, noting, "A rat can get really big on protein."

Lee Maddocks, a pest control director based on Australia’s Gold Coast, weighed in on the situation by highlighting changes in urban rats' feeding habits, including instances of cannibalism. Speaking to the Daily Star, Maddocks stated, “Rats are getting bigger,” attributing their growth to abundant high-calorie food waste, warmer winters, and a scarcity of natural predators in urban environments, which create ideal conditions for these rodents. He further explained that the Norway rat, under optimal conditions, can grow up to 40cm in length. “While there are biological limits to how large they can grow, consistently large food sources and milder climates can absolutely push them toward their maximum potential,” he added.

Concerns have been raised not only about the potential size of these rodents but also about the health risks they pose. Larger rats could injure small pets or children if they feel threatened. Moreover, they can spread serious diseases such as Leptospirosis and Salmonella through their urine and droppings, as larger rats produce more waste.

As residents have attempted to navigate their daily lives amidst the waste and rat crisis, reports of agency workers attempting to clean up the mess have surfaced. However, as they handle the trash, there are troubling accounts of rats seen scurrying away, highlighting the sheer scale of the infestation. One local resident described seeing agency workers encountering rats while trying to clear the rubbish, stating, "These are agency workers... look at the rats scatter!"

Joseph, another local rat catcher, described the current situation, noting, "There's a whole super highway of rats beneath us now - millions of them," indicating that the rats have created extensive networks due to the abundance of food and shelter provided by the rubbish. The favourable weather for breeding also heightens concerns; rats can reproduce at startling rates, contributing to an ever-growing population.

Lee Maddocks emphasised the need for more sophisticated pest control methods in light of the increased intelligence and caution of larger rats. These methods include strategies like pre-baiting, motion-detection systems, and sealed bait stations to outsmart the rodents, rather than solely relying on traps.

As Birmingham continues to recover from the waste crisis, the implications of the rat infestation raise serious concerns for public health and urban living conditions, with the challenges of managing these pests only expected to increase in the current environment.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://thetab.com/2025/03/19/birminghams-rat-crisis-residents-urge-council-to-address-cat-sized-rodent-problem> - This article supports claims about the perception of 'cat-sized' rats in Birmingham and details the impact of ongoing bin strikes on the community, including the surge in rat activity linked to waste issues.
* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R7KNOBUUSx0> - This video corroborates the adverse effects of Birmingham's bin strikes on local communities, highlighting the rise of rats and efforts to address the situation.
* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8WRM3PSvgBM> - This video from Sky News provides further evidence of the rat infestation in Birmingham, showcasing uncollected waste and the impact on residents due to the ongoing strike.
* <https://news.sky.com/story/its-awful-the-streets-of-birmingham-where-residents-are-battling-rat-problems-during-waste-strikes-12902762> - This article supports the scale of the waste issue, with 17,000 tonnes uncollected, and the consequent rat infestation described as a 'rat super highway' by residents and pest control experts.
* <https://www.birminghammail.co.uk/news/midlands-news/rat-infestation-birmingham-bin-strikes-27544187> - This article provides additional details about the response from Birmingham City Council and the public health concerns raised by the escalating rat problem due to the prolonged bin strike.
* <https://daily-star.co.uk/news/birmingham-rats-size-of-cats-bin-strikes-rotting-waste-27556298> - This article features expert opinions like Lee Maddocks discussing the factors contributing to the size and health risks of urban rats, aligning with concerns raised in the article about rat growth and disease transmission.