



Pack Rats - Natural or Nuisance?

You Decide!

How to be Nuisance Pack Rat Free in 2020

The problem is not pack rats, the problem is **Nuisance** pack rats. There is a difference. Pack rats in a natural setting are amazing and beautiful creatures. Pack rats in your car, attic, pool heater or landscaping are destructive, dirty and a serious nuisance.

I do not advocate getting rid of all pack rats. I do advocate getting rid of and preventing nuisance pack rats. Mr. Pack Rat is not a Pest Control company, we are a highly specialized Nuisance Wildlife Service company.

Sometime this year, Mr. Pack Rat will trap our sixty-thousandth pack rat. I feel I can honestly say I have been involved in the trapping and removal of more pack rats than any other person on earth, so I have some experience. In my experience about 95% of all pack rat/human issues are preventable. In fact, most nuisance pack problems are directly caused by our own inadvertent actions and ignorance.

You can be nuisance pack rat free in 2020. It does take some work. We can show you how and we can help. We are not just a specialized Nuisance Wildlife Service company, we are in the business of education — free to anyone who asks.

I hope you find this newsletter informative and interesting. Your feedback is always welcome and appreciated.

Kris ~ Owner

Mr. Pack Rat



If your life depended on having lots of safe places to hide, where would you rather live?

How pack rats go from natural to nuisance

Pack rats have no armor, no venom, are not particularly fast or aggressive. Their very survival depends on remaining hidden and building fortress-like impenetrable nests. Food is not an issue, but shelter is essential. The natural desert is very open, but add people and things change. Pack rats do not need humans to survive but will take complete advantage of any opportunities provided.

"Keeping it natural" is not natural at all!

When streets are put in and homes are built things are no longer 100% natural. Just simple runoff from roofs, patios, driveways, and streets leads to an increase in vegetation. Most people also want to add a little something like rosemary, bougainvillea, lantana, and non-native cactus. To truly keep things natural takes work. At least once a year things need to be trimmed and thinned to create more open space. This provides less opportunity for pack rats and more effective hunting for predators.



Kept "natural" with thinning & trimming



Who are the real pack rats?

People love to collect and hold on to things and where does it all go? First, we fill the garage, the car can sit outside. Then things get put behind the wall, against the house, by the air conditioner. We love our stuff and so do the pack rats - all those great hiding places!



#1 Pack rat nest - the cave

In nature, pack rats love crevices in caves. A ready-built home safe from predators and weather. A pack rat nest in a cactus may last 5-10 years until the rats kill the cactus, but nests in caves have been continually occupied for over 40,000 years. What do people do? We provide ready-made caves for rats to move into - things like vehicles, attics, pool heaters, air conditioners, grills, and even poison bait boxes. All enclosures are simply caves to a pack rat, providing safe shelter from predators and weather. It is like putting out a welcome mat.



Fewer and less effective predators

Most predators shy away from homes. Snakes in residential areas are often removed or even killed. Some people think all types of rats are the same and use poison. Pack rats are not even distant cousins to the notorious urban Roof and Norway rats that poison baits are designed for. Poison should never be used in areas where there is wildlife. It is [ineffective for pack rats](#) and often ends up killing the very predators that keep the pack rat population in check. Pack rats reproduce quickly, owls and bobcats do not. Don't let a pest control or hardware store employee tell you otherwise — secondary poisoning is a real problem. Check out these recent articles:

- [Two mountain lions found dead,](#)
- [Rat Poison Found in 85 Percent of Tested Mountain Lions, Bobcats, Fishers,](#)
- [Necropsy results show Kings Park owl likely died from rat poison,](#)

The predators that do remain are less effective hunters when the rats have more cover under the unnaturally dense, excessive, and overgrown vegetation typical around homes.



Conclusion

Nature loves balance. Available habitat and the predator/prey ratio are key factors that naturally keep the pack rat population in check. When people are introduced the balance is upset. An increase in the available habitat and a decrease in predators lead to a surge in the number of pack rats. The end result — a native wild animal; [key to a healthy Sonoran desert](#); becomes a nuisance.