

Pest Profile



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Common Name: Northern Rat Flea

Scientific Name: *Nosopsyllus fassciatus*

Order and Family: Siphonaptera; Ceratophyllidae

Size and Appearance: The Northern Rat Flea is about 3-4 mm in length with a dorsally flattened, wingless, red to brown colored body. Its hind femur has 3 to 4 bristles on the inner surface, which distinguishes it from similar flea species.

	Length (mm)	Appearance
Egg	< 0.05 mm	Eggs are oval and white in color. Females lay 2-8 eggs after each blood meal. Eggs rarely stay on host, often fall to ground.
Larva/Nymph	< 0.5-3 mm depending on instar	White, slender, with no eyes or legs. 3 larval instars.
Adult	2.5 mm	Flattened, elongate bodies with red-brown color. Back femur has 3 to 4 bristles on the interior side.
Pupa (if applicable)	2.0 mm	Made of spun silk and is rendered immobile.

Type of feeder (Chewing, sucking, etc.): Piercing/sucking

Host /stored food products: *Nosopsyllus fassciatus* will feeds primarily on Norway Rat (*Rattus norvegicus*) but can feed on other rodents and humans as well.

Description of Damage (larvae and adults):

Northern rat fleas serve as intermediate hosts for both rat tapeworm and bubonic plague through feeding on rats. It is considered a minor vector as it only occasionally feeds on humans and other mammals.

References:

Smith, E.H. and Whitman, R.C. (2007). Blood Feeders- Northern Rat Flea. In *NPMA Field Guide of Structural Pests*. (3.6.3). National Pest Management Association International.

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