

Rat epidemic threatens to plague Britain

by UPI

LONDON - Britain is now home to around 80 million brown rats -- 1.3 rats for each of the 61 million people living in the country. The recent spike in rat population is partly being attributed to the cut in the trash pick up program, dropping from one a week to around once a month, Britain's *The Sun* reported Monday. Brown rats are known to spread numerous diseases, including Weil's, salmonella, tuberculosis, E.Coli and foot-and-mouth. Since 2000 there has been a 39 percent increase in the number of rats in Britain. Jed Kenrick, who heads the environmental services group Rentokil UK, suggested the country is facing a rat epidemic of "plague-like proportions." "The rodent population has grown significantly in recent times," he said, "and a contributing factor has been the introduction of fortnightly rubbish collections."

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