

The habitat used by the black rat *Rattus rattus* in the date palm agro-system (case of the region of Ouargla).

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Oasis agroecosystem is experiencing an accelerated degradation due to technical impacts caused essentially by poor farming practices and lack of maintenance which promoted the establishment of invasive species like black rats and caused a lot of damage to many crops. In this study habitat preferences of black rats (*Rattus rattus*) in palm groves were studied. A total of 10 date groves were selected for our study. A detailed survey was carried out in all vegetation alliances for any obvious signs of rats (tracks, faecal pellets, chewed vegetation, runs, or burrows) and their presence or absence was noted. Sightings of live rats were recorded. Their presence was confirmed by the trapping operations applied at some localities. Our results showed that rats preferred habitats providing a dense vegetation cover. Two clearly definable habitat types could be recognized: The dense herbaceous cover (Reeds, ruches, and brome) that dominates most ditches and irrigation canals surrounding the date groves and date palms that suffer from lack of maintenance.

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