The three common rat species.
Note the differences in body size and the long tail (in relation to body size) of the black rat.

Brown rat
(Rattus norvegicus)

It also has a distinctive dark stripe on its rear leg.
The muzzle is more rounded than the black rat.

Black rat
(R. rattus)

The ears are smaller than those of the black rat.

Pacific rat
(R. exulans)

As well as longer tails, black rats have large ears and a sharper muzzle. Black rats also come in different colour morphs (the one shown is the one most likely to be confused).

Large ears that extend over eyes when pulled forward.

Samples supplied by James Russell. Photos: Natasha Doherty