

Rodent Poison is Killing More Than Rodents

With thanks to Christine Cummings, Director,
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Wildlife deaths due to consumption of poisons used for control of rodents are increasing at an alarming rate. Birds of prey, including owls, eagles, hawks and falcons are most at risk. Other rodent predators such as fox, weasel, coyote, snake, and bobcat are also vulnerable. First Generation Anticoagulant Rodenticides (FGARs)



Red-tail hawk with mouse. *Public domain.*

and the even more dangerous Second Generation Anticoagulant Rodenticides (SGARs) are commonly used in bait traps and cause poisoned animals to bleed to death. SGARs are available only to exterminators, not homeowners.

Rodents become easy prey before they die, or may become immune to

the poisons and become toxic time bombs. Predators consuming poisoned rodents are poisoned in turn and suffer agonizing deaths. Rodents often carry bait outside of bait boxes, exposing children, wildlife and domestic pets to poisons.

Managing rodent issues without the use of poisons is possible. If you are a homeowner who uses FGAR pest-control products such as D-Con Bait Station, Rodentex, or Talon, to name a few, consider the alternatives below. If you use a pest management company, ask them to use alternatives to FGARs and SGARs

Your State Representative and Senator appreciate hearing your views. Currently in Connecticut (2022-23), there is a bill before the State legislature: Bill 962—An Act to Prohibit the Use and The Sale of Second Generation Anticoagulant Rodenticides Statewide. (*update: this bill did not pass in spring 2023.*) To find and contact your legislator, visit website: cga.ct.gov.

Steps to control rodent populations

Population Control: Let nature do its job. Protect birds of prey and other natural predators of rodents. In a healthy ecosystem, a balance of predator to prey will keep the rodent population in check. The inadvertent killing of predators with poisons adds to the overpopulation problem. Only place owl nesting boxes or

hawk perches on the property to attract natural predators if you do not use poisons and know that your close neighbors do not.

Sanitation. Remove what rodents are attracted to: food, water sources, nesting material, and a safe place to raise their young. If you house poultry or farm animals, clean up all food, garbage, seed, and water. Try feed bags, or no-spill bins. Add cayenne pepper to poultry foods; birds love it while rodents hate it.

Exclusion. Seal up access points in foundations, walls, windows, and doors with galvanized wire. Don't forget pipes or dryer vents which can be easy access for rodents. Remove ground cover, like ivy, that rodents can hide in, and cut back shrubs or tree branches near structures to lessen roof access. Bury galvanized wire along foundations to discourage tunneling.

Eradication: Use humane, non-toxic methods: live traps, snap traps, zap traps, and CO2 traps placed in concealed areas so no other animals can access them. Never use glue boards or sticky traps, as these are unnecessarily cruel and may trap non-targeted small animals.

Deterrence: Rodents typically run along the perimeters of structures. Sprinkle cayenne pepper or spray natural essential oil-based repellent on foundations and perimeters. Noise and light repellents are also great deterrents. Dry ice can be dropped into the burrow entrance or exit and then covered.

Reproduction control: Rodents are prolific and when populations are threatened, their birthrate actually goes up. Fertility control products lessen rodent fertility, inhibiting their reproductive ability. A smaller rodent population makes safe, non-toxic alternatives more effective. These products don't use hormones and have no bioaccumulation, biomagnification, and no secondary effect on predatory wildlife. It is a great alternative for service-based pest management professionals since it must be regularly re-applied to remain effective. It's a win-win for everyone, especially our wildlife.

Smart technology products and services. Electronic remote monitoring and internet-based trapping systems are great for heavily populated areas or larger commercial and residential buildings. These monitor traffic areas and allow effective placement of traps.

For a complete list of toxic rodenticides, see the "Tracking Poisons" section of the website raptorsarethesolution.org

For more information, see: the Alternatives to Rodenticides section of the website aplacecalledhoperaptors.com