

THE PROBLEM

There is no such thing as a safe poison. Rodenticides are no exception as they are not only deadly to the targeted animals, mice and rats, but also to the many predatory animals we cherish in Connecticut. This often includes hawks, falcons, eagles, owls, vultures, coyotes, foxes, bobcats, raccoons and more. The non-targeted victims succumb to secondary poisoning after consuming poisoned rodents, which are their natural prey. They may also even ingest bait directly, as witnessed in household pets and even small children. Rodenticides are counterproductive to rodent control as they cannot be specific to their targets and are unsafe for the environment. Harming and killing the natural predators that regulate rodent populations will never be the solution.

First and Second Generation Anticoagulant Rodenticide Poisons (FGARS, SGARS) work by preventing blood from clotting. Victims die from internal bleeding within a few days. FGARS lost their effectiveness over time, so SGAR took their place. SGARS were created to be more toxic and last longer in a victim's body. Ultimately this poses a greater threat to non-target wildlife, pets and children, as well as the environment.

What's unique about SGARs is that rodents frequently eat more than a single dose at one feeding, and since the effects are delayed the rodent doesn't die instantly. This allows the rodent to continue consuming the toxins, which results in a super lethal build-up in their tissues. These rodents are then consumed by predators who do not have a chance against the potent ingredients that make up SGARS.

A COMPREHENSIVE SOLUTION

To address these unnecessary consequences of anticoagulant rodenticides, lawmakers must ban SGARS (brodifacoum, bromadiolone, difenacoum and difethialone) and the FGAR diphacinone statewide with the same verbiage used in California's moratorium. That moratorium includes these exceptions: warehouses used to store foods for human or animal consumption; agricultural food production sites; factories, breweries, or wineries; medical facilities, and drug and medical equipment manufacturing facilities.



One of two great horned owls orphaned after their mother was found dead at the base of the nest tree. She was poisoned by rodenticides. The owls were cared for and released by A Place Called Hope Rehabilitation Center in Killingworth.

The following are not exempt: places where people eat, shop, live and work—such as restaurants, grocery stores, homes, housing facilities, schools and office buildings.

NON-TOXIC PREVENTION STRATEGIES

These toxic rodenticides are unnecessary to effectively manage rodent populations. The best line of defense is exclusion and sanitation:

- ❖ Remove food sources.
- ❖ Store trash, indoors and out, in a metal container with a tight cover or fastener for the lid.
- ❖ Remove potential rodenticides.
- ❖ Remove clutter.
- ❖ Stuff holes in and around the house with steel wool or copper mesh, or fill them with caulk or plaster and cover with sheet metal, paying particular attention to the foundation and holes between the house and garage.
- ❖ Seal gaps around the doors by replacing worn thresholds and weather stripping, and installing door sweeps.
- ❖ Caulk openings around water pipes, electric wires, cables, and vents.

Prevention Strategies—Continued

- ❖ Use hardware cloth to screen vents, floor drains, and any other openings.
- ❖ Raise wood piles at least 12 inches from the ground (and pet cages, if mice find them interesting), and wrap the legs in galvanized sheet metal to prevent the mice from climbing them.
- ❖ Cut tall grass, weeds, and brush from around the foundation of a house or shed and dispose of the clippings.
- ❖ Discard or recycle unused clutter around the house that may be providing a home for mice. Pick up fallen fruit and rotting vegetables from the garden, and don't place food scraps at the top of the compost pile.
- ❖ Store birdseed in a sealed container, use a birdfeeder with a catch tray and clean up around it regularly.
- ❖ Don't leave food on counters or dirty dishes in the sink overnight.
- ❖ Keep the stovetop, oven, broiler, and kitchen floor clean (especially under the stove and refrigerator).
- ❖ Store grains, cereals, nuts, and pet foods in sealed plastic, metal or glass containers, or keep them in the refrigerator. Pick up any uneaten pet food before going to bed.
- ❖ Owl boxes encourage native species to take up residence and manage rodents naturally.

FAST FACTS

- ❖ In 2020, California became the first state in the country to impose a moratorium on SGARs with a few exceptions. British Columbia's temporary ban of second-generation anticoagulant rodenticides was made permanent in January 2023.
- ❖ A 2020 study by Dr. Maureen Murray, director of TUFTS Wildlife Clinic in Mass., revealed that 100% of the 43 red-tailed hawks tested positive for both FGAR and SGAR poisons, with SGARs being the most prevalent.
- ❖ CT's own A Place Called Hope has submitted 70 birds of prey for testing since 2021 and 59 resulted positive for one or more SGAR ingredients.
- ❖ A 2021 study revealed that 82 percent of 133 eagles collected had anticoagulant rodenticides in their bodies.
- ❖ Antidotes for SGARS include Vitamin K therapy, but CT wildlife typically does not receive help in time to reverse the ill effects of these poisons.



In March 2023, our national symbol of freedom, a mature male bald eagle from New Hartford, died from rodenticide poisoning.

- ❖ Other studies have proven that sublethal levels of anticoagulant rodenticides have affected the immune systems of many mammals, resulting in the inability to fight off infections and increasing the chance of mange.
- ❖ A full-grown mouse can enter your house through a hole the size of a dime. They are talented climbers and able to swim.
- ❖ An Upper Queen Anne, Seattle, mixed-use business district demonstration pilot study managed by Raptors Are The Solution illustrates effective rat population management using a non-toxic, rat birth control solution called ContraPest®. They were able to reduce the rat population by 91 percent on this site in just a few months.
- ❖ Non-toxic, no-kill, multi-catch live rodent traps can be used to catch any mice that do manage to get inside; single-catch live traps work well for rats.

MORE INFORMATION

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