



**NATIONAL COUNCIL OF SPCAs
SPECIAL PROJECTS UNIT**

**HUMANE DETERRENTS AND PEST CONTROL:
RODENTS - 2014**

1. RODENT CONTROL

FOREWORD

While the National Council of SPCAs (NSPCA) acknowledges that under certain circumstances, pest control and/or extermination may be required, the NSPCA only supports the use of humane methods. The NSPCA does not support methods of pest management that cause suffering, pain, or distress to any animal.

- Regardless of the problems pest animals cause, they require the same level of consideration for their welfare as animals in other contexts.
- The NSPCA recommends adopting solutions to control pest issues before they begin/escalate as well as subsequent to humane control measures being implemented.
- The NSPCA encourages a review of control or deterrent measures be taken prior to coming to the conclusion that extermination is required.
- Conventional methods of extermination often involve the use of poisonous chemicals, which have effects on other non-target species, including humans. Other animals, children or adults can be harmed by an animal which has been poisoned or by the chemicals or baits used.

The position of the NSPCA:

The NSPCA is opposed to the manufacture, sale and use of all snares and any trap or trapping device or substance or form of animal control which causes or may cause suffering.

The NSPCA is opposed to the use of poisons and has specific concerns about the widespread agricultural and commercial use of chemical substances which are potentially harmful to animals.

1.1. NON LETHAL CONTROL METHODS:

1.1.1. EXCLUSION

The best and most permanent solution is exclusion. This means to close off all possible entry points they could use. For rodents, this can be done by using materials such as steel mesh, steel wool, expanding foam, wire mesh, chalk, concrete and cement.

Important tips:

- Rats feel vulnerable in open spaces so eliminate any possible hiding places.
- Keep any vegetation around the building short and tidy. Rats like to use ivy and creepers to access the roof or exposed roof beams where they may be able to gain entry to the home.
- They are very good climbers and can run up a brick, rough or textured finish wall. Also trim tree branches that overhang the roof as rodents will readily use a tree to gain access to your roof.
- Repair broken slates, roof tiles holes, ventilation grates and search for areas where timber may be rotten or insecure. Pay particular attention to areas where mortar is broken as these can create entry points. Seal any holes around pipes and cables going into the house.
- Make sure windows and doors fit tightly and are not damaged.
- Seal gaps beneath the garage door.
- Look for holes in the earth around the base of the building as rats frequently gain access to the foundations and then into the cavity walls.
- Try smearing grease on top of walls or cross beams/poles being used as runways by the rodents. This makes it slippery and uncomfortable for them to use.

Advantages

- If there is no access to food, water, shelter or nesting sites, rodents will go elsewhere and will not be able to reproduce or maintain significant populations;
- Non-lethal;
- Non-toxic;
- No danger to secondary animals.

Disadvantages

- None, however requires much effort by humans but worth it in the long run. Only works very well in areas that can be sealed / blocked off or kept closed. Won't for example work in big open factories where it's not possible to close every hole.

This method is recommended.

1.1.2. HYGIENE

Good hygiene practices (such as removing all rubbish from around the house, sheds, garage etc.) eliminate food, water and shelter which might attract any rodents. Ensure no food is stored or left to which rodents can get access, inside, outside or in sheds and out-houses.

Advantages

- Good hygiene and housekeeping removes essential resources (water, food and shelter) needed by rodents and limits the numbers of animals that can live in an area.
- Assists in minimizing health risks;
- Non-lethal;
- Non-toxic;
- No danger to secondary animals.

Disadvantages

- Good hygiene is very important for controlling rodent populations, but hygiene measures may not prevent infestations where exclusion methods are not adequately in place and maintained.

This method is recommended.

1.1.3. CONTINUAL REMOVAL

Continually removing the rodents capable of reproducing using humane live capture traps. Rodents should not be removed during times when rodents have young as the young will be left behind and could suffer if not weaned to fend for themselves.

Advantages

- Non-lethal option;
- Non-toxic;
- No danger to secondary animals.

Disadvantages

- Rodents mature quickly and produce large numbers of young. The numbers of rodents present may not change much or may continually increase unless most of the breeding adults are removed;
- Rodents being removed would need to be relocated appropriately or failing that - humanely euthanized by a professional;
- Traps must be checked at least once daily.

This method is recommended provided it is done humanely and no animal is left to suffer.

1.1.4. CEMENT CURTAIN

This method is used to prevent rodents from living under cement floors. The rodents must be vacated prior to this method being used by means of digging the area open, pet presence and / or smells / scent methods being used.

Once the rodents have been vacated then the "cement curtain" can be created which will exclude them from gaining access again through the floor.

This is a wall of cement going from the edge of the existing floor a minimum of two feet underground. A buried, horizontal portion of curtain-wire barrier extending out away from the wall will assure rodents cannot dig downward.

Advantages

- Using this method prevents having to throw cement floors over whole areas of soil;
- Non-lethal;
- Non-toxic;
- No danger to secondary animals.

Disadvantages

- Operator must make sure all the rodents and any possible young are out prior to implementation of this method;
- High cost and effort by owner.

This method is recommended.

1.1.5. SMELLS / SCENTS

Deterrents in the form of natural scents and smells rodents dislike. Such as:

- Placing closed glass containers with air holes and moth balls, garlic cloves or toilet cakes / blocks inside in affected areas. Rodents hate these smells and will try to remove its source from the area.
- Neem seed oil cake, ammonia, diluted peppermint oil or cinnamon oil can be sprayed near the rodent entry holes;
- A potent concoction of salad oil, horseradish, garlic and plenty of cayenne pepper can also be made by letting the oil sit for several days before placing the concoction in the affected areas;
- Use a spray bottle to coat surfaces;
- Placing strong curry powder, pepper or ammonia in the affected areas also works well.

Advantages

- Non-lethal;
- Non-toxic (Except for commercial moth balls and toilet cakes / blocks – this is why they are placed in closed glass containers to prevent contact with any animal);
- No danger to secondary animals.

Disadvantages

- Operator must make sure any other animals nearby are not also irritated by these strong smells;
- Real moth balls are toxic, hence we advise they should be in a glass container that can be removed again and prevent actual contact with any animal.

This method is recommended.

1.1.6. LIVE-CAPTURE TRAPS

Live-capture traps catch rodents but do not kill them. These traps can come in many forms such as cages or bucket traps and can be used for singular or multiple rodent captures depending on the specific trap. Please see the NSPCA website for a guideline of how to build and use a humane bucket trap.

Advantages

- If done correctly, animals can be caught without harm and followed by release in an area in which it will not be seen as a pest or humane euthanasia by a professional or authorised person;
- Non-pest species that are caught can be released unharmed;
- Non-toxic.

Disadvantages

- Traps must be checked at least once daily;
- Some animals might get injured from trying to escape;
- Some people do not like the idea of having to release a rodent again and most people do not know how to dispose of a rodent humanely once caught alive;
- Once an infestation has been controlled, traps should not be re-set on the off chance of subsequent infestation.

This method is recommended if undertaken correctly and without harming the animals, but only for humane euthanasia by a professional / authorised person or relocation to an appropriate location.

Inhumane and unacceptable traps that should not be used under any circumstances:

- Victor Tin Cat Mouse Trap;
- Ketch All/Catch All Mouse Trap;
- Glue trap.

1.1.7. PETS

Having the odours/scents and physical presence of pets like cats and dogs can be an effective deterrent for rodents. For larger areas like factories, having a controlled and monitored (by an animal welfare organisation) feral cat colony could help.

Advantages

- Does not require much human effort;
- Potentially Non-lethal;
- Non-toxic;
- No danger to secondary animals.

Disadvantages

- There is the off chance that a rodent might be caught by one of these pets. Try by all means to prevent this (bell can be placed on the animals collar to alert rodents);
- Maintenance of pets;
- Responsible care over weekends of pets;
- Costs associated with pets.

This method is acceptable if undertaken correctly.

1.1.8. PREDATOR DECOYS

Placing life-like decoys of predators such as owls, eagles, snakes, spiders, dogs and cats around the yard and home appear as a threat to the rodents.

Advantages

- Non-lethal;
- Non-toxic;
- No danger to secondary animals.

Disadvantages

- Needs to be moved around daily to maintain the idea that it is actually alive. If not, the rodents might get used to it.

This method is recommended.

1.1.9. ULTRASONIC SOUND DETERRENTS

Ultra Sonic Sound emitters that humans cannot hear. Sounds emitted are disliked by rodents and they will move away.

Advantages

- Non-lethal;
- Non-toxic.

Disadvantages

- Operator needs to ensure that no other animals in the house (birds in cages, hamsters, dogs, etc.) or yard is affected by this device. Distance of sound to be looked-up on device.
- Cost of purchasing unit (once off amount).

This method is recommended, but only if no other animals are affected by the sounds.

1.1.10. AUDIBLE SOUND DETERRENTS

Sound emitters make the sounds of predators such as cats and dogs or the sound of rodents in distress. These sounds make the rodents move away. Even the sound of a radio with constant human talking can work.

Advantages

- Non-lethal;
- Non-toxic;
- No danger to secondary animals.

Disadvantages

- Operator needs to ensure that no other animals in the house (birds in cages, hamsters, dogs, etc.) or yard is affected by this device.
- Purchase costs;
- Rodents can become desensitised and less responsive.

This method is recommended, but only if no other animals are affected by the sounds.

1.1.11. LIGHTS

Motion activated lights, permanent lights and strobe lights in rodent affected areas.

Advantages

- The light causes an irritable disturbance and also exposes the rodents to the possibility of predation. They will seek shelter and protection in a new area;
- Non-lethal;
- Non-toxic;
- No danger to secondary animals.

Disadvantages

- None, besides costs involved with the purchasing and installation of the lights.

This method is recommended.