
Alert! Wildlife Poisonings

by: Barbara Sciacca

THERE ARE MORE HUMANE METHODS TO ELIMINATE RODENTS

Southwest Wildlife Rehabilitation and Educational Foundation has recently¹ received a number of coyotes suffering from Warfarin poisoning. One of the latest was found on Spur Cross Road in Cave Creek.

In humans, Warfarin is used as a powerful anticoagulant for persons at risk for forming blood clots, as in post-heart attacks or strokes. That drug is a compound known as Coumadin. With animals, however, potent forms of Warfarin are used in rodent poisons, like D/Con, in pellets or cakes. Enticing inert fillers are incorporated to draw animals to eat this poison. Large amounts are used, causing animals to bleed to death over an extended period. It causes a great deal of pain.

The poison is readily available at grocery, drug and hardware stores. When people set these cakes or pellets out, they think this poisons only the target animals. But damage to wildlife and pets occurs, in addition to potentially threatening children. Remember this is tasty stuff. So, the coyote (or your dog or cat) eats the poisoned mouse or packet. When it dies, vultures and other scavengers eat it, and they die.

The effects are far-reaching going up the chain, each one poisoning the next link. Organs bleed and the scent draws other animals. The scavengers in turn eat those. The poison destroys the clotting factor and this effect can last up to 20 days, post-exposure.

Rodenticides are sold under a large number of trade names. A few of the common chemical names of anticoagulant Rodenticides are: Chlorophacinone Bromadiolone, Warfarin Diphacinone, Brodifacoum, Coumatetraly, Pindone, and Valone.

The humane alternative to poisons is the use of multi-catch rodent traps. These can be purchased at most feed stores; they are inexpensive and easy to use. After trap-

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ping, the rodents may be relocated. Another alternative is to hire a company licensed to humanely live trap and relocate. If you have trouble finding help with live traps or companies licensed to relocate trapped rodents, please give Southwest Wildlife a call at 480-471-9109.

Southwest Wildlife has received multiple species with this poisoning method – javelina, coyotes, foxes, ringtails, bobcats, raccoons, hawks and owls. They mostly have to be euthanized. The effects can only be reversed if caught very early, and of course, none of these animals would let you near unless they were already quite sick.

Even if discovered early, it would take three weeks of Vitamin K injections at six separate spots on the body each day to possibly arrest it. When one of the coyotes was brought in to a veterinarian, they were working on a cocker spaniel that had ingested the poison. Adding insult to injury, Warfarin does not break down in the environment. Do we remember the devastation of DDT?

These nasty incidents are increasing in number, and we need to address the problem now. Check your area and discuss it with your neighbors and homeowners associations. Alert everyone around and inform people of the danger to children and pets; also, remind them of the horrendous potential liability connected with accidental poisoning. There are many places that carry humane traps or companies that you can call to trap and release away from populated areas. For more information just give us a call.

As rodents have built up tolerance for rodenticides, man has made them increasingly more deadly, further endangering our environment. Predators such as coyotes, bobcats, ringtails, raccoons, owls, hawks, etc., control the rodent population and keep the environment in healthy balance. Nature can flourish without man but man cannot survive without nature.

[Southwest Wildlife Rehabilitation & Educational Foundation Inc.](#)

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