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South Georgia Island Habitat Restoration Project

Sandwiched between the usual increase in orders for rodent control products in autumn, Bell filled a request in October for a unique bait that is travelling to a location in the Southern Hemisphere so remote most of us would be hard pressed to find it on a map.

South Georgia Island, located in the Antarctic some 1,750 km east of the southern tip of South America, will soon be the site of the largest island rat eradication project in the world to date.

Undertaken by the South Georgia Heritage Trust (SGHT), a Scottish registered

charity, the SGHT Habitat Restoration Project aims to rid the 150 km-long Antarctic island of invasive Norway rats.

For years, scientists feared that rat eradication on an island as large as South Georgia was unrealistic – the island was too large, its location too remote, the risks too high. An eradication campaign, typically undertaken in winter when birds are no longer nesting and the rats' food supply is low, was out of the question in Antarctica.

Glaciers No Longer Barrier to Rats

Like many islands around the world that have experienced loss of biodiversity due to introduced alien species, South Georgia Island has long been plagued by rats whose predecessors disembarked from the ships of early explorers, whalers and seal hunters. Preying on the eggs and chicks of nesting seabirds, the rats thrived.

Until recently rats were confined to isolated regions on the island, creating subpopulations separated by either water or glaciers.

But now, with climate change, scientists have found that the glaciers are rapidly retreating and are no longer effective barriers to the spread of rats. Areas once protected from rats are now overrun, leading to further decline in bird populations. The wildlife of South Georgia Island is at a crossroads.



Thousands of tourists visit South Georgia Island each year to view its spectacular wildlife.

With recent successes of several island rat eradication projects using aerial bait application, including the sub-Antarctic Campbell Island in 2001 and most recently Rat Island off the coast of Alaska, the South Georgia Heritage Trust took the bold step of initiating a multi-year project using aerial bait application, beginning in February 2011.

This project holds the promise of relief from rats on part or all of South Georgia Island and restoring it as one of the most important and spectacular seabird islands in the world.

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<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Bell-Laboratories-Inc/58604531155>

Two Centuries of Negative Human Impact

As rich in history as it is in wildlife, South Georgia Island was discovered south of the Antarctic circumpolar front by early mariners, but it wasn't until 1775 that the first man, British Captain James Cook, set foot on its shores.

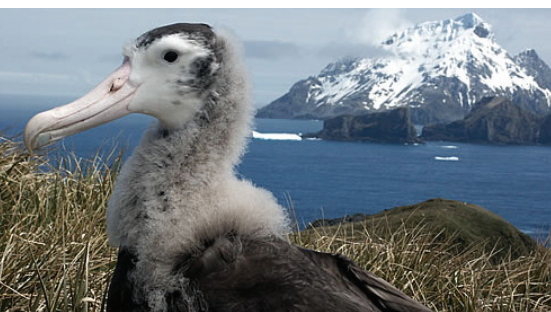
With beaches and waters rich in wildlife, the strikingly rugged and beautiful island for the next two centuries drew hoards of whalers and seal hunters who overharvested whales and other marine animals before the practice was halted with international regulations.

And, it was across the glaciers of South Georgia Island from west to east that the Antarctic explorer, Sir Ernest Shackleton, in 1916 trekked in his heroic journey to rescue his crew stranded 800 ocean-miles away on Elephant Island.

SGHT Habitat Restoration Project

Fast forwarding to 2011, SGHT Habitat Restoration Project scientists will rectify two centuries of negative human impact. Through a rat eradication program, scientists hope to save the native South Georgia pipit from extinction and increase the number of breeding seabirds by millions.

The SGHT Habitat Restoration Project will be directed by Professor Tony Martin, a zoologist and professor of Animal Conservation at the University of Dundee in Scotland. Martin, who is experienced in organizing large logistical operations in



remote areas, has lived and worked on South Georgia Island.

Project operational plans call for aerial baiting on the island in two phases.

Phase I, scheduled for late February - March 2011, is a critical testing period for the project with aerial baiting in a defined locale. Helicopter pilots will broadcast some 33.5 tonnes of a special pelleted brodifacoum bait, developed by Bell, on three adjacent areas on

the north coast that surround the only inhabited part of the main island – Thatcher and Greene Peninsulas and a headland west of Mercer Bay.

Complete eradication of rats in the Phase I area alone would add a spectacular 50 percent to prime habitat area deemed rat-free.

Phase II calls for baiting the rest of the island between 2013-2015.

In the intervening years, scientists will monitor, evaluate and assess the impact on both rats and non-target species, as well as gather vital feedback on the logistics and operational procedures needed for Phase II.

Complete eradication of rats in the Phase I area alone would add a spectacular 50 percent to prime habitat area deemed rat-free.

First Shipment of Bait Set Sail

In preparation for Phase I, Bell manufactured and shipped 2,558 bags of bait, totaling nearly 57,600 kg. Seven 20-foot containers, each containing 10 pallets, left Bell headquarters between October 19-21, 2010, headed for Southampton, England. There the bait will be loaded onto a British military ship for the long trek south to Stanley, the capital of the Falkland Islands where it will be transported with other equipment and supplies, including a helicopter, to South Georgia Island.

The logistics of an operation of this magnitude are daunting and a critical part of the operation is the bait.

"It has to arrive in pristine condition, free from any contaminants or mold caused from condensation build-up as the ship crosses the tropics," noted Bell's compliance manager, Craig Riekema, who is the liaison between Bell and the project staff.

The time and distance the bait spends in transit called for special shipping procedures. Shipping containers were steam cleaned and thoroughly dried before being filled. The pel-



Bait pellets, 1/2-inch in diameter and 3/4 to one-inch long, were specially manufactured for South Georgia Island.

lets were packed in multi-layer paper bags and then stacked on pallets which were double bagged and shrink wrapped. One-pound desiccant bags were included on pallets.

Bell has manufactured bait for other island rat eradication projects in recent years including two where bait was aerially broadcast - the first on Anacapa Island, off the coast of California, and a more recent project on Rat Island (see story below).

Well Wishes on Arduous Undertaking

As the SGHT Habitat Restoration Project unfolds in the months ahead, we will inform our readers of its progress. Scientists hope to eliminate the independent subpopulations of rats now separated by glaciers in the initial baiting area and, from that experience, to evaluate and subsequently improve techniques to get rid of rats on the whole of the main island.

We share their hopes and wish them well on this arduous undertaking. ■



Rat Island is officially rat-free!

Biologists working to eradicate rats on this remote island in the Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge reported in late summer that Rat Island is now free of invasive rats that had decimated native bird populations by preying

Get Snapshot Facts on EPA Risk Mitigation Decision

Confused or unsure what the EPA Risk Mitigation Decision is all about?

Check out Bell's new EPA Mitigation Facts Website www.riskmitigationinfo.com for useful information on how mitigation will affect you and your customers.

The Risk Mitigation Decision came about when the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) undertook a scientific review of 10 active ingredients found in rodenticides in an effort to decrease children's exposure to rodenticides and to reduce the risk of primary and secondary poisoning of non-target wildlife.

"The EPA's focus was on human and environmental risks as opposed to public health and other benefits of rodenticide use," noted Bell Laboratories CEO, Steve Levy, who participated in discussions leading up to the decision.

On May 28, 2008, the EPA published its Risk Mitigation Decision which concluded that certain active ingredients and certain bait forms present a greater opportunity for misuse and accidental exposure than others.

Consequently the agency put restrictions primarily on manufacturers in terms of the types and package sizes of rodenticides that can be sold to pest control professionals, agricultural users and retail consumers.

Since the decision, Bell has been working with the EPA to clarify regulatory details, update product registrations and develop

on their chicks and eggs.

Getting rid of rats on the 26-sq. kilometer island, located in the Aleutian chain some 2,080 km west of Anchorage, Alaska, was the most ambitious island habitat restoration project ever undertaken in the Northern Hemisphere and the first in Alaska.

The Aleutian Seabird Restoration Project was a collaborative effort among The Nature Conservancy, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the California-based Island Conservation and Ecology Group.

After four years of planning, in September 2008, a specially equipped helicopter aerially broadcast 25 tonnes of brodifacoum bait pel-



riskmitigationinfo.com

Get Snapshot Facts on the EPA Risk Mitigation Decision

transition schedules to ensure that our products are in full compliance by the deadline on June 4, 2011.

"By then, manufacturers will no longer be allowed to ship non-compliant products," Levy pointed out. "However, distributors can sell pre-mitigation products until they're gone and the same for pest control operators, using up their pre-mitigation products."

For more information, go to Bell's mitigation website at www.riskmitigationinfo.com or the EPA site at www.epa.gov. ■

lets, manufactured by Bell, on the island, with a second pass of bait a week later.

For the next two years, biologists monitored the island for signs of rats. In August 2010, they declared the island rat-free with confirmed sightings of seabird nesting and substantially increased numbers of seabirds, including the giant song sparrow, rarely seen on the island prior to the eradication project.

Gratified by the success of this project, restoration partners are further marking the occasion by taking steps to bestow a more appropriate Aleut name to this seabird sanctuary. ■

Elderbrook named Territory Manager for Canada



Matt Elderbrook joined Bell's technical sales team in October as Territory Manager for Canada where he represents Bell products to Canada's professional pest control industry, as well as its agricultural market through Bell's sister company, Motomco.

Elderbrook works directly with Bell distributors on product sales and promotional support, including developing new markets. He sets up education/training programs for distributors' sales staff and pest management professionals (PMPs), and provides in-field technical support on difficult-to-control rodent infestations.

Similarly, Elderbrook advises agricultural customers on the use and marketing of Motomco products.

He also represents Bell and Motomco at national and provincial industry-related shows and distributor sales meetings.

Elderbrook brings extensive knowledge of Bell/Motomco products and rodent control to the Canadian market. He worked for four years in Bell's marketing department, providing product sales and marketing support for Bell's domestic and international product lines. He was also lead contact for Bell's advertising program with industry publications.

Elderbrook holds a B.S. degree in business marketing from the University of Wisconsin-LaCrosse.

Elderbrook is based at Bell headquarters in Madison, Wis. ■



Bell emphasizes environmental stewardship at Pest World 2010

Pest Management Professionals and industry leaders gathered this autumn in Honolulu, Hawaii, for Pest World 2010. It was the 77th meeting of the largest gathering of PMPs, distributors and suppliers from across the globe.

At the Grand Opening of the exhibit hall at the beautiful Hawaii Convention Center, Bell Laboratories welcomed attendees to their exhibit featuring the latest in rodent control products and Bell's ongoing environmental stewardship programs in the Galapagos Islands and South Georgia Island, nearly 1,750 km off the southeastern tip of South America (see cover story).

"In keeping with our dedication to innovation and leadership, we felt it was timely to stress our environmental work to the many leaders in the industry at this large gathering," said Rupert Broome,

Bell's Business Manager for Europe, the Middle East, Africa and Asia.

At the conclusion of the first day in the exhibit hall, Bell sponsored a wine and cheese reception at the Hilton Hawaiian Village. New members and first-timers were honored and National Pest Management Association officials mingled with attendees at the outdoor reception.

Educational sessions followed the opening ceremonies and opportunities for networking were plentiful. The hospitality shown by the people of Honolulu made for a memorable week at this annual "Gathering Place" for the pest management industry. ■



From rodent control products to dining fare, attendees from around the world sampled the best at Pest World 2010.



Use pesticides safely. Always read the label. Follow the BPCA Code of Practice for glue boards in the UK.

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