

The Bell Report

International Edition



Vol. 9 • No. 3 July August 2006

FROM THE FIELD

Rat eradication program on Canna Island holds promise of restoring bird colonies

In the January/February 2006 issue of The Bell Report we reported on the work of a New Zealand species management team hired to rid Scotland's Canna Island of rats. In this issue, we revisit the island to see how the program fared and what the future looks like for its seabird colonies.



Adult shag

In early April, six months after arriving on Canna Island off Scotland's western coast, the island/species management team from New Zealand prepared to leave, confident their hard work and diligence in eradicating the island of rats would pay off in a regenera-

tion of the island's internationally important seabird colonies.

With the completion of the day-to-day cycle of baiting-checking-rebaiting some 4,200 bait stations, Elizabeth Bell who headed the team from Wildlife Management International, Ltd. (WMIL), gave the eradication program an enthusiastic thumbs-up.

Monitoring during the previous couple months had shown no signs of rats, though Bell cautioned they could not be absolutely sure yet that all the rats were gone.

It would take monthly monitoring during the summer months in randomly selected areas, followed by a return visit of the WMIL team in fall '06, and then another complete

year of monitoring before the island could be declared "rat-free," but so far the prognosis looks good.

Encouraging Initial Findings

That's good news for the National Trust for Scotland (NTS), owners of the Herbridean island, that commissioned the Canna Seabird Recovery Project after burgeoning rat populations threatened seabird colonies.

Abbie Patterson, National Species Recovery Officer for the NTS, who travelled to the island this summer to carry out some post-rat monitoring, found that "seabird numbers are going up in some species but not others as yet."

White tailed eagles have been successful, along with Golden eagles, he reported.

"Both these species nest early and it was a difficult task to mitigate against teams of field workers having to work within the birds' territories so we are pleased with this outcome," he noted.

Similarly he found that a few Manx shearwater have returned and "other bird species breeding in unfavourable habitat in the past have moved back to more favorable habitat."

While it's premature to conclude definitively that Canna is rat free, with no signs of rats to date from the monitoring, Patterson saw the results as "very encouraging."

Continued on page 2

FROM THE FIELD

Canna Seabird Recovery Project continued from front page



“FUTURE PROJECTS GLOBALLY CAN NOW FOLLOW THIS LEAD IN HOW YOU CAN SUCCESSFULLY GET RID OF RATS WITHOUT KILLING OFF OTHER SPECIES, THEREFORE RETAINING BIODIVERSITY.”

Canna Mice Gradually Re-Introduced

Rare Canna mice, removed from the island last fall to protect them from the poison, are being returned in small numbers.

“This is called a soft release so that some can breed on the island but, if we were to loose this sample to any remaining rats, then we have some remaining in quarantine that can be released next year,” Patterson noted. “This is precautionary and we would not expect there to be any significant rats left, if any at all.”

Intense Baiting with DITRAC Blox

Ridding the island of rats was a tremendous undertaking with the WMIL team and volunteers setting up a grid of more than 4,200 bait stations across the island. Each station was labeled and numbered according to its position on the grid.

As team members baited and checked stations, they recorded the amount of bait removed or nibbled by rats. At base camp, they transferred the information into a database which generated maps showing the activity level at each station - where rats were being eradicated, as well as “hot spots” of continued rat activity.

Baiting continued, regardless of activity levels, until February. By the final two rounds, the team saw no bait take and few other signs of activity. By the tenth bait check, bait take had stopped.

“I was very impressed with the DITRAC diphacinone bait. Bait acceptance was excellent and it lasted well in the environment,” Bell said.

“Bait acceptance was pretty uniform over the island. Bait take was higher on the cliffs and slopes (coastal areas) where rat populations were concentrated,” she added.

Follow-up Monitoring for Two Years

Intensive monitoring began in late January with another grid of more than 4,300 monitoring stations positioned between existing bait stations. The monitoring bait consisted of chocolate flavored wax blocks, handmade from melted candles and cocoa, held together by wire on a chew stick.

The idea was to attract rats that were wary of entering a bait station. By monitoring, the team identified remaining pockets of rat activity and then followed up with intensive trapping or baiting.

By the time the team left in April, signs of rat activity had ceased. Bait stations were cleaned and stored away, along with the anchoring wires and unused bait. The only

stations still in use were placed in the buildings and on the farm. A line of bait/monitoring stations was left around the coast of neighboring Sanday Island.

Summer Monitoring Before Team Returns

Over this summer, the island’s 13 residents, who were active in the eradication program, checked the monitoring grid monthly, prepared to poison or trap any rats. So far, no rats have been reported.

In October, the WMIL team will return for three months of intensive monitoring.

“If monitoring over the next year discovers that even one rat is present, we will take action,” Bell promised. But, overall she felt the project ran very smoothly.

“We had a very good team of personnel and vol-

unteers. The management team at NTS and other agencies were very supportive,” said Bell.

“It was very similar to other eradications I have been involved with but with its own issues and difficulties,” Bell added. The island’s steep 600-foot cliffs posed a challenge as did the grazing sheep and cattle that had to be kept away from the bait stations.

Bell representative, Will Golland, who worked with the NTS in selecting the bait, added, “We were delighted to have played such an important and successful role in safeguarding a key seabird sanctuary.”

Global Implications for Future Projects

On a larger scale, this project holds promise for the feasibility of eradicating rats while protecting an island’s unique flora and fauna. (See sidebar on return of rare Canna mice to the island.)

As Patterson noted, “Future projects globally can now follow this lead in how you can successfully get rid of rats without killing off other species therefore retaining biodiversity, as the Trust has demonstrated.” ■



The team baited with Bell’s DITRAC Blox that killed an estimated 5,000 rats.

Monitoring with **Trapper 24/7** keeps mice at bay in sensitive fisheries and dairies

Sensitive accounts, such as food plants, dairies and pharmaceutical firms, pose unique challenges for pest control.

With bait use either prohibited or severely limited, these facilities depend on a good monitoring program to maintain “zero tolerance” to pests.

To be successful, pest management professionals (PMPs) must combine their professional skills of observation, intuition and stealth with today’s array of non-poisonous control products.

Monitoring as Important as Inspection

“There’s no substitute for a good inspection. And, in commercial accounts especially, monitoring is as important as the inspection,” said Chris Del Rossi, a 15-year veteran in commercial pest control for J. P. Chemical.

Servicing accounts for New England’s fishery and dairy industries in the United States, Del Rossi said he’s seen a shift toward more monitoring these days.

“Earlier on, it was routine application but now we’ve had a huge shift to IPM with companies partnering with PMPs,” he noted.

For monitoring products, Del Rossi relies exclusively on Bell products to alert his technicians when rodents are lurking.

Outdoors around a facility, he uses tamper-resistant PROTECTA Landscape Bait Stations with CONTRAC Blox. Indoors where conditions are clean, but wet from all the washing and sanitation, he uses TRAPPER 24/7 Multiple Catch Traps.

No Rust Marks with TRAPPER 24/7

“With water, metal traps leave rust stains. The biggest comment we get from customers is that the floors aren’t getting rust stained with the 24/7,” he said. In dry areas his technicians will include a disposable TRAPPER Glue Board in the trap.

His system works.

“In plants that have an active pest control program in place, we may catch one or two mice a year,” Del Rossi noted. “You don’t see mice coming in from the outside.”



If mouse activity suddenly peaks, it’s usually traced back to a vendor, he added.

Guidelines & Monitoring Data

Del Rossi advises that the key to rodent control in sensitive accounts is understanding the guidelines, “what is expected before you even start a service agreement.

“Commercial food establishments frequently have multiple mandates and it’s not uncommon in these places to have three, four or five different audits a year,” he said. “There are specific requirement on how close for placement and how many to place. It’s best to know what you’re getting into.”

Maintaining detailed logs is important, too. “We use a bar coding system that tells us what’s been caught and how many. It’s thorough but people appreciate that,” he stressed.

As more companies partner with their PMP, the end result, Del Rossi feels, is making these facilities less conducive to pests. ■



TRAPPER 24/7 is ideal to use in commercial facilities along walls, on both sides of interior doorways, and behind objects where mice travel.

PUBLICATIONS

New RPM brochure available in UK and Australia

Bell's Rodent Pest Management (RPM) brochure is now available to PMPs in the United Kingdom and Australia.

Newly revised, the attractive four-color publication is full of practical tips on rodent control based on both scientific research and field experience.

The 16-page booklet covers six topics:

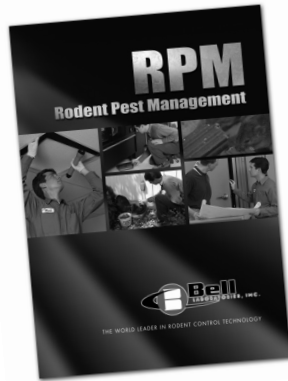
- rodent biology
- inspections
- harborage reduction & rodent proofing
- proper bait selection
- baiting strategies
- non-toxic baiting methods

Each topic is easily referenced by stair-step pages with color-coded section titles for quick referral in the field.

Illustrated with colorful photos and pull-out key points, the brochure offers users a wealth of information on control techniques – how to knockdown and clean out infestations in new accounts, reducing/eliminating infestations in existing accounts, preventing future infestations and choosing the right bait form.

In addition to highlighting the key principles to successful baiting, the booklet also discusses using mechanical traps and glue products to their full advantage.

To obtain copies of the RPM brochure, contact your local Bell technical sales representative. ■



Whether you're a seasoned professional or new to the industry, Bell's new RPM brochure offers sound rodent control advice for everyone.

PERSONNEL NEWS

Elderbrook focuses on Bell's international markets

Matthew Elderbrook joined Bell's marketing department as a marketing coordinator with a focus on the company's international business.

Elderbrook assists Bell's International Product Manager, Sarah Danes, in developing product promotional sheets and brochures in numerous languages.

Similarly, he works on Bell's international advertising program, as well as coordinating product packaging for Bell products overseas.

A December 2005 graduate of the University of Wisconsin, Elderbrook holds a bachelor of science degree in marketing. While in college, he gained experience in researching markets, conducting market analysis, and developing promotional materials for events.

Elderbrook works out of Bell's corporate office in the U.S. ■



Matthew Elderbrook

Address Service Requested

3699 KINSMAN BLVD. • MADISON, WI 53704



PRSRRT STD
US Postage
PAID
Madison, WI
Permit 1355