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TALPIRID Mole Bait Exceptional Mole Control and service, too

Bell Laboratories' TALPIRID Mole Bait, the first and only mole bait on the market scientifically tested and proven to work on moles, has opened doors for many pest control companies seeking to expand their line of services.

In spring particularly, when snow cover melts and mole damage appears, homeowners and businesses turn to their pest control company for ways to treat unsightly mole runs. TALPIRID Mole Bait can bring relief to customers and additional revenue to pest control companies.

Carl Embree, district manager of Rose Pest Solutions in Toledo, Ohio, got on the bandwagon early, providing mole service to customers in northeastern Ohio as soon as TALPIRID reached the market in 2004.

"Bell is a reputable company with products we can count on," Embree said, confident TALPIRID would help his residential

customers whose property butted up against woods where moles lived. At the time, he took advantage of printed materials and door hangers from Bell to market his new mole services, and he attended home and garden shows where he drew potential customers with a mole service display.

As its mole business grew, Embree also turned to his Bell technical representative, Rich Williams, to train his service techni-

cians and account managers.

Spearheaded by the Toledo district's supervisor in training, Steve Currier, Williams' training encompassed classroom sessions on everything from mole biology and behavior to identifying active runways and proper application of the mole bait. It also included hands-on application on a customer's yard.

"We were fortunate to have Rich's professionalism and sense of humor which made the

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TALPIRID Mole Bait mimics a mole's natural food source, earthworms and grubs.

Anacapa Island

REVISITED

Rat-free for more than a decade after the first aerial bait broadcast of an island in North America

Photo Credit: Island Conservation

Technicians looking to get away from the daily grind might want to consider a trip to Anacapa Island off the coast of California. Beside sunny skies, ocean views and plenty of hiking trails, this rugged island in Channel Island National Park is rat free.

Until a decade ago, however, Anacapa was overridden with invasive black rats that preyed on seabirds, some to near extinction.

No one knows exactly when *Rattus rattus* arrived on Anacapa. They could have come aboard a paddle-wheeled steamer that shipwrecked off the island in 1854. Park Service records note rats as far back as 1907.

For more than a century, these prolific and unbridled pests annihilated island vegetation and wildlife, seriously threatening the Xantus' Murrelet and the Ashy Storm-Petrel which nested on the island.

But all that changed in the late 1990s when park staff and conservationists decided to eradicate the black rat once and for all.

"Anacapa represented a watershed moment for conservation," said Gregg Howald of Santa Cruz-based Island Conservation who explored ways with park staff to remove rats from this rugged, steep island terrain.

"It created a lot of dialogue on the value of doing this work, dialogue on what our value systems are as a society and how we treat the

loss of biodiversity," he recalled.

Back then, island rat eradication projects in North America involved hand baiting and trapping. But Anacapa's steep cliffs, where birds were being driven from their nests by invading rats, made bait placement impossible. Yet, it was critical to eradicate every single rat.

“Anacapa represented a watershed moment for conservation.”

— Gregg Howald
Island Conservation

Also, any eradication attempt needed to protect the island's only endemic mammal, the Anacapa deer mouse, also prey to rats.

Naysayers aside, the project forged ahead employing a GPS-guided helicopter to aerially broadcast customized bait pellets on the island, a technique pioneered in New Zealand but a first in North America.

"With this technology, we could highlight the opportunity that something could be done with a permanent solution to the problem," Howald pointed out.

Searching for a brodifacoum bait that could withstand the drop, Howald eventually made his way to Bell Laboratories where he found a

willing partner in Bell's Director of Research and Development, Peter Martin.

"There was nothing at the time," Howald pointed out. "Bell Labs and Pete were the only ones who wanted to engage and had the capacity to do it. Most of the other industry said, 'Here are our products.' Bell was willing to listen and customize product to what we needed."

Working together, Bell created a conservation bait that met Anacapa's specific requirements: reduced toxicity, a unique 3/8 inch pellet that small birds wouldn't eat, a green bait which research showed birds typically do not pick up. The pellets had to be hard enough to withstand aerial drop, yet break down quickly in the arid coastal conditions.

"We were in structural pest control. No one at that time was talking about conservation bait", said Martin who found the project interesting. "Island Conservation had a unique methodology for using bait and it merited investigation."

But, it was Island Conservation's plan to protect the endemic Anacapa deer mice that sold Martin.

"When I read they planned to capture significant populations of mice and repopulate them afterwards, I knew they were serious about protecting biodiversity," Martin recalled.

Two years in the planning, the customized bait pellets were dropped on the smaller East Anacapa Island in December 2001 and on Middle and West Anacapa in fall 2002.

Almost immediately, scientists noted dramatic increases in the number of nesting birds and successful hatching of eggs.

Brighter Future for Anacapa Wildlife

Now, after a decade free of rats, the island's bird populations and native vegetation have rebounded. The rare Scripps's Murrelets have returned to their nests in the island's rocky crevices.

A brighter future awaits the Ashy Storm-Petrel and the small Cassin's Auklet which has started to breed on one of islets. The Anacapa deer mice also are thriving, no longer preyed upon by rats or competing with them for food. And, indigenous plants, once a source of water for rats, are returning to the island's diverse ecosystem.

To mark the 10th anniversary of the island's restoration, park and project staff, accompanied by a group of radio and print media, ferried to the island in early March to take in the sights and sounds of what has now become the model for returning rat-ravished islands back to their natural state.

Success on Anacapa Island has spurred the implementation of rodent eradication projects in all corners of the world from Alaska to Antarctica, the Galápagos Islands to Palmyra Atoll.

"With each new project, Bell uses its expertise to develop unique, effective solutions that protect vulnerable plans and animals from the ravages of invading rodent populations," Martin added. ■



The island's endemic Anacapa Deer Mouse



From the *Field*

Rat Ville Horror cleaned out with CONTRAC BLOX

Some stories bear repeating, like this one from Frances McKim, editor of Pest Magazine in the U.K., which illustrates why technicians choose CONTRAC BLOX.

The story's featured pest control technician, Dave Boniface, said he normally uses traps in residential accounts but this particular house, which he dubbed 'rat ville,' was "way different."

"There were so many rats we would hear them in the roof spaces, walls, and laughably, the piano that was buried under rubbish would play from time to time as rats moved around inside," Boniface said. "Our problem was the amount of food."

Traps proved futile. The only solution was to clear out five tons of rubbish, two tons of magazines, and then bait with the Bell's CONTRAC BLOX.

"I even ground some up as we wanted it consumed ASAP," Boniface recalled. When he returned four days later, "the horror began."

When Dave Boniface of Campbells Pest Control in Eastbourne finally got into a private detached house in the town he could hardly believe his eyes. Inside the rooms were filled to the height of the window sills with rubbish and the house was alive with rats.

"In fact even getting into the house posed a challenge," said Dave. "The front door would only open a matter of inches, so I had to find someone really slim to squeeze through the gap."

Once inside the extent of the problem became evident. Having been moved out for the clearance operation, the resident, an elderly man, had lived in the house alone for the last 11 years following the death of his mother.

During this time he had become a compulsive buyer and hoarder. Every room was stacked high with piles of old magazines and shopping catalogues, but the real highlight, as far as the rats were concerned, were the endless bars of chocolate, crisps and other types of food. Every room in the house was stacked feet deep and to get upstairs you had to negotiate a very small track.

Clearing the house took Dave four days and he estimates he shifted at least five tonnes of rubbish plus a further two tonnes of all the old catalogues and magazines.

But once the rubbish started to subside, the rats became the real problem.

"The rats had eaten holes through the walls and floor boards and there were droppings everywhere. The floors were so wet with rat urine that the moisture started sweating out of



Signs of rats were everywhere beneath the clutter of "Rat Ville." A total of 104 rats were removed.



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TALPIRID Mole Bait *from front page*

training worthwhile,” Embree noted.

In the field, technicians applied the basics they’d learned in the classroom session to what Embree described as “a textbook problem” with major mole damage. Under Williams’ guidance, they treated the customer’s yard, determining which runs were active and then baiting with TALPIRID.

Within a few weeks, Embree noted they had good control. “Even the landscape company commented that things were getting better,” he noted.

Since then, Embree has added Bell’s TALPIRID Mole Trap to his mole control repertoire, but his top choice is still TALPIRID Mole Bait.

“We prefer bait because of ease of applica-



Classic mole runs disfigure lawns.

tion and, we’re a little leery of leaving traps out if people have landscape services. Traps can be eaten by lawnmowers,” he mused.

Although Rose’s mole customer base shifts

from residential to commercial, depending on the economy, two things remain stable.

“TALPIRID Mole Bait is doing the job,” Embree stressed, and so is Williams. “Rich is there for us.”

Rose Pest Solutions, providing pest control services for more than 150 years, serves residential and commercial accounts in Michigan, Ohio, Indiana, and parts of Kentucky, Western Pennsylvania and West Virginia. ■

TALPIRID Mole Bait is the only mole product submitted to the EPA with laboratory efficacy data on moles. After developing the right active ingredient and mode of action, Bell field tested TALPIRID throughout the US before its launch in 2004.



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Rat Ville Horror *from page 3*

them. It was truly incredible,” explained Dave. “I have never seen anything like it.”

Initially Dave attempted to combat the rodent problem by using traps. In one room alone he set 12, but this was futile and he didn’t catch a single rat. So Dave laid bait, Bell’s CONTRAC BLOX containing bromadiolone. That seemed to do the trick. Returning to the site, Dave bagged-up a total of 104 rats. From the kitchen alone he removed 56 including, to his amazement, 16 from a chest of drawers where the rats had previously made a nest.

In the ten years Dave has been involved with house clearances and pest control he admits he had never seen anything like it.

“Once we managed to clear the rubbish we



Dave Boniface is sticking with CONTRAC BLOX.

discovered where the rats had been coming from. It was the drains. There was an inceptor cap missing, but no one would have been able to spot it was missing. I wish we’d had a TV crew with us, it was incredible,” he concluded.

POSTSCRIPT:

Dave Boniface, who has been in pest control for the past ten years, normally deals with bed bugs, foxes, fleas, rodents, insects and the occasional “dirty clean up.”

“The guy I had helping said this was the worst living hell he had ever had to put up with,” Boniface said of the “rat ville” house.

After baiting every room and the loft with CONTRAC BLOX, the rats are gone. The house is now on the market and due for renovation.

Boniface has been using CONTRAC BLOX with bromadiolone for five years and, “is sticking with it.”

“Why change when you get results like this?” he asks. ■