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BC SPCA sounds alarm on dangers of rodenticides for wildlife and pets

July 29, 2020

Every year hundreds of native wild animals are brought to wildlife rehabilitation centres in Canada suffering from the effects of poison. This poison was not meant for them, but was set out in bait boxes at homes, parks, and buildings across communities to attract rodents. The full scale of the problem is unknown since most wild animals will never be found by someone before their death.



Dr. Sara Dubois, chief scientific officer for the BC SPCA, notes that both homeowners and pest control companies use different kinds of rodenticides without even knowing if the poison is effectively reducing rodent issues. She says it is time to rethink the use of rodenticides completely.

“Alternatives to rodenticides are now growing in availability and effectiveness, and ongoing research will hopefully eliminate their use completely in the future.” Not only are many predators to rodents – like owls, hawks, raccoons, bobcats, coyotes and even our pet cats and dogs – being killed by eating poisoned rodents, pesticides can make their way up higher through the food chain to eagles and cougars. “Dying by internal bleeding over a period of days is not a humane death for rodents or their predators – just because these products are legal to buy and sell, it does not mean they are humane,” Dubois emphasizes.

The BC SPCA has been tackling this major animal welfare issue through participation in research partnerships, providing resources on wildlife control **best practices** (<https://spca.bc.ca/ways-to-help/take-action/urban-wild-life/>) for many species, setting evidence-based standards that reduce rodenticide use through its **AnimalKind** (<https://spca.bc.ca/programs-services/certifications-accreditation/animalkind/animalkind-wild-life-rodent-control-accreditation/>) accreditation program for wildlife and pest control companies, and working with municipalities to reduce rodenticide use in communities.

In 2019, the BC SPCA worked with the Vancouver Park Board to **pass a motion** (<https://parkboardmeetings.vancouver.ca/2019/20190311/MOTION-AssessmentofPestControlPolicies-20190311.pdf>) to evaluate its use of rodenticides following owl deaths from poison in several parks as a result of city baiting programs. In 2020 so far, the BC SPCA supported the District of North Vancouver and the District of Saanich to ban anticoagulant rodenticide

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use on all district-owned properties and will provide education to their residents about the harmful impacts of homeowner use. The City of Richmond also reviewed a similar motion this month but have deferred the decision.

“This is a significant first step for municipal governments to take to protect their local wildlife and pets, as well as important environments like streams and greenspaces. Governments can even save money by addressing rodent issues proactively and investing in long-term management solutions, rather than endless poison programs with little ability to measure their effectiveness” says Dubois. “Now is the time for all B.C. municipalities to consider this change to their own operations.

The BC SPCA is asking its supporters to reach out to their local councils help protect local wildlife and wild spaces by reducing rodenticide use in communities.” Visit spca.bc.ca/safe-from-poison (https://spca.bc.ca/ways-to-help/take-action/safe-from-poison/?utm_source=news&utm_medium=link&utm_campaign=advocacy&utm_content=poison2020) to voice your support.

Contact your local government about keeping animals safe from poison



Goal: 5000

Street Address *

▶ manual address entry

Key Point:

- Ban rodenticide use on municipal property

We'll notify your representative

Please enter a complete address to continue.

Dear Mayor and Council,

The wide-spread use of poisons in rodent control is killing our wildlife and harming greenspaces and waterways. Municipalities can play a key role in reducing rodenticide use and educating residents on preventative and alternative control measures.

Taking action to address which pest control measures are used on municipal property can make a significant change and show leadership on environmental, animal welfare and public health issues in local communities. The District of North Vancouver and the District of Saanich recently passed motions to ban rodenticide use on all municipal properties – I am now asking you to do the same for our community.

The BC SPCA is dedicated to supporting humane pest control and has spent years developing research partnerships, setting evidence-based wildlife-friendly standards through its AnimalKind accreditation program for wildlife and pest control companies, and working with municipalities to make local change. Each community has a role in preventing the suffering of

animals and this action taken by Mayor and Council will be supported by the BC SPCA, other environmental and animal organizations, and residents.

Yours truly,
[Your Name]

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Our mission is to protect and enhance the quality of life for domestic, farm and wild animals in BC. BC SPCA is a registered charity, tax # BN 11881 9036 RR0001