

PREDATOR BLITZ - TRAINING 101

Rodents – Rats and mice

AKA – the Norway rat, ship rat, kiore or pacific rat and the house mouse

WHY CONTROL RODENTS?

Rodents carry disease and are public nuisances in our ceilings, compost, homes and backyards. They are also key predators of our native flora and fauna. They hunt birds, eggs, lizards and invertebrates and consume massive amounts of seed which make up the next generation of forest. Rats are prevalent in Kaipātiki.



HOW CAN WE MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

Together, we can make a huge impact on reducing predators across the landscape. One pregnant female rat can result in 15,000 ratty descendants in a single year – so any control is a great contribution – thank you.

You can volunteer to trap as a team in a public space or reserve, but also in a typical urban situation – by installing one or two traps or bait stations on your property.



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HOW TO CONTROL RODENTS EFFECTIVELY

The most effective and efficient way to control predators, is to '**Pulse**' (conduct predator control at intervals) – **FOUR TIMES a year.**

- You can 'pulse' with mechanical traps or bait..
- Pulse in February, April, August and November – these months match the availability of resources and breeding times for both rats and native bird life.
- A baiting pulse lasts 4 weeks in total, a trapping pulse – 6 weeks.
- Pulsing is more resource effective, targeted, easier on volunteers and residents, reduces the risk of 'shy' rats and reduces the risk of secondary poisoning to other animals such as pets. Pulsing avoids bait becoming old and non-effective. Old bait will not kill a rat, whereby it becomes bait shy and you will have to use a mechanical trap instead to kill it (vice versa).

~Boxes, T-rex snap traps and Modified victors are available for purchase at a very low cost through PFK if you live in Kaipātiki. If you are part of a PFK Enhanced Halo, you may qualify for a special purchase price of self-resetting A24's (above right) at \$100 (limited time offer from Predator Free NZ and Kiwibank). Visit our website or email enquiries@pestfreeKaipātiki.org.nz for pricing and more information.

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BAITING

You can pulse with two kinds of poison; CONTRAC (a single feed, dark blue Bromadiolone bait) or DITRAC (a multi-feed, light green Diphacinone bait). We recommend a first pulse with CONTRAC, followed by three DITRAC pulses. An Ambush bait station holds down and secures four bait blocks inside a lockable station - keeping the bait inaccessible to children, pets and other non-target creatures. Never simply leave bait blocks in a roof space or dish somewhere.



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REPLENISHMENT AND BAIT FRESHNESS IS VERY IMPORTANT

- Single feed toxins have a higher chance of a lethal dose, useful during your very first pulse to knockdown the population. After putting bait out on Day 1, CONTRAC is checked and refilled TWO more times (i.e Day 5 and Day 14), before removing all bait at the end of the fourth week (Day 28). (see chart(s) on next page).
- Multi-feed toxins (i.e DITRAC) must have bait present for at least 5 nights for a rat to consume a lethal dose. Therefore you MUST check it more regularly (Day 1, 3, 5, 14 and 28). DITRAC has a far smaller chance for secondary poisoning.
- When checking and refilling bait, any loose, largely eaten or moldy bait should be replaced with a new block.

Bait disposal: Always respect bait, store it in a secure place and promptly pick up spillage. At the end of a pulse (end of the 4th week) – all bait must be removed from stations and disposed of safely. Double wrap in newspaper, a plastic bag and put out with your general rubbish (don't let dogs get to it) – which goes to an actively managed landfill.

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Baiting Diphacinone (DITRAC) programme for Rodents

Month	August				September				October				November				December				January				February				March				April				May			
Week	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Bait Fill D1, 3, 5																																								
Bait Fill D14, (17)																																								
Remove																																								

Baiting Bromadiolone (CONTRAC) programme for Rodents

Month	August				September				October				November				December				January				February				March				April				May			
Week	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Bait Fill D1, D 5																																								
Bait Fill D14																																								
Remove																																								

Note: Any mention of a check on Day 14 is optional.

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HARDWARE

- **Spacing:** Place one trap or station per urban property or every 50m along lines 100m apart if on a larger property or reserve environment.
- **Trap housing – lockable – safe:** It is important to have a housing for your trap or bait, which encourages the rodent onto the kill mechanism for a clean kill, prevents other creatures or people accessing the bait/trap, and prevents rats from being able to carry away and store bait. This is essential – do NOT leave bait in dishes or by itself in a roof cavity.
- **Pre-feed with mechanical traps:** Rats are careful creatures and wary of new food sources and objects. Put out station and lure (peanut butter) first. Once gone, add the unset trap. Repeat. Finally once gone, set the trap. If baiting, set out your empty station for at least one week prior to baiting. Do this at least the very first time traps go out.
- **Location and other structures:** Use chew cards or monitoring tunnels to find where pests are present. Place traps and stations along ridges, stream banks, coastal edges and within backyards – along fence lines and areas where there is security for a rodent (i.e a garden shed) or pile of debris. Sometimes rodents may not enter a trap if other handy food sources are available therefore avoid putting food scraps in the compost (sealed worm farms are better) and make sure rubbish bags are not left around.



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DISPOSAL

At the end of a pulse, all bait must be removed from bait stations. To dispose of dead bodies, either dig a hole in the garden and bury it deeply or double wrap it in newspaper, seal in a plastic bag tying a firm knot and dispose of in your general rubbish collection.

TIPS AND TRICKS

- Always record the amount of bait taken in a pulse. It will help you plan and save resources over time.
- Ensure your station is stable and entrances clear, and placed so water will not pool under the bait.
- Keep your AMBUSH station key on a string around your neck (they are easy to lose!)
- Use inexpensive 'homebrand' Sandwich bags (17x15cm) to surround bait to help slow bait deterioration in winter. Rats will much through these bags to get to bait.
- Always pre-feed if using mechanical traps, and leave stations out empty between pulses so rodents become familiar to them.
- If you know there are rodents around but your current method isn't working, switch to a mechanical trap (vice versa) to catch rats who have had a 'bad experience' or miss-catch/kill in someone else's property.
- A24 Goodnature traps which are designed for rats and stoats are also very good at catching Hedgehogs (another invasive predator).

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HEALTH AND SAFETY

For you and your family:

Use lockable stations. Teach family to respect bait as a poison and to use it with care. Always use gloves when handling stations, traps, dead animals or bait. If making written records in a reserve, have your buddy write while you check traps. Do not consume food or drink when laying bait. Read safety sheets and labels, store bait safely and securely (rodents will eat through plastic to get at bait!). All public spaces where bait is used must have warning signs placed at Entrances.

For the environment:

Store and carry bait securely in lidded, sturdy pails (labelled). Do not allow to enter waterways and always pick up spillage and dispose of safely. Tie bait stations with wire to a tree stem if they are at risk of washing away in heavy rain or flooding.

For pets:

Lockable stations that pin down bait inside are not a risk to pets. If bait is not secured, they can carry it off and hoard it. If a dog dug up such a cache, they would receive 'primary poisoning'. This is 100% avoidable by using the correct hardware. Single feed bait poses a higher risk of secondary poisoning, multi feed has a significantly reduced risk. An animal would have to eat many dead carcasses in a single day to feel ill effects. Dogs typically don't consume rats, however cats will scavenge. If poisoning is suspected, Vitamin K is the antidote from a vet. If you are still concerned after the safeguards above, consider keeping a close eye on pets during the first pulse when you use CONTRAC. Feed you cat well over this period, and don't let pets roam alone in reserves!

[Link to extended health and safety sheet.](#)