

# CRRU

CAMPAIGN FOR RESPONSIBLE RODENTICIDE USE NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2016

## Recent Report on Raptor Deaths in Ireland

**CRRU**—the Campaign for Responsible Rodenticide Use was set up in Ireland in September 2013. A sister CRRU company was formed in the UK in 2005. CRRU Ireland was established following prompting by the Dept. of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM) following the finding by Birdwatch Ireland and by the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) working with DAFM and the State Laboratory that demonstrated that Barn Owl, Red Kite and other raptor carcasses contained traces of rodenticide.

In 2011 the RAPTOR Protocol for the investigation of deaths of Birds of Prey and other wildlife was agreed. Work is ongoing by the stakeholders— the NPWS, the Veterinary Service of DAFM and the State Laboratory to ascertain the extent and significance of poisoning for Ireland's native Raptor species. Reports for 2012, 2013 and 2014 have recently been published by the NPWS and taken together with the 2011 report, give us a picture of the situation over an extended period as the 2011 report included data for the period from 2007. The reports can be downloaded from the NPWS website, [www.npws.ie](http://www.npws.ie)

There were 109 incidents during this period where dead raptors were collected, examined and analysed. Of these 74 were poisoned, 25 had been shot, 10 contained traces of rodenticides, and two were shot but also contained traces of poisons. Looking at the 74 who were poisoned, these included 32 Buzzards, 21 Red Kites and 16 Peregrine Falcons as well as 7 Sparrow Hawks and 3 Kestrels.

A range of poisons were detected in the carcasses. Anticoagulant rodenticides were found in 48% of incidents while others involved the rodenticide Alphachloralose or the now illegal insecticide Carbofuran. While the presence of traces of anticoagulant rodenticides is taken to be secondary and unintentional and may not have caused fatalities, their presence in protected wildlife is most undesirable.

The RAPTOR protocol is beginning to provide a clearer picture of poisoning and persecution in Ireland and just how big an issue it is. Trends are beginning to emerge as to the main threats, the most frequent victims and the location of black spots and the land use types with which these incidents are associated.

Responsible use of rodenticides as promoted in CRRU Code will reduce the number of incidents caused unintentionally to our birds of prey and other top predators.

### **UPCOMING WILDLIFE AWARE COURSES 2016**

**7 April— DAFM Laboratories Backweston**

**11 April—TEAGASC Mellows Campus Athenry**

**14 April— TEAGASC Moorepark Fermoy**

**6 October—DAFM Laboratories Backweston**

**10 October — Teagasc Mellows Campus Athenry**

**13 October— Teagasc Moorepark Fermoy**



## Second Generation Anti Coagulant Rodenticides (SGARS) detected in Raptor Carcasses

Name of Rodenticide	No. of Incidents where it was detected
Brodifacoum	24
Bromadiolone	13
Difenacoum	5
Flocoumafen	8



Farmers on a recent Teagasc Pilot Glas course on the farm of Patrick O Connor, Macroom, during which a discussion on Responsible Rodenticide Use was led by Catherine Keena Teagasc, and Greg Collins,

## GLAS SCHEME for FARMERS

GLAS— the Green Low Carbon Agri-Environment scheme - is part of the Rural Development Programme 2014—2020. A series of thirteen pilot training courses for farmers, who have been accepted into the GLAS scheme under Tranche 1 and Tranche 2, has been running throughout the month of February.

These pilot training courses were organized by Teagasc in association with the Farm Relief Service (FRS) and were held in venues all around the country. A maximum of twenty farmers attended each course which ran for six hours and included both an indoor and an outdoor segment. Each course provided instruction on the requirements of the Glas scheme and practical information and demonstrations on many of the twenty- five actions listed therein

One of the requirements of the GLAS scheme is that participants should comply with the **Campaign for Responsible Rodenticide Use (CRRU)** in their daily farming activities. That requirement forms an important element of the Integrated Pest Management programme which each farmer should have for their farm. The seven steps of the CRRU Code forms part of each GLAS Training Course as does familiarization with use of the various bait box types that can be used where there is a need to use rodenticides on the farm.

The Integrated Rodent Pest Management (IPM) approach to rodent control involves the following steps:

- Exclusion of Rodent Entry, where possible,
- Restriction of Access to Food and Water,
- Survey of the Farm to create a Map showing points at which there is evidence of rodent activity,
- Destruction of any Infestation found – use the method with least risk for workers and the environment that is effective,
- Review of outcome,
- Clean-up by removing former or potential rodent harbourage (waste materials, scrub), and
- Monitoring for re-infestation using non-toxic or placebo bait.

Anticoagulant Rodenticides are toxic substances. Only those that have Dept. of Agriculture approval may be used. The instructions for use printed on rodenticide product labels are legally binding. Failure in the past to comply with the instructions for use printed on rodenticide product labels has resulted in companion animals (e.g. dogs, cats) being exposed to risk of direct poisoning with rodenticides, and to many wildlife species (e.g. Owls, and Raptor species including Red Kites, Kestrels, Buzzards) being exposed to risk of secondary poisoning. It has been found that some 85% of Barn Owl carcasses collected contained residual traces of rodenticides.

In developing the training course, Teagasc consulted CRRU Ireland which provided training materials on responsible control of rodent pests used in the course. CRUU TaskForce members participated in the pilot training provided. Following the evaluation of these initial thirteen courses, GLAS Training Days will be rolled out later this year for all farmers who are in Tranche 1 and Tranche 2 of GLAS. It is a requirement of the GLAS scheme that each farmer must attend such a course. Successful implementation of GLAS over the five-year period from 2016 -2021 will involve some 50,000 farmers and should lead to a welcome improvement in Ireland's biodiversity.

# Alberta—the Canadian Province with no rats



**Vast open prairie land in Alberta where an enormous quantity of wheat is grown**

The Canadian state of Alberta has the Rocky Mountains on its western border and the state of Saskatchewan on its eastern side. It is a huge state—at 660,000 square km it is larger than France. It has no rats - neither Brown rat nor Black rat—even though those species occur in both the adjoining states of British Columbia and Saskatchewan.

How do they do it? Quite simply they never allowed rats to become established there in the first place. Rats live in association with humans and the state of Alberta was only colonized by settlers in the late 1800's. These settlers moved out west from Ontario and kept ahead of any following rats which would have arrived in Canada off ships from Europe. The land in Alberta was eminently suitable for growing grain and huge farms, by Irish standards, were established. Grain was harvested and stored in enormous silos until collection could be arranged so the presence of rats in such a silo could ruin a whole year's crop.

The climate of Alberta helps. The temperature drops in the winter time to minus 40 degrees centigrade. There are no woodlands or forests in the wide open grain- growing prairies so rats cannot live away from farm buildings. Although the cities of Calgary and Edmonton have a population each of over a million, They are quite a distance from the state borders and rats never reached them. In the rural areas there is no one-off housing. The farms are over two thousand hectares in size so it is quite a distance to go and visit your next door neighbour.

But the key to keeping Alberta rat free is eternal vigilance. Each county in the state has a Rat Control section, whose officers visit each farm at least once annually and have the authority to search for traces of rats. The public are also invited to notify them if they detect any rats. As most of the public have never actually seen a rat, the inspectors get called out on false alarms because ground squirrels, gophers or chipmunks have been reported. But the calls are always followed up because occasionally a real rat will come in—perhaps on a cargo train coming westwards to Calgary or, as in a recent case, in the importation of a mobile home from British Columbia to Edmonton. In this case Black rats had entered and become established in a chicken house. To sort this out eight officers from several different counties, armed with various calibres of rifles as well as beating implements and quantities of baits and rodenticides, surrounded and demolished the chicken house. All emerging rodents were shot (the officers have practice shooting sessions as part of their training, so that they don't shoot each other). The area was closely monitored after this for several weeks until the all clear was given and the farmer was compensated for the loss of his chickens.

That's how they do rat control in Alberta! .

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