

Rodent Poison Types Summary

See the section on the Urban Carnivores website [No Poison Is A Good Poison](#) (near the center of the long page). There is no poison that does not present a risk to wildlife, pets, and humans.

I. Anticoagulants

There are two categories of anticoagulants. LOOK AT THE PRODUCT LABEL to determine the type of poison.

A. **Second generation.** Products that have any of the following active ingredients are in this category:

Brodifacoum

Bromadiolone

Difethialone

Difenacoum

These are the most advanced, and dangerous, poisons. They are banned for consumer use in the United States, but are VERY commonly used by the professional pest control companies.

B. **First generation.** Most common active ingredients are

Diphacinone

Chlorophacinone

Warfarin

These are less potent, BUT – **1st Generation Anticoagulant Rodenticides are not the solution!** 2nd generation anticoagulants get most of the bad publicity, but recent research suggests that 1st generation anticoagulants are no better.

Here is a handout we made summarizing the evidence concerning the far more abundant 1st generation anticoagulants.

HELP GET RID OF ALL ANTICOAGULANT RODENT POISONS

HELP SAVE ME FROM DIPHACINONE!

- Anticoagulant rodent poisons have been sickening and killing **80-90%** of local wildlife – bobcats, foxes, coyotes, owls, hawks, mountain lions, etc.¹
- **1st gen anticoagulants**, namely diphacinone and chlorophacinone, are **UNRESTRICTED** and are all over the stores.
- **1st generation** anticoagulants poisoned P-22.² →
- **1st generation diphacinone** was in **77%** of poisoned blood-tested bobcats in a 5-county southern California study by UCLA and NPS scientists.³
- See PoisonFreeMalibu.org for more information.



P-22, Heroic Griffith Park Mountain Lion
Featured in National Geographic.
Poisoned by Diphacinone

PLEASE CHECK STORES FOR “DIPHACINONE”-BASED
POISON AND ASK FOR IT TO BE REMOVED!

¹www.cdpr.ca.gov/docs/registration/reevaluation/chemicals/brodifacoum_final_assess.pdf

²www.nps.gov/samo/parknews/gp-lion-exposed-to-poison.htm

³www.urbanecarnivores.com/laurels-blog

II. Other Rodent Poisons

Typical rodenticide product names

<i>Fastrac</i>	Bromethalin
<i>First Strike</i>	Difethialone
<i>Liqua-Tox II</i>	Diphacinone
<i>Ground Squirrel Bait by Wilco</i>	Diphacinone
<i>D-Con Bait Stations</i>	Diphacinone
<i>Maki Mini Block</i>	Bromadiolone
<i>Confrac Block</i>	Bromadiolone
<i>WeatherBlok XT</i>	Brodifacoum
<i>Terad 3</i>	Cholecalciferol, Vitamin D3

A. Bromethalin

From EPA document <https://poisonfreemalibu.files.wordpress.com/2017/12/epa-hq-opp-2011-0718-0086.pdf>:

"Bromethalin is a neurotoxin. Clinically, this results in swelling of the brain (cerebral edema). In general, severe bromethalin poisonings are very concerning for clinicians because of less human experience with them and, unlike the anticoagulant rodenticides, **there is no specific diagnostic test or antidote**. Given that bromethalin targets the central nervous system, there is concern that the developing brain of young children may be particularly susceptible to the effects of bromethalin."

<https://healthypets.mercola.com/sites/healthypets/archive/2015/01/07/bromethalin-rat-poison.aspx>:

"Since 2011, the national Pet Poison Helpline has reported a 65 percent increase in bromethalin poisoning in pets."

"Bromethalin is a fast-acting neurotoxin that affects the brain and liver. In pets, signs of brain swelling and central nervous system disturbance appear within 2 to 24 hours of ingestion."

B. Cholecalciferol (Vitamin D3)

Here are two links to the facts about cholecalciferol.

1. <http://www.petpoisonhelpline.com/poison/cholecalciferol/>

Poisonous to: Cats, Dogs

Level of toxicity: Generally moderate to severe

"This is one of the most dangerous mouse and rat poisons on the market and unfortunately, seems to be gaining in popularity.

Cholecalciferol, or activated vitamin D3, causes a life-threateningly high calcium and phosphorus level in the body, resulting in severe, acute kidney failure."

"Unfortunately, cholecalciferol mouse and rat poison **does not have an antidote**, and is one of the most challenging poisoning cases to treat as hospitalization"

2. <https://www.drugs.com/answers/cholecalciferol-is-main-ingredient-in-rat-poison-336757.html>

"However, in practice it has been found that use of cholecalciferol in rodenticides represents a significant hazard to other animals, such as dogs and cats."

"Cholecalciferol produces hypercalcemia, which results in systemic calcification of soft tissue, leading to renal failure, cardiac abnormalities, hypertension, and Central nervous system depression.

3. From Melissa Booker, Navy Wildlife Biologist. Recent research shows that **rodents can play a role in spreading cholecalciferol**. This occurs not from secondary poisoning from eating the rodents, but from rats gathering cholecalciferol pellets away from bait stations and bringing it to their lairs. Foxes can then gain access to the pellets, eat them, and become fatalities.

C. Strychnine

Strychnine is an example of a very dangerous and previously unpopular poison making a comeback. Stella McMillin, California Department of Fish and Wildlife Environmental Scientist for Toxicology finds (<https://calwil.wordpress.com/2012/10/03/some-perspective-on-rodenticides>) – *“One rodenticide I’m keeping my eye on is strychnine. In California, we went nearly a decade without any reported cases of wildlife poisoned by strychnine. Now, in the last couple of years, we’ve had several. So, what’s going on? Is it just coincidence or is it due to the increased regulation of anticoagulant rodenticides?”*

From the California Department of Pesticide Regulation website on strychnine:

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife has the same concern – *“CDFW has also seen an increase in the number of strychnine-related wildlife losses in recent years,”* - www.wildlife.ca.gov/living-with-wildlife/rodenticides.

This poison has been historically almost abandoned due to its extreme danger. Strychnine has **NO antidote** and acts very quickly. Thus, it is especially dangerous. From a State of Michigan pesticide website - ([https://www.michigan.gov/dnr/0,4570,7-350-79136_79608_85016-26326--](https://www.michigan.gov/dnr/0,4570,7-350-79136_79608_85016-26326--,),

[00.html](#)), “Due to the rapid absorption and action of strychnine, treatment is impractical for wildlife, unless found immediately after ingestion.”



**Products Currently Registered by DPR:
Strychnine bait**

[Back to School IPM Home](#)

Products on this list are not necessarily legal or appropriate for use in schools. **Always read and follow label restrictions and instructions.** This list does not constitute a recommendation from DPR or UCIPM.

- **Click on each product name for a full product information report.**
- **Click here** to view specific search criteria used to generate this page

Total Products Found - 1		
Product Name	EPA Signal Word	Restricted Status
WILCO GOPHER GETTER TYPE-1 BAIT	POISON/DANGER	

D. Zinc Phosphide

The rodenticide zinc phosphide is commonly used for poisoning ground squirrels and gophers. Zinc phosphide is in the most dangerous category of poison in that it cannot be purchased at a store and requires a license for application. It is true that it is not as susceptible to secondary poisoning as the anticoagulants, however, it is perhaps the most dangerous in regard to **primary** poisoning!

One of the most comprehensive and authoritative documents on wildlife poisoning is from an Environmental Protection Agency report from 2004 entitled *Potential Risks of Nine Rodenticides to Birds and Nontarget Mammals: A Comparative Approach*. It can be found at <http://www.pesticideresearch.com/site/docs/bulletins/>

[EPAComparisonRodenticideRisks.pdf](#)

Please see page 66 which states -

“Based on the comparative analysis model, zinc phosphide is ranked as the rodenticide posing the **greatest potential primary risk to nontarget mammals**, with brodifacoum ranked a distant second, and warfarin and bromadiolone an even more distant third and fourth.” These other three are the anticoagulants. Zinc phosphide is considered significantly **more dangerous for direct poisoning** of wildlife, pets, and children than the anticoagulant poisons.

This is especially startling considering the many users of parks and also wildlife. Here is a quote from the National Pesticide Information Center, co-sponsored by the Environmental Protection Agency and Oregon State University, on their website <http://npic.orst.edu/factsheets/znpngen.html>.

“Young children and pets are most likely to be exposed to zinc phosphide by eating the bait pellets if they find them. Baits often have peanut butter, molasses, or other flavors that may attract dogs or children.” It continues, stating – “Zinc phosphide is very toxic to birds, fish, and other wildlife if it is eaten. Pellets or grain containing zinc phosphide may attract birds in particular. All baits should be placed so they are out of reach of any pets, children, or non-target wildlife.”

Another EPA document (<https://archive.epa.gov/pesticides/reregistration/web/pdf/0026red.pdf>) states “The Agency has also determined that a **single swallow** of zinc phosphide bait may be **fatal to a young child**.”!!

Birds appear to be the most vulnerable animal to zinc phosphide. The US Dept. of Agriculture reports (<http://extoxnet.orst.edu/pips/zincphos.htm>):

“Effects on birds: Zinc phosphide is highly toxic to wild birds. The most sensitive birds are geese. Pheasants, mourning doves, quail, mallard ducks, and the horned lark are also very susceptible to this compound. Blackbirds are less sensitive (U.S. National Library of Medicine. Hazardous Substances Databank. Bethesda, MD, 1995.10-9).”

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources website states (<https://>

www.michigan.gov/dnr/0,4570,7-350-79136_79608_85016-26326--,00.html) -

“All species of animals are subject to zinc phosphide poisoning, but avian species, specifically gallinaceous birds {pheasants, turkeys, grouse, chicken}, are the most seriously affected. In Michigan, wild turkeys, ring-necked pheasants, black and gray squirrels, Canada geese, and possibly white-tailed deer have died from zinc phosphide poisoning.”

Finally, the above 2004 EPA report on page 107 concludes “Based on the lines-of-evidence assessment, potential **primary risks to birds are highest for zinc phosphide**, brodifacoum, and difethialone. A small bird finding and **eating a pellet or two** of any of these baits is likely to ingest a lethal dose, and **just a few pellets** could provide a lethal dose to larger birds.”

E. Aluminum Phosphide/Fumitoxin

Parks and recreation areas are where people, especially children and pets, are in close contact with the earth, with picnicking and ball playing in grassy areas. It is imperative that we look to non-poisonous ways of controlling pests. We are in particular concerned with the inclusion of *Fumitoxin* as an option for rodent control.

The EPA has placed *Fumitoxin* in its highest toxicity category, "Category 1 Danger." "Danger" means that the pesticide product is highly toxic if eaten, absorbed through the skin, or inhaled. If this is the case, the word "POISON" must also be included in red letters on the front panel of the pesticide product label.

The compound converts to a deadly phosphine gas when it comes in contact with moisture, eventually degrading into inorganic phosphate. This is a groundwater contaminant and contributes to ocean water quality degradation. The U.S. Department of Agriculture reported about *Fumitoxin* in 1997 that "burrowing fumigants will kill animals residing in treated burrows, so it is important to verify that burrows are occupied by target animals. Animals potentially affected by primary poisoning include

nontarget rodents, burrowing owls, reptiles and amphibians, rabbits, raccoons, fox, weasel and skunk."

Fumitoxin caused the death of a four-year-old girl and her 15-month-old sister in 2010 in Utah. It leaked into the basement of their home after being used to treat the family's lawn for gophers. San Diego TV station CBS-8 reported on this story and implications locally. See below for more on this story.

More recently, January 2017, it happened again in Amarillo, Texas. Four children died and five additional family members sent to the hospital from a product containing the same phosphine gas compound - <http://www.cnn.com/2017/01/03/health/texas-pesticide-deaths>.

City of San Diego

The City of San Diego, Parks and Recreation Department had been relying on *Fumitoxin*. but determined that it will control rodents with safer methods. San Diego TV station CBS-8 reported on this in a November 2012 story. Please watch the video and read the story here: <http://www.cbs8.com/story/20114334/pesticide-that-killed-two-girls-used-at-san-diego-county-schools>

Quoting:

"The City of San Diego, Parks and Recreation Department stopped using *Fumitoxin* in 2010. Maintenance manager David Long said he used to use it for gopher control in Balboa Park. Now he uses traps.

"(Traps) are safe. They're underground. People aren't going to get into them. You know when you've killed the gopher because you have a body," said Long. Long said he changed to the non-toxic alternative out of concern for public safety. **"We use traps now and it's fairly effective," said Long. "Even when we used *Fumitoxin*, we still had gophers. But I don't believe our problem without *Fumitoxin* is any worse than it was with *Fumitoxin*."**

To learn more about San Diego's practices, Citywide District Manager Dave Long can be contacted at 619-235-1165.



Natural Predators Helping to Solve the Problem

Red Tailed Hawk looking for gophers to pop out

Red Tailed Hawk keeping watch on soccer goal post at high school



Great Blue Heron looking for prey



Great Blue Heron found a gopher