

Dear Members of the VT House Committee on Agriculture, Food Resiliency, and Forestry,

I am a wildlife rehabilitator in Addison, licensed by both the state of Vermont and the federal government since 2012. My husband has been a VT State Game Warden for 29 years, just retiring this past fall. My daughter is also a Vermont licensed wildlife rehabilitator. Between the three of us, we have regularly faced cases of suffering and death caused by secondary rodenticide-poisoning impacting a wide range of species, both birds and mammals.

I will give a few examples in more detail. But here also is a partial list of species we have dealt with who showed the dramatic signs of rodenticide poisoning; most were killed by it despite best efforts to save.

- great horned owls; barred owls; eastern screech owls; saw whet owls; long eared owls; barn owls
- red tailed hawks; kestrels; red shouldered hawks; northern harriers
- ravens; and crows
- red foxes; and grey foxes
- ermine; long-tailed weasels; fishers
- opossums
- raccoons
- coyotes
- skunks
- domestic dogs and cats

Among the most heartbreaking situations we see almost every year is a nest of dead owls, sometimes with a single survivor still clinging to life, often already being eaten alive by maggots (flies are drawn to blood leaking from ears, pin feathers, etc., so lay their eggs on the suffering bird).

Bird parents work so hard to raise a nest of babies! They overcome so many challenges. But a rodenticide-poisoned rodent - captured easily because it's sick and dying, thus moving slowly - brought back to the nest to share among babies *can kill an entire nest*, including the parents who ingest parts of the rodent as they tear it up to feed their babies.

If a survivor is found in time, we have a small chance to save with days and weeks of Vitamin K injections (to support blood coagulation) and around the clock care. But most times, no one even finds the poisoned nest until after all have suffered and died.

We see the same sad situation among raven nests. One day a thriving family of ravens; days later, all the babies lying dead in the nest, at least one parent dead on the ground nearby.

Both raptors and corvids provide great rodent control! They will eat thousands of rats and mice if left unharmed. But humans who use rodenticides are carelessly killing whole families of nature's best rodent-control species.

Species of mammals also provide great rodent control - which also makes them terribly vulnerable to secondary rodenticide poisoning.

Another common call we receive is a fox or opossum or raccoon or barn cat "acting strange". With further description, we hear about the unfortunate mammal circling and stumbling, barely able to function. People usually call with concerns about rabies, more than concerns about the animal's welfare. We take that concern seriously, of course, and gather details. These animals rarely display signs of aggression, just disability and "seem miserable". We ask whether the caller or a neighbor is using rodenticides. Sadly, the answer is almost always yes. When we speak with the person responsible for bait boxes or other rodenticide display, many had no idea that secondary species would also be poisoned. They didn't even think about it, and their "pest control" companies never mentioned it. Other times, people are fully aware, but care far more about "conveniently" killing rodents than about the concentric circles of harm they cause.

Brenna Galdenzi and POW created a short video about a great horned owl we were able to revive, raise, and ultimately release after rodenticide poisoning killed his family. I'll attach a link. What a magnificent creature! Sometimes, usually at the full moon, he will still hoot back and forth with me from the woods nearby, two years after his release now. The last few times, there has been a second owl hooting along with him, a slightly higher call. This sounds like a mated pair - they will raise a family this year. My deepest concern for these exquisite birds is rodenticide poisoning.

(note: [link to the video can be found under my name on the House Agriculture Committee webpage for February 25th 2026](#))

One of Vermont's greatest natural resources is our diverse and abundant wildlife. This bill - H.758 - is one important step toward protecting both the individual birds and mammals, and the species, vulnerable to being harmed and killed by rodenticides.

Thank you so much for advancing these protections!