



NAVFAC HAWAII PUBLIC AFFAIRS INTERNAL NEWSGRAM
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Newsgram 2: NAVFAC Hawaii Environmental Services Keep Feral Rodents at Bay

Naval Facilities Engineering Command (NAVFAC) Hawaii's environmental services are continuing to play an active role in eradicating rodent infestation throughout Joint Base Pearl Harbor - Hickam (JBPHH). The pest management team employs an environmentally sound Integrated Pest Management (IPM) system which has proven to be successful in combating the enduring island-wide dilemma of rodent control.

In regions where there are reports of heavily populated rodent infestation, the pest management team determined the root cause to be the favorable spring that had produced lush foliage which provides an abundance of food and shelter. As a result, the population of rodents greatly expanded. Then when the foliage began to die back during the summer months, the rats began to seek out other desirable environments including buildings and the Navy's sewer system. If left untreated, the rodent overpopulation would develop into unfavorable consequences including serious damage to affected areas and exponential service costs.

"Last summer the rat population in the JBPHH area became extremely high disturbing personnel and damaging property," said NAVFAC Hawaii Environmental Services Director Steven Christiansen. "We decided to become more proactive and search for the source starting with our utility corridors which potentially provides miles of underground passageways."

In the summer of 2013, pest control management responded to a rodent infestation problem in the shipyard and housing regions in the Hickam, Makalapa and Moanalua areas that prompted a multi-month long investigation. The team recommended eradication efforts that required more than topical prevention methods such as vegetation control (cutting trees, grass and shrubs near buildings), exclusion (repair holes and entry points into a facility), or basic housekeeping (removing food sources).

A primary concern was centralized in the utility corridors where the rat population could expand and began infiltrating residential homes in these areas. Realizing the threats these pests may cause, the environmental team devised the best approach is to apply an IPM system before resorting to the use of pesticides. In addition, they assisted landscapers by informing them of rat behaviors and areas to be especially watchful. They also performed inspections in base facilities and homes in areas of pest concentration.

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2-2-2-2 NAVFAC Hawaii Environmental Services Keep Feral Rodents at Bay

The team attacked the problem by employing an environmentally sound “bait and check” method, a first option of defense from rodents. This process involves using various tools to detect activity in the utility and sewer lines which include monitoring the amount of bait consumed over several days. By employing this process, the team was able to reduce the frequency of baiting and inspection accordingly which eventually led to reduced eradication efforts. To the delight of the affected communities, the IPM method employed yielded favorable results with the population of feral rats steadily decreased over a three month period.

“The best way to eliminate rodent issues is to educate customers by promoting awareness,” said Owen Abad, NAVFAC Hawaii pest management supervisor. “It is a team effort in which everyone involved needs to participate and report incidents as soon as there are signs of encroachment or disturbance.”

The environmental team is continuing its efforts with a “bait and monitoring” program with the objective of ensuring that utility and sewer areas are not a source of harborage for rat populations.

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Article and photos by Sila Manahane, NAVFAC Hawaii Public Affairs Assistant.



140211-N-YL258-008 PEARL HARBOR-HICKAM, Hawaii (Feb. 11, 2014) One method of Integrated Pest Management is to reduce feral rodent populations by employing above-ground bait stations placed 30 feet apart from one another along the exterior of buildings. A bait station containing 4 ounces of rodent bait is prepared by a pest control management team employee. (U.S. Navy photo by Sila Manahane, NAVFAC Hawaii Public Affairs/Released)



140211-N-YL258-006 PEARL HARBOR-HICKAM, Hawaii (Feb. 11, 2014) Sewer manhole traps are checked regularly every seven days to monitor the amount of bait consumption of feral rats dwelling below ground with the goal of eliminating rodent activity in utility corridors. Pest control management team employee assembles a 1 pound bait trap to be lowered into a manhole. (U.S. Navy photo by Sila Manahane, NAVFAC Hawaii Public Affairs/Released)

For information about NAVFAC Hawaii, visit the command’s website at www.navfac.navy.mil or call Denise Emsley, Public Affairs Officer, at 808-471-7300 (denise.emsley@navy.mil). Become a Fan at www.facebook.com/navfac and follow us at www.twitter.com/navfac, or visit our Photostream on Flickr at <http://www.flickr.com/photos/navfac>.

NAVFAC Hawaii Public Affairs Office
Public Affairs Officer: Denise Emsley, 808-471-7300, denise.emsley@navy.mil