



Reasons to Ban Dangerous Rat Poisons

Rat poisons that are classified as first-generation anticoagulant rodenticides (FGARs), second-generation anticoagulant rodenticides (SGARs), and those containing bromethalin pose serious threats to wildlife, pets, and people. These poisons represent just a subset of commercially available rodenticides and should be removed from the market immediately.

What are first-generation anticoagulant rodenticides (FGARs)?

These products contain warfarin, chlorophacinone, and diphacinone, blood thinners that typically require multiple feedings over several days to kill rodents. Although they are less persistent in animal tissue than SGARs, they poison pets and wildlife who eat the bait or poisoned prey, and pose a threat to children who come into contact with the bait.

What are second-generation anticoagulant rodenticides (SGARs)?

These products contain brodifacoum, bromadiolone, difenacoum, and difethialone, long-lasting anticoagulants that are designed to kill rodents after a single feeding. Because they persist in animal tissues for weeks to months, they move up the food chain to predators and scavengers who eat poisoned rodents, including cats, dogs, owls, eagles, foxes, bobcats, and cougars, in addition to poisoning fish when they make their way into water. They cause internal bleeding and organ failure, and even sublethal exposure weakens immune systems, making both people and animals more susceptible to disease.

What is bromethalin?

[Bromethalin](#) is a non-anticoagulant “single-feed” neurotoxin often used as an alternative to SGARs. It causes brain and nerve swelling, seizures, paralysis, and death in wildlife and pets, with both wild and domestic cats being particularly sensitive. It also accumulates in marine ecosystems, poisoning fish and other marine animals.

SGARs, FGARs, and bromethalin poison children

The American Association of Poison Control Centers [reported more than 8,400](#) cases of people ingesting rat poison in the U.S. in 2024, with more than half in children under 6. Anticoagulant rodenticides (ARs) were the rat poisons people ingested most often, and were responsible for nearly 3,000 cases, and more than 2,000 in children under 6. Bromethalin was second, with 1,800 ingestions and more than 1,100 of which were in children under 6.

Even when children survive the acute poisoning, they may suffer long-term impacts, as these poisons may weaken immune systems and even lead to worse cancer outcomes: a recent study of children with acute lymphoblastic leukemia found prenatal exposure to rat poisons [increased their risk of death by 91%](#). Moreover, studies show that rats exposed to ARs are [more likely to carry diseases such as leptospirosis](#), which spreads easily to domestic pets and sickens people, increasing the risk of miscarriages and stillbirths, and causes kidney damage, meningitis, liver failure, breathing problems, and death.

SGARs, FGARs, and bromethalin poison pets

Rat poisons are a common source of poisoning for dogs and cats, frequently resulting in severe illness and death. Of [1.37 million animal poisoning incidents captured by the National Poison Data System from 2000 to 2010](#), more than 26% were from pesticides, including rat poison, which caused more than 1,500 reported animal deaths (more than 30% of all reported deaths). Within pesticides, SGARs accounted for the second-highest number of animal exposures and were the single leading cause of death in dogs. Each year, rodenticide poisons are listed on the ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center's [top 10 list of pet toxins](#).

SGARs, FGARs, and bromethalin contaminate ecosystems and kill wildlife

There is a large amount of data showing that SGARs, FGARs, and bromethalin kill wild predators and scavengers who eat poisoned rodents and contaminate waterways, [poisoning fish](#) and other aquatic wildlife. For example, a multi-state study found that ARs were present in [82% of the dead eagles](#) submitted for testing. Another study found that [79% of federally endangered fishers](#) submitted for testing had been exposed to ARs, with 96% of those carrying traces of SGARs. AR exposure is also widespread in urban wildlife, such as [bobcats](#) and [coyotes](#), causing not only immediate poisoning but also increasing susceptibility to diseases like mange. A recent analysis of bobcats and mountain lions in the Olympic Peninsula found [low but widespread levels of ARs](#), and the [Stillaguamish Tribe](#) and [local wildlife hospitals](#) have recently reported multiple bald eagles with rodenticide poisoning in Snohomish County.

SGARs, FGARs, and bromethalin are inhumane

Ars are [among the least humane control methods](#), which kill by causing progressive internal bleeding into organs, body cavities, lungs, and the skull over several days, resulting in severe to extreme suffering. [Bromethalin](#) is a neurotoxin with no antidote, which causes brain swelling that leads to tremors, seizures, paralysis, and respiratory failure that can be prolonged, painful, and terrifying.

Many alternatives exist to these dangerous poisons

Washington [endorses integrated pest management](#) (IPM) to reduce both rodent infestations and poison use in homes, schools, parks, utilities, and municipal facilities. It emphasizes preventative steps such as securing trash and animal food, sealing entry points, fixing water leaks, and improving sanitation, and recommends mechanical trapping if lethal control is needed. There are also many commercially available rodent poisons that are more humane and pose fewer risks to people and non-target species.

Other states have taken steps toward banning these dangerous poisons

Since 2020, California has built one of the nation's strongest protections against wildlife-poisoning rodenticides: in 2020, [AB 1788](#) placed a moratorium on SGARs and banned their use in most wildlife-habitat areas; in 2023 and 2024, [AB 1322](#) and [AB 2552](#) added FGARs to that moratorium. Together, these laws amount to a near-total statewide prohibition on ARs, unless an exemption applies or the CA Department of Pesticide Regulation certifies restrictions that limit wildlife exposure.

Other states are considering similar measures. For example, the Massachusetts legislature is currently considering [H.965](#), which would prohibit state registration/reregistration of both SGARs and FGARs, replacing general use with narrow, regulated emergency allowances. Exemptions include limited, one-time indoor use by licensed applicators during declared public-health emergencies.

Additional Information:

1. Columbia Insights, Opinion: Why the Pacific NW needs a rodenticide ban: <https://columbiainsight.org/why-the-pacific-northwest-needs-a-rodenticide-ban/>. (September 11, 2025).
2. Center for Biological Diversity, Safe Rodent Control: <https://www.biologicaldiversity.org/campaigns/Safe-Rodent-Control/index.html>
3. Raptors Are the Solution, Free Outreach Materials: <https://raptorsarethesolution.org/science-on-ars/>
4. Audubon, Poisons Used to Kill Rodents have Safer Alternatives: <https://www.audubon.org/magazine/poisons-used-kill-rodents-have-safer-alternatives>
5. Project Coyote, Rodenticides: <https://projectcoyote.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/Rodenticides.pdf>
6. Humane World for Animals, A Modern Day DDT: [A modern-day DDT? | Humane World for Animals](#)