Historic, archived document

Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.
United States Department of Agriculture
Bureau of Biological Survey

Wildlife Research and Management Leaflet BS-78

Washington, D.C. * January 1937

DIRECTIONS FOR DESTROYING HOUSE MICE

Prepared in the Section of Predator and Rodent Control
Division of Game Management

Trapping.—House mice in the home, on a small farm, or in a business
establishment may best be kept under control by trapping. The small wooden-
base snap traps give good results, and their low cost makes it practicable to
use a dozen or more. Use plenty. Rebait and reset all traps each evening
and place them in such manner that the mice in following their natural run-
ways along walls, behind objects, or wherever partial concealment is afforded,
will pass over the trigger. Traps set near the garbage pail, in the pantry,
kitchen, or cellar, or wherever a mouse is likely to be attracted by food are
most effective.

Fresh bait is essential and preferably should be tied to the trigger of
the trap. Fresh bread, cake, and doughnuts are dependable baits, but these
should be varied with others, as peanut butter, chocolate candy, cheese, fried
bacon, sardines, nut meats, or bananas. Rolled oats or other cereal may be
sprinkled lightly over the trap as an additional attraction.

Poisoning.—For the control of mice on a larger scale, poisoning is
sometimes necessary. The use of poisoned baits may also be desirable for the
protection of property in homes or camps that are used periodically and shut
up for part of the year. A simple method of preparing the baits is to mix one-
eighth ounce of powdered strychnine alkaloid with an equal quantity of baking
soda and stir thoroughly into 1 quart of rolled oats or corn meal. For ex-
tensive use the following formula is recommended:

Mix 1 tablespoon of gloss starch in one-fourth teacup of cold water and
stir into three-fourths pint of boiling water to make a thin clear paste. Mix 1
ounce of powdered strychnine alkaloid with 1 ounce of baking soda and stir into
the starch to a smooth creamy mass free of lumps. Stir in one-half pint of
heavy corn sirup and 1 tablespoon of glycerin or petrolatum. Apply to 10 pounds
of canary seed and mix thoroughly to coat each kernel, and spread on paper to
dry. The canary seed, or bird seed (Phalaris canariensis), can usually be
obtained from bird dealers or seed stores and is preferred by the mice to other
small seeds.
Baits thus prepared will keep indefinitely in a dry place. They may be left in little open boxes, or stations, in out-of-the-way places, where they will provide a permanent poison supply available to the mice at all times. The containers should be plainly marked "POISON" and put out of reach of children, irresponsible persons, and domestic animals. The utensils used in mixing the bait should be thoroughly washed or destroyed.

Cats as mousers.—House cats are sometimes effective in removing mice and may be stimulated to increased effort by reducing their supply of other food. Good mousers, however, are certain also to be destructive of bird life if allowed freedom, and should be kept shut up during the bird-nesting season.

Repelling mice.—Certain odors are obnoxious to mice and are therefore of great value in repelling them from stored products. Flake naphthalene is one of the most effective of the deterrents and when scattered over and around bags of seeds, overstuffed furniture, books, clothing, and other articles will effectively protect them from mouse depredations. Because of its odor, however, it is not advisable to use naphthalene to repel mice from foodstuffs. Powdered sulphur and also lime have been used successfully in protecting such stored grain as corn and sheaf oats. Other repellent compounds are kerosene, creosote, and other coal-tar derivatives, and oils of peppermint and wintergreen.