

The Benefits of Raptors in Our Community

There are a variety of ways that we can keep our community safe from rodents. One of the most natural and sustainable methods is by raptors. Our community is very fortunate to have the Bald eagle, Harris hawks, and Great Horned owls amongst us. These birds of prey can help reduce rodent populations without posing any danger to humans or other animals. Let's take a closer look at why using raptors as a resource for controlling rodents is beneficial for our community.



The first benefit to using raptors as a means of controlling rodent populations is that it is incredibly effective. These birds have been preying on rodents since time immemorial, so they have evolved to be incredibly adept at hunting and catching their prey.

Another benefit to using raptors is that they pose no danger to humans or other animals. Unlike rat poison which can harm other animals that may ingest it, raptors will in most cases only hunt and eat their intended target - rodents. As always, you must be aware of your surroundings and never leave your small pet unaccompanied. More specifically at night as the owl is very silent when in flight.

Finally, using raptors to control rodent populations is much more sustainable than traditional methods. As these birds are part of the natural food chain, they help maintain a healthy balance between predator and prey in our local ecosystems. They also require minimal resources from us. All we need to do is provide suitable nesting sites for these birds so that they can thrive in our community! Did you know that owls do not build their own nests? They will take over a nest that another raptor has built.

My favorite pair of raptors here in PebbleCreek is the mighty Harris Hawks. We have a mated pair that nests in the trees near the Tuscany Clubhouse. The hunting habits of these hawks are perhaps their most interesting feature. They are the only species of raptors known to hunt cooperatively. This means that two or more hawks will work together to capture prey, communicating with one another through calls and movements. Our pair can be seen sitting in the palm trees on the 15th hole. Not only will they hunt rodents and rabbits, but they will also hunt those pesky pigeons.



As a community and a homeowner, we should not be using rodenticides, because they can be hazardous to our health and the environment. Using rodenticides is not the only way to get rid of rodents. There are other methods such as trapping them or using natural repellents.

Another great alternative is rodent birth control. ContraPest is a new tool for controlling rodent populations. Developed by SenesTech, Inc., it is the first US EPA registered contraceptive pest control tool designed to reduce fertility in brown and black rats. It works by targeting the reproductive capabilities of both male and female rats, using sweet liquid bait that limits their ability to reproduce. Studies have shown that ContraPest can be effective in reducing rat populations over time. In one study in Flagstaff, Arizona, ContraPest was deployed alongside traditional rodent control methods and resulted in a decrease of up to 86% in rat populations in just two months. Other reports show a reduction of up to 90% when used for a longer period. Overall, this alternative is a safer method to control our rodent population. Its non-toxic formulation makes it safe for use around humans and other animals, while its long-term effects make it an ideal solution for controlling rat populations over time.



Both Arizona Traditions in Surprise and Wigwam in Litchfield Park have chosen to discontinue using rodenticides. Wigwam Golf Club has joined with Wild at Heart Raptor Rescue and Arizona Wildlife Resource to use Barn Owls to control their rodent population. I would love for Pebblecreek to follow their lead and make our community a raptor friendly one.

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