

FINAL REPORT

for

Vertebrate Pest Control Research Advisory Committee

STUDY TITLE:

Maintenance of VPCRAC website.

PROJECT LEADER:

Roger A. Baldwin

Department of Wildlife, Fish, and Conservation Biology

University of California, Davis

One Shields Ave., Davis, CA 95616

COLLABORATOR:

Ryan Meinerz

Department of Wildlife, Fish, and Conservation Biology

University of California, Davis

One Shields Ave., Davis, CA 95616

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This project built upon former VPCRAC funded website contracts with the University of California to help maintain an internet presence through a dedicated website, thus providing a valuable professional and public resource. Through funding allocated through this grant, we were able to move the website to a UC Davis server; this move allowed us to more easily update the website while also providing troubleshooting assistance. We also made numerous general updates throughout the website, with special emphasis devoted to the “research” portion of the website. We spent significant time collecting, cataloging, and digitizing VPCRAC Final Reports to provide us with a central location for all reports if requested. A final major emphasis of ours was to begin updates on the Vertebrate Pest Control Handbook. To date, we have updated 10 species accounts, as well as the CDFA rodenticide labels. Funding has already been allocated to allow us to complete the update of the Handbook over the next two years.

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INTRODUCTION

The Vertebrate Pest Control Research Advisory Committee (VPCRAC) website has served as a valuable resource for many years. Given the extensive damage caused by many vertebrate species, this website serves as a great benefit to California agriculture, as well as to agricultural produces in other states and countries and members of the general population as a whole. Important features found on the website include information on how to manage numerous vertebrate species found throughout the state of California, information on current CDFA rodenticide labels and where to purchase these materials, information on past and current research projects, and the date and location of future VPCRAC meetings.

The ever-changing nature of research makes it necessary to provide updates and revisions on control techniques for vertebrate pest species. Regulations and laws regarding vertebrate pest control also change over time making a well-maintained VPCRAC site a necessity. However, much of the information provided in the Vertebrate Pest Control Handbook is out of date. Revisions are needed to ensure that Californian's are receiving correct information on how to manage damaging vertebrate pest species.

UPDATES

Throughout this funding period, a number of changes have been made to the VPCRAC website (<http://www.vpcrac.org>). These updates are detailed below:

Physical maintenance of the website

The most recent version of the VPCRAC website was housed on a private server. We were not familiar with the software used to maintain the website. Therefore, we transferred all web content to a University of California server. This transfer makes it possible for us to host the website at no additional cost to VPCRAC. Now that the website content is on a University of California server, it is easily updatable without additional training. We also have the added benefit of having access to minor troubleshooting through the University when problems arise. Furthermore, it should be pointed out that the domain name has been renewed through HostMySite.com until June 16, 2024.

Changes in general content

Research projects—Updates and changes have been made to the 'Research' section of the website. Previously, the 'Research' section was divided into two separate sections: 'Current' and 'Completed'. A third section of 'Published Research' has now been added. This new section lists and links publications that have been funded by VPCRAC. For both the 'Current' and "Completed" sections, updates have been made to reflect the current status of those research projects. In cases where listed research had been previously uploaded without report summaries, those summaries have now been added (in cases where those summaries were available). Additional research projects have been uploaded to the 'Completed' section to reflect projects that have been finished since the time the last update occurred.

Bait sales—On the website homepage, an update has been made linking current bait sales information for Kings County. This can be found under the 'Bait Sales Kings County' tab. We

are continuing to update this whenever directed by Kings County Agricultural Commissioner staff.

Minutes—The section that contains past approved VPCRAC meeting minutes has been updated. Currently, minutes for 2008 until 2014 are available. We will upload future minutes as they are approved. These minutes can be found in the ‘About’ tab under the heading of ‘Committee’.

Links—A number of links relevant to vertebrate pest control have been updated. These links can be found under the ‘About’ tab under the heading of ‘Links’. These links include various federal, state, and university pages as well as other pertinent information sources. All links listed are now current and navigable.

Calendar—The calendar is a feature that is regularly monitored and changed to reflect upcoming events of interest in the vertebrate pest control arena. For example, upcoming VPCRAC meeting details are displayed on the website calendar.

Digital copies of final reports

We made several trips to the CDFA office in Sacramento to scan all available VPCRAC funded project reports. We have electronically organized all reports for easy access when needed. Industry professionals and researchers often make requests for reports and the digitized database of project reports makes the turnaround time to fill such requests minimal.

Vertebrate Pest Control Handbook

The CDFA rodenticide labels have been updated for chlorphacinone, diphacinone, and zinc phosphide. By far, the most time spent updating the webpage has been on the Mammals, Birds, and Reptiles chapters in the Vertebrate Pest Control Handbook. Each of the species listed in the handbook was in need of both review and revision when the project began. This is a lengthy process that, when completed, will involve several hundred pages of revisions. Thus far, the following species accounts have been revised and are now complete: Deer Mice, Meadow Voles, Rabbits, Skunks, Tree Squirrels, Wild Pigs, Blackbirds and Cowbirds, House Sparrow, Starling, and Rattlesnakes.

CONCLUSION

The VPCRAC website has served as a valuable resource for Californians and other regional states for many years. The completed updates should ensure the viability of the website for years to come. The Vertebrate Pest Control Handbook is arguably the most valuable part of the website. Our current efforts to update the Handbook should greatly assist all who are interested in managing the listed vertebrate pests, and should continue to draw an audience to the website for years to come.