

Glue Traps: Pans of Pain

Consumers spend millions of dollars each year on mousetraps, poisons, and exterminators in an effort to “control” rodent populations. Sticky glue traps cause an enormous amount of suffering and a traumatic death for the animals they catch. Humane methods of rodent control are available.

“For the majority of animals immobilized by the glue ... death ultimately is caused by extremes in temperature, starvation, dehydration, exhaustion, predation, or self-mutilation.”

—Dr. Nedim C. Buyukmihci, V.M.D.

What Is a Glue Trap?

A glue trap consists of a piece of cardboard, fiberboard, or plastic that is coated with a sticky adhesive. The pest control industry also refers to the traps as “glue trays” or “glue boards.” Sticky traps are designed for indoor use because they can become clogged with leaves and other loose material when placed outside. The makers of these devices generally state that trapped animals should be thrown away with the trap—leaving animals to suffer for days.

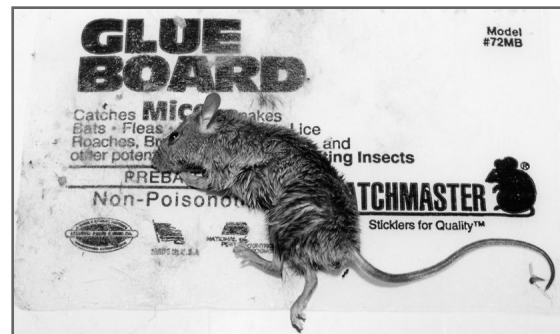
Inhumane to Animals, Dangerous for Humans

A regulatory impact statement released by the Australian government cited a study that concluded that glue traps should be banned

“because of the enormous distress that these traps cause, even if the trapped animals are found after just a few hours and then humanely dispatched.”¹ One New York City pest control manager said that he had even seen rats chew off their own feet to escape from the traps.²

The few laws that protect rodents from cruelty either conflict with other laws or are ignored. The Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act does not give the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency the authority to regulate pest control devices unless there is evidence of false or misleading statements regarding the product, so rodents are not protected from inhumane forms of extermination. Research protocols and state laws that prohibit cruelty to animals often exclude rodents from protection despite the fact that rodents have the ability to suffer and feel pain just as other animals do.

Glue traps are also dangerous to human health. Animals who are trapped on these devices continue to produce urine and feces, which are sources of hantavirus.³ In one case, a hospital that used glue traps did not check them for more than a year—during that time, the dead mice who were stuck on the traps became the hosts for a fly population that caused illness among the hospital’s patients.⁴



Solutions Without Suffering

In addition to being cruel, glue traps are ultimately ineffective. One exterminator told *The New York Times* that he had “seen rats scurry through a

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building and avoid an area where a trap had once been, though it was no longer there.”⁵ Despite the misconceptions that mice and rats are “dirty” or “diseased,” it is not necessary to kill them. The use of poisons can cause painful deaths for cats, dogs, and other animals who either ingest them by mistake or eat the bodies of rodents who have been poisoned. Preventive measures, natural repellents, and nonlethal traps are the only humane options for controlling rodent populations.

The problem of rodent intrusion is largely preventable by maintaining clean, sanitary conditions and plugging holes or cracks where mice or rats might enter a building. If traps are needed to remove mice or rats, humane box-type traps are available from humane societies and hardware stores and at PETACatalog.com. These traps are made from either plastic or metal and have a spring-release trap door at one end

that closes behind the animal once he or she enters the trap. The trap can then be taken outside so that the animal can be released. When using these, be sure to check them every hour because rodents have a high rate of metabolism and quickly become thirsty when they are frightened.

What You Can Do

If your local hardware store carries glue traps, urge the manager to carry humane live traps instead.

And if you encounter an animal who is stuck to a glue trap, pour a small amount of cooking oil or baby oil onto the stuck areas and gently work the animal free.

The only surefire way to keep mice and other animals out of your house is to make it less inviting to them. Use live traps to catch those who do enter so that you can release them outside. Please see HelpingWildlife.com and our “Living in Harmony With Nature” factsheet for more tips on keeping wildlife outdoors.



References

¹State of Victoria, Department of Primary Industries, *Draft Prevention of Cruelty-to-Animals (Prohibition of Glue Trapping) Regulations 2005* (2005).

²N.R. Kleinfeld, “City Seeks Ways to Cut Population of a Shrewd, Adaptable Opponent,” *The New York Times* 12 Jul. 2000.

³Richard Fagerlund, “Never Use Glue Traps, Rodenticides on Deer Mice,” *The Santa Fe New Mexican* 23 May 2004.

⁴R. Beckendorf *et al.*, “Nasal Myiasis in an Intensive Care Unit Linked to Hospital-Wide Mouse Infestation,” *Archives of Internal Medicine* 162 (2002): 638-40.

⁵Kleinfeld.