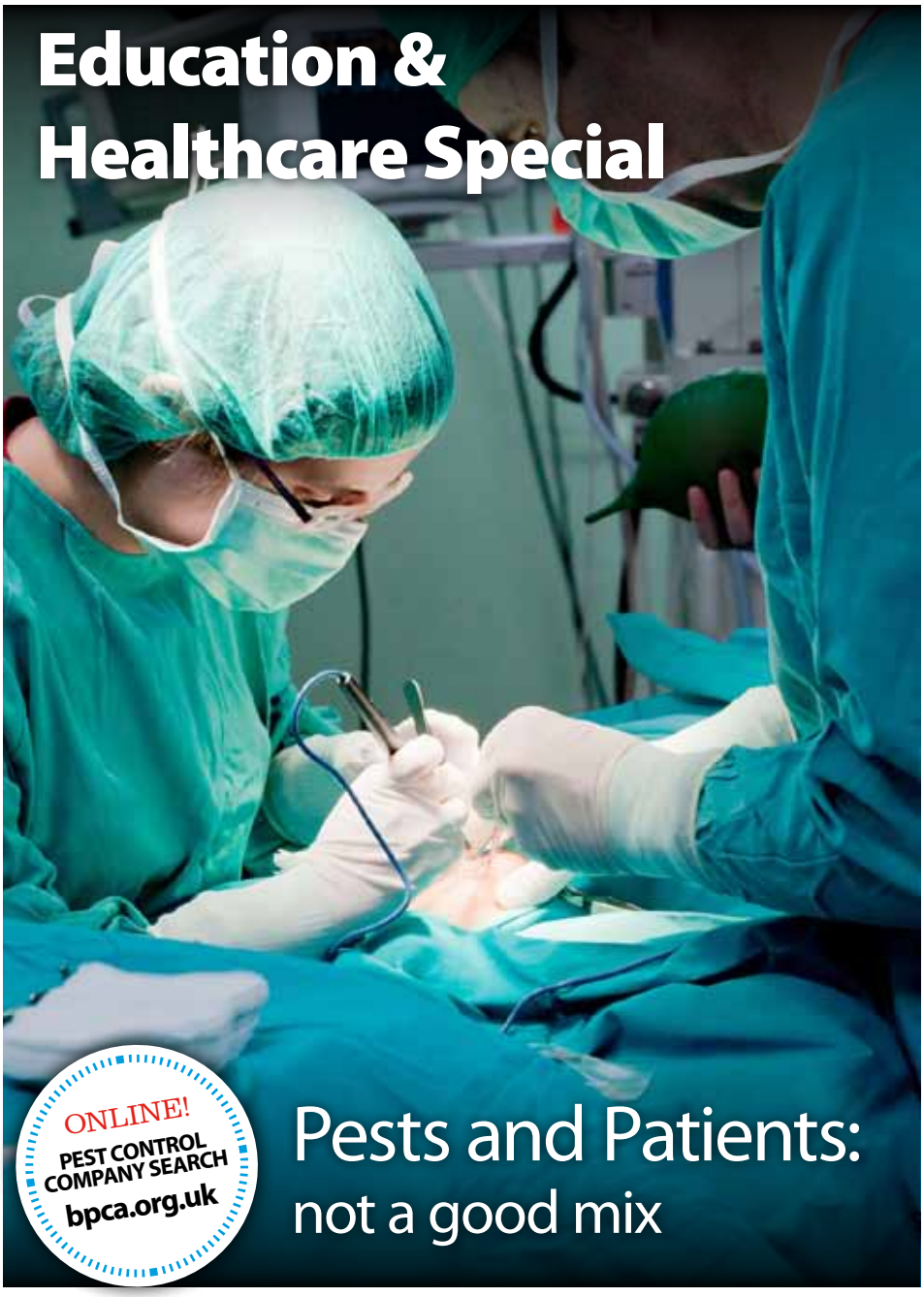
alexo

EDUCATION & HEALTHCARE
ISSUE NINE

Meeting the pest problem head on.

BPCA British Pest Control Association

Education & Healthcare Special



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Pests and Patients: not a good mix

What is alexo?

alexo is BPCA's digital magazine designed to keep your business informed about public health pest control.

alexo is packed with professional advice from leading experts in the pest control industry, and is the only magazine you need to tackle your organisation's pest problems.

Why choose a BPCA member?

By choosing a BPCA member you are ensuring the use of a contractor who can provide a professional and consistent service.

BPCA British Pest Control Association MEMBER

All BPCA members meet our strict membership criteria, hold the relevant pest control insurances, and are fully qualified and trained to deal with your pest problems.

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PESTS AND PATIENTS: NOT A GOOD MIX

Hospitals are vulnerable to infestation. The modern hospital functions on a 24 hour / 365 day basis, with perhaps several thousand staff, patients and other visitors, supported by a wide range of services. As such it resembles a small city, creating a very attractive habitat for a wide range of pests. To maintain an environment in which patients are cared for effectively, a very rigorous, consistent and informed approach to pest control needs to be taken.

There have been times when infestation in hospitals was not being appropriately managed. In the early 1980's, records indicated that about 65% of UK hospitals were infested with Oriental cockroaches, and about 10% had Pharaohs ants. At that time, Crown Immunity of hospital premises was seen as one reason why infestation was not being taken seriously, and public concern eventually resulted in the lifting of Crown Immunity in 1984. This move, together with the introduction of measures by the Department of Health, including the preparation of a Model Contract for Pest Control, and the establishment within each hospital of a trained Nominated Officer with responsibility for the management of pest control, brought about a gradual improvement. Importantly, these measures changed the culture of pest control in hospitals, by showing that it was possible to eradicate many pests that had formerly been considered as fixtures. Across the UK, there are many hospitals that formerly had deeply entrenched infestations that have now not had a significant infestation for several years.

Up to speed

There is, however, no room for treading water. The issues around infestation and its control do not stand still. Feedback on recent Nominated Officer training courses indicates that infestations of cockroaches, bed bugs and other pests in hospitals are still all too common. Recent reports also indicate that some pests such as rats and mice are on the increase across the UK, and this is being reflected in hospitals. In addition, entirely new pests such as ghost ants have appeared in the UK, and are becoming increasingly widespread.

In addition to changes in pests, changes in the health service also bring new challenges. In some of the latest facilities, pest control appears to have fallen down the gap between the management company and the Trust. Pest control, where this has been considered at all, has sometimes gone out to tender along with catering, cleaning, security, and car parking etc, with no consideration of existing arrangements or of the specific requirements of the site. Sometimes, significant questions have subsequently come to light about the design of details in new buildings, for example with respect to pigeon roosting sites close to air intakes and clinical facilities.

Old buildings can also bring their own problems. On numerous sites redundant buildings sit empty prior to demolition, and some hospitals have removed these from the pest control contract in order to save costs, which can lead to several problems. At one site, rats became established in a redundant building that was no longer subject to pest control inspection, and started to cause a persistent problem in the nearby Out Patients Department.

The risk of litigation in relation to infestation has grown in recent years. The lifting of Crown Immunity created the possibility of legal action under food safety legislation, and for some hospitals this has since become reality. Of course all Trusts will also have a duty to provide a safe working environment for staff, and this extends to the prevention of pest infestation. Similarly any Trust that provides accommodation for staff will also have responsibilities to ensure that this is free of pests, and failure to do so again creates the possibility of claims. In addition, there is the real possibility of claims

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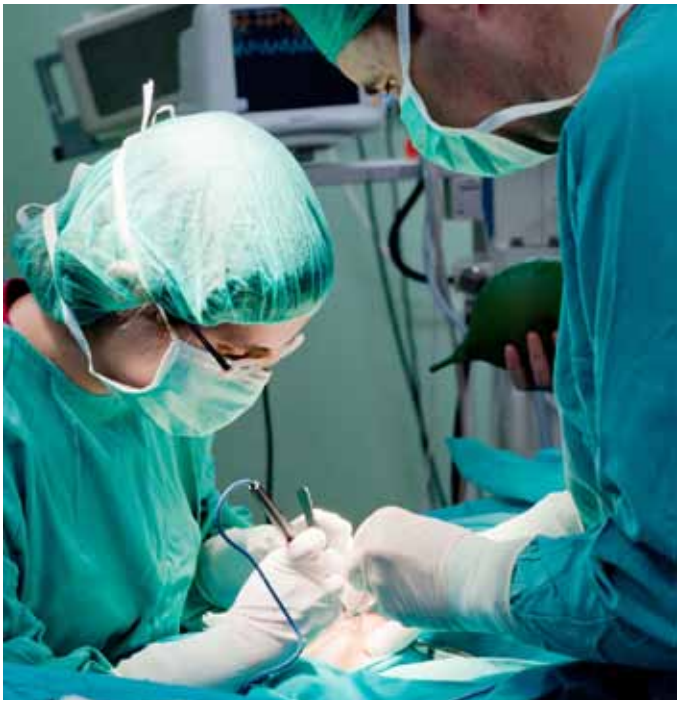

being brought by members of the public, perhaps in relation to an infestation, illness or infestation which they believe they may have acquired in hospital. As hospitals and Trusts now become increasingly competitive, the indirect costs of high profile litigation on the public and professional perception of the unit may well exceed the direct costs of Court action.

Faced with these and other issues, those with responsibility for the management of pest control within Trusts and hospitals need to actively maintain a broad professional competence in this area.

Where can they have come from?

Upon finding an infestation this is normally the first question to be asked, but often the last to be answered, if at all. We can normally identify which factors are conducive to infestation, but it is often very difficult to look at a particular current infestation, and work out its origin with any degree of certainty.

Of course we know that feral pigeons may visit the site at intervals, and may become established if they find regular food (particularly if it is deliberately placed out for them), and sheltered roosting sites. Rats, squirrels, foxes, and feral cats are all likely to respond similarly. At the other end of the scale, we presume that most stored food pests such as beetles, moths, mites etc, normally arrive within food products. However some storage insects are also associated with bird's nests, which may provide an alternative route into a building.

Pests such as Pharaohs ants, cockroaches and bed bugs do not normally colonise buildings very rapidly under current UK conditions, and the actual infestation routes are often difficult to identify. An infestation that re-appears some months after a treatment programme is much more likely to be based on survivors of the old infestation, rather than on newly arrived pests. Once a hospital is truly free of cockroaches, ants, or other infestations of this type, years can easily pass before a new infestation appears.

Do we need to actually eradicate them?

The reasons for keeping the hospital free of infestation are many, and reducing the risk of litigation and adverse publicity are clearly important. However within the hospital environment, reducing the risk of infection is likely to be uppermost in most peoples minds and with cases of infection contracted within hospitals believed to be running at a high rate, the co-existence of patients and potential sources of infection cannot be tolerated.

Studies of insects such as cockroaches, ants and houseflies have shown that these insects acquire a very wide range of human pathogens from their environment (e.g. refuse areas or drains) and are potentially able to transfer these to other areas. The pathogens are carried externally, or via their faeces or vomit. Nonetheless conclusive evidence of human infection by crawling insects is hard to establish although there are several cases that support this theory. With houseflies, there is now recent research overseas to show a statistically clear link between housefly infestation and gastro-enteritis.

FIVE HOSPITAL PEST FACTS

1. Hospital sites are often large, complex and have a host of services such as heating and drainage connecting the various properties on site. This makes them a perfect location for pest such as rats that find harbourage in the foliage that often surrounds hospitals and use drains and services to gain access to buildings. Regular inspections by trained operators can help flag and prevent rodent intrusions before they can become established on site.

2. The warm conditions that are often maintained in hospitals can make them susceptible to infestations from some tropical inspect species. Insect species such as Pharaohs ants can feed on suppurating wounds and dirty dressings, and are small enough to contaminate sterile areas and equipment. Insect infestations should be controlled rapidly by a reputable organisation, and regular inspections may be required. Remember that insects don't work office hours, so you may require inspections outside of regular working hours for some pest species.

3. Hospitals can attract flying insects for a number of reasons. For example, hospital grounds containing trees may encourage wasp nesting, and large buildings may encourage species such as cluster fly. Work with your contractor to ensure that any access points such as windows and louver screens are proofed to help discourage flying insect intrusion.

4. Boiler rooms, plant rooms and quadrangles can all attract bird species such as pigeons that are looking to nest and breed in warm, sheltered areas that are not accessible to predator species. Food sources may also be available around hospitals, reinforcing the birds desire to settle on the buildings. Pigeon and their nesting areas carry a number of diseases and infections, and their nests will encourage a number of insect species that can infest properties.

5. Large sites can become harbourage points for pest species such as feral cats. Feral cats are domestic cats that have returned to a semi wild state, and colonies can become very large in a relatively short period of time. Feral cats are often encouraged by well-meaning people who feed the cats, but feral colonies leave large amounts of waste which will require deep cleaning and disinfection.

Although disease transmission by some blood-feeding insects is a major problem globally; fleas, bed bugs and mosquitoes are fortunately no more than a severe nuisance in the UK at present. Research has revealed no evidence to link biting insects with infections such as hepatitis and HIV, for example. However the recent upswing in bed bug infestations has created particular problems for those suffering from haemophilia.

Rodents are recognised as carriers of a number of diseases and human cases of Weils disease occur regularly in the UK. At-risk groups are seen as those spending time in areas infested with rats, with cases having occurred in construction workers, watersports enthusiasts, sewer workers and others.

Birds are also increasingly recognised as capable of transmitting a range of human pathogens. For example outbreaks of Listeria have been shown to be caused by birds pecking milk bottle tops, while E. coli 0157 has been shown to occur in the faeces of gulls that have been feeding on refuse.

Although direct effects of infestation on patients and staff are of greatest concern in hospitals, infestations can cause a wide range of other problems. For example, an infestation of food stores is likely to result in quantities of food being discarded and the enforced closure of catering, and damage to electrical cables by rodents is a fire hazard, as well as putting computing and communication systems at risk.

Putting procedures in place

Almost all hospitals and Trusts will have pest control arrangements already in place. However the process needs to be reviewed at regular intervals, especially prior to re-tendering for pest control work. Key aspects are:

- Ensure that each hospital has a Nominated Officer with responsibility for pest control, and ensure that they have been specifically trained to monitor the NHS pest control contract.
- Adopt the NHS model pest control contract, ensure it is tailored to meet your needs, and go through a rigorous competitive tendering process at the next opportunity. Use of this contract has been instrumental in driving down hospital infestation rates in recent years.
- Select a competent contractor. The British Pest Control Association (BPCA) is the UK trade association representing organisations with a professional interest in pest control. All BPCA members meet our strict membership criteria, hold the relevant pest control insurances, and are fully qualified and trained to deal with your pest problems. The BPCA website (www.bpca.org.uk) provides a nationwide database of servicing companies or call the BPCA office on 01332 294288.

Further information

Should you require further information, advice or specific hospital pest training and support for you nominate officers and maintenance staff please contact BPCA on 01332 294288 or visit our website at www.bpca.org.uk

No access - all areas

A special report from bestselling business author, Dee Blick

Keeping pests at bay is a daunting challenge for hospitals, schools and universities. By their very nature they are designed to be open buildings with many exit points. They are easy for people to access and easy for pests to access too.

Take a hospital, it usually comprises of a sprawling campus with buildings, new and old often connected by purpose-built corridors. The new building may have some pest proofing measures built in whereas the old one will be bereft of such niceties. Often all that's protecting a patient from the dried (and fresh) bird droppings on the wide stone window ledge of the old building they're staying in is a thin pane of glass. Once opened it's a health risk. For a person with a robust constitution, there's little if any risk from these droppings. For a person with a weakened immune system they are breathing in unhealthy air simply by opening up the window.

"Pests carry diseases," says Ralph Izod, Dyno-Pest Managing Director. "A patient with an open wound for example will be vulnerable to the seemingly innocuous fly. With many hospitals struggling to maintain cleaning standards in the face of cutbacks, despite an increase in patient numbers, it's imperative that a pest prevention policy is in place."

In a school or university, whilst the occupants are there to learn and not be looked after, there are some pests that positively thrive in these environments. Take bed bugs. Says Ralph. "They are fast becoming the bane of a student's life and are proving to be a challenge for the onsite maintenance teams too. What happens if the problem is ignored? It spreads. A student with a room infested with bed bugs pops over to their friend's room and the problem escalates; room to room. The bed bug infestation is not contained to the rooms at either side of the infested bedroom as it usually is in a hotel. It's much more challenging to tackle because many rooms are affected with no clear pattern of infestation. Early treatment is essential to prevent this insidious spread."

Ralph offers these tips if you are a hospital or educational establishment considering how best to approach your pest prevention and pest management strategy.

1. Invest in pest consultancy - don't treat pest control as a commodity to be bought in haste only after an outbreak has occurred. Be proactive. Seek professional expert advice. In doing so you will significantly reduce the risk of pest infestations. Make sure that pest control is included in your budget.
2. Ensure that each one of the buildings on your campus is surveyed by a qualified technician – one with relevant experience. A good surveyor will know the types of pests that pose a problem, where they are most likely to take hold and how they can be effectively prevented or managed. Ideally a surveyor should have gained hands-on experience working as a pest control technician.
3. Introduce your maintenance teams to your pest control partner so that best practice can be shared and agreed. A combination of early detection training and making your team aware of the pest risk hotspots in your buildings and grounds ensure that any pest outbreak is contained.
4. For the same reasons, give your pest control provider the freedom to speak to your housekeeping and catering teams. Simple measures such as installing the latest fly killers for example can ensure your kitchen is virtually fly free.
5. Make sure that your suppliers work with a BPCA approved pest control provider. Pay close attention to supplies, checking for signs of any pests before accepting them.
6. Look upon your pest control provider as a trusted expert and ally. Give as much unrestricted access as possible so that weak spots in your building and any lapses in best practise can be identified enabling corrective action taken swiftly. Your pest control provider knows where to look and will spot any early tell-tale signs that all is not well. Don't put barriers in their way.
7. Ensure your pest control contract is thorough and clear. It should include the number and frequency of technician visits; the recommended treatments (including non-chemical treatments) and the proofing measures that are required. Know what you're buying, what your contract covers and what it doesn't before signing on the dotted line.

"A robust pest control and pest prevention strategy, underpinned with thorough site surveys has to be the preferred alternative to fire fighting outbreaks on a regular basis," concludes Ralph.

More information

www.dynopest.co.uk
www.bpca.org.uk

Welcome to the University of wildlife

Spread over 200 acres of park and woodland, much of it protected environmentally sensitive land, Essex University has a finely balanced yet robust policy in place to manage a wide variety of wildlife, including some less than welcome exotic visitors. Jonathan Doyle reports.

Mark Ager's responsibilities for pest control and wildlife management are finely balanced, to say the least. As Deputy Director, Estates Management at Essex University's main Colchester campus, he looks after a site established in the mid-60s which is now more or less the size of a small town. With around 9,000 full-time students coming in to study at Essex from more than 130 different countries (about 3,500 of whom live on site), and some 2,000 staff working on campus, it's a thriving and culturally diverse community of people. Built in the grounds of the Grade II listed 18th Century Wivenhoe House (itself now home to The Edge Hotel School), the site is so much more than a 1960s concrete jungle. It's also a thriving and diverse haven for wildlife.

Ager explains that the campus, set in over 200 acres mainly of parkland and woodland, also has lakes, a wildlife-managed pond, a bat sanctuary, meadows, a tidal riverbank and salt marsh grazing land. Large areas of the site are environmentally sensitive and protected accordingly. It's an important site for a diverse flora and fauna, so pest control in and around the academic and residential buildings, or on the sports pitches, needs careful management. This part of Ager's job, simply put, is to keep the whole ecosystem running harmoniously and in line with the University's balanced wildlife policy. Within that, he has to be tough on pests.

There are the usual pests one might expect, Ager says, such as rabbits, squirrels, jackdaws and pigeons. Their management largely involves keeping an appropriate balance and keeping them away from the buildings and the sports fields as far as possible. "We're happy for all of it to be here but we try to manage it so something is not dominant."

While many species are simply part of the biodiversity of their natural habitats, it's quite a job at times keeping them away from the buildings. The University, for example, has one of the largest flocks of jackdaws in Essex. Ager is assisted by BPCA Member, Absolute Pest Control with a team which was formerly led by Robert Long, who now works for another BPCA Member Goodwin Pest Management. There is always much to do. In fact, a member of Long's staff is on site full-time. Long explains the jackdaw issue: "[Jackdaws] are stealing eggs. They are nesting in the buildings. To take a jackdaw's nest out takes about five black sacks full of twigs. It's a fire hazard and [the nests are] full of biting insects, feeding on the chicks." Once the chicks have left the nest, the insects migrate down into the accommodation areas and feed on the students.

Squirrels are also prevalent at the University. The owl population has been decimated as a result, he says: "Squirrels will kill small owls and they'll take all the eggs." It's not only owls that need protection from squirrels. "We have put up lots of bird boxes all over campus to encourage the songbirds back and to give them somewhere safe." Despite reinforcing the boxes with metal, the damage done to them each year by squirrels is significant. "They just get through everything that we put in their way", he says. "Except the bullet, obviously. We cull them where necessary."

There are other, less obvious infestations to deal with too. With such a large proportion of students coming to the University from overseas, it's inevitable that non-indigenous pests are imported into the accommodation areas, albeit inadvertently. Ager and Long have dealt with infestations of ghost ants and Pharaoh ants at regular intervals, which they think probably get carried in from China and the rest of Asia. "We've had them in cycles every year. When students move in it's usually a good three months afterwards and then we see them".

Pharaoh ants differ from the indigenous garden or black ant in several ways and have to be eradicated with specialist treatments. Following an infestation, they will build multiple small nests throughout a building unlike the common black ant which builds one large nest. Due to their small size (approx 2 mm), they often form a base well within the fabric of a building, making their nests difficult to find and access. Over half the population of a colony are brood (ie, eggs and young ants). If a nest is disturbed, the ants will dissipate and re-group in several smaller colonies.

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The Pharaoh ant is polygynous – its colonies contain many queens. Periodically a queen Pharaoh ant, together with a few workers, will leave the nest and set up a new colony elsewhere, quickly spreading an infestation throughout a building. Nests are often so small that they can be contained in a thimble or may be found between sheets of paper. Pharaoh ants prefer dark, warm areas near hot water pipes and heating taps, enabling them to remain active all year round.

"You often see them feeding out of fly units", says Long. Initially they'll forage over a large area but once they've found a source they are very focussed. The gel baits he uses now are a considerable improvement on previous treatments: "It's a poison which works very quickly and eradicates in half the time and with a third of the work". It's also useful that only very small quantities are required. Long dots the bait around and the ants find it. "The beauty of it is that it's not tampered with. People can't see it unless they know what they're looking for." This is an advantage in a student residence. He found the older, more visible treatments were often disturbed by students.

The University has raised student awareness about pest issues as a preventive measure. Pharaoh ants are often imported in food and luggage and even inside equipment such as computers, Long says. They are not the only pests to arrive in this way. "We've had German cockroach nymphs come out of laptops here." Infestations are analysed by the nationality of students in the affected area which helps the pest control team in future years.

Students are not allowed to have food sent in from overseas. Mark Ager advertised in the student handbook to alert students to the problem of inadvertent importation.

However, there are other ways in which pests arrive too. Although pets are not allowed in the residences, not all students adhere to the rules. On one occasion, Robert Long was called in to deal with an infestation of house crickets. "They were shop bought – as food for a [pet] snake or lizard. They had multiplied and were eating the cereal baits put down for the mice." The mouse bait had no effect on the crickets whatsoever. "So, we were feeding them!"

Sometimes, students call for help when in fact there is no pest infestation. "The foreign students are frightened by our common spiders because where they come from all spiders are nasty. We get a few calls out for house spiders and harvest spiders", Long says. And, Mark Ager adds: "We get a lot of call outs for wasps".

Out on the campus, non-indigenous species have caused problems with the indigenous wildlife. There are mink on the site which Ager presumes have escaped from farms. They take rabbits, duck and fish. "You name it, mink will eat it", adds Long. The Environment Agency are trying to rejuvenate streams and rivers to encourage water voles to come back. Ager and Long have carried out mink surveys for this purpose too and tried to eradicate the mink. "Unless you do that everything else gets wiped out", Ager says.

In the water, there is another problem. The lakes themselves are populated with red-eared terrapin. "I don't think that's necessarily the students', Long explains, "It's more likely to be members of the public getting rid of unwanted pets. The terrapins are doing a lot of damage". Although there is not much evidence that the UK climate is warm enough for terrapin to breed successfully in the wild, the fact that they can live for 40 years is having a real impact on the lakes in which they are now established.

"We have put up lots of bird boxes all over campus to encourage the songbirds back and to give them somewhere safe.Despite reinforcing the boxes with metal, the damage done to them each year by squirrels is significant."

Mild winters alter the campus ecology of course. Robert Long says at Essex he expects an increased rabbit population this year as a result of milder weather over the last few months. "Also, the Grey Squirrel population will have tripled easily," he says. That means songbirds will drop down as the squirrels take eggs. On top of that he adds: "There are not enough stoats on campus to manage what we have got here. That's why we intervene. Squirrels do so much damage – to the wildlife and to the buildings. There is nothing preying on the squirrels – except us. They are our biggest problem." Ironically, as probably the tamest species amongst the campus wildlife, they are also the most popular with students, campus staff and the children from the University nursery. So their management must be sensitively controlled. Mark Ager, Robert Long and the rest of the University's wildlife management and pest control team have long since added diplomacy to their skill set.

www.absolutepestcontrol.biz

www.bpca.org.uk

www.gpmpest.com

Jonathan Doyle is a freelance writer. He was editor of The Retailer, published by British Retail Consortium from 2008 to 2011. Jonathan started his editorial career at the leading law publisher Lexis in the 1980s, working on a wide variety of academic and professional legal titles. Jonathan's other current work includes book and journal design, typesetting and production.

Pest control in schools

When you think of pests within schools and, with the exception of the occasional two-legged ones, most of us will think of the ubiquitous head louse. However, there is a wide range of other pests that can be a regular problem. School kitchens and waste disposal areas can attract rodents and flies; dining areas provide fruitful areas for ants, and wasps may be drawn towards children in the playground by sweet, sugary drinks and confectionery.

Pest problems in schools and nurseries bring their own set of unique problems. Parents will naturally be alarmed by the prospect of diseases such as Weil's disease (leptospirosis) if a rat infestation is discovered but some may also be equally concerned by the presence of rodenticide bait on the premises. A wasps' nest may appear to be a sufficient distance away from children in the playground but if a child suffers anaphylactic shock from a wasp sting then the school could have a major incident on its hands. Though a contract with a professional pest control company is essential to keep the premises pest free, there are a number of measures that can be taken by staff to prevent infestations from becoming established.

Pest 'Hot-Spots'

Within a school there will be several areas that will be more susceptible to certain pest infestations than others.

Food Preparation Areas

Primarily, this will be the main catering area but also bear in mind classrooms where Home Economics or Food Science lessons may take place. Rats and mice need food, water and harbourage to survive. To minimise the attractiveness of these areas ensure that all food spillages are cleaned and that any gaps between cupboards or behind working surfaces into which particles of food may fall are cleaned regularly. Food products should be stored in rodent proof containers. If food is stored in containers vulnerable to rodents, it should be inspected regularly and the building in which it is housed should be proofed to prevent access.

Proofing involves using physical barriers at specific points where pests are most likely to gain access to a building, for example from sewers via a drain. Harbourages within buildings that are most attractive to rodents are spaces between the floors and ceilings, behind skirting boards, ducts and conduits, and timber and plastic casings to pipes and cables. Proofing can block all access to these areas.

Flies can also be a major problem within food areas. The diseases spread by flies are well known and therefore they cannot be tolerated around food preparation areas. Physical control methods such as screens should be fitted to windows and doors and electronic fly killers can help control small numbers.

Waste Disposal Areas

One of the most effective methods of preventing infestation is to ensure that waste disposal areas are kept clean and tidy. All spillages should be cleared away, and all rubbish should be kept in metal bins with close-fitting lids to prevent access by rodents and flies. Drains and gullies should be cleaned regularly to remove any organic matter.

Dining Areas

The main concern here is with spillages of food and sugary drinks which may attract ants and other pests. A thorough cleaning regime will help to keep the risk of infestation to a minimum.

Playgrounds and playing fields

Dropped crisps and other playtime snacks can attract pests. Keep vegetation around the playground short and tidy, as rodents do not like open spaces where they can feel vulnerable. Encourage children to dispose of waste wrappers and food in rubbish bins and make sure the bins have close-fitting lids to discourage flies and wasps.

Playing fields may be subject to mole activity. The tunnelling activity of moles can make surfaces uneven and the molehills can cause damage to mowing machinery. If sand pits are present on the playing fields, ants may also be a problem. The sand should be turned regularly and be kept scrupulously clean.

Working with your pest control contractor

To prevent pests becoming a problem, a pest control contractor should be employed. The words 'pest control' are a bit misleading as the emphasis today is on working with clients to prevent infestations rather than reacting when pests have been discovered.

When selecting a pest control contractor, several points need to be considered. The contractor should have the ability to carry out a full survey of the premises and present a clear report, with action points, recommendations and a firm quotation of cost. As the client you should insist on seeing

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"Proofing involves using physical barriers at specific points where pests are most likely to gain access to a building."

evidence of adequate technical resources and of correctly trained and qualified service staff, supervisors and management, and also proof of adequate public liability, product liability and employer's liability insurance cover.

Your contractor should have the capacity to provide proofing and other preventive measures such as advice on housekeeping, storage, waste disposal, cleaning and the detection and monitoring of pest populations. Should an infestation occur, the contractor should be able to advise on the safest and most effective way of controlling the pest species, working with staff to ensure that there will be no risk to children, and able to provide the necessary documentation and risk assessment to meet the requirements of the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) Regulations 1998.

Why choose a BPCA member?

The British Pest Control Association (BPCA) was formed in 1942 to promote the highest standards of professionalism within the pest control industry. The aims of the Association are to represent a responsible industry committed to the control of public health pests without risk to the general public, non-target animals and the environment; represent the interests and opinions of the UK pest control industry to Government, other key decision makers, the general public and associated industries; encourage high standards of professionalism within the industry and explain the role of the industry in today's society and its benefits to the community.

Before being able to join the BPCA as a Full Servicing Member, a company must initially be able to meet, and then maintain, the rigorous criteria laid down for membership.

All staff of member companies involved with the eradication of pest problems must be adequately trained as defined under the Control of Pesticides Regulations 1986. Members must also demonstrate a high standard in their business systems, adhering to the COSHH Regulations and keeping risk assessments and other records as evidence of compliance. All stores and vehicles must comply with the BPCA's guidelines on the safe storage and transport of pesticides, and all BPCA members must carry adequate public, products and employers' liability insurance and demonstrate a business track record before their application will be considered. Upon acceptance as a member, companies must conform to the Association's Codes of Practice, Code of Conduct, Artiles and Rules of Association. Companies are also audited regularly by a BPCA representative to ensure that these systems are being maintained.

TOP TIPS ABOUT PESTS IN SCHOOLS

1. If you think you have a bee colony at school, it doesn't need to be destroyed as bees are not aggressive. Bee keepers may be able to move the nest if in an accessible area.
2. Mice can squeeze through gaps the size of a pen top, so good building maintenance and proofing is essential.
3. Watch out for mole hills - moles can undermine school playing field causing potential harm if the ground gives way and children fall. Mole hills also contain stones that will damage mowers and maintenance equipment.
4. Fly killing machines in canteens and kitchens must have their tubes changed at least once a year as the UV light that attracts flies deteriorates.
5. Pigeons should be actively discouraged from your buildings as they carry a number of diseases. Their droppings can also damage buildings and host large numbers of insects.
6. Cockroaches are mostly active at night. If you think you have a problem with them, you may need to consider providing access to your pest controller outside normal working hours.
7. Mice do up to 80 droppings a day, and the females are only pregnant for 3 weeks. If you see signs of mouse activity, have it investigated at the earliest opportunity.
8. Rodents incisor teeth grow constantly and rats, mice and squirrels will gnaw through cables and pipes to wear them down. This can result in fires, flooding and electrocution.
9. Always use a professional operator from a reputable company who is a member of the British Pest Control Association.

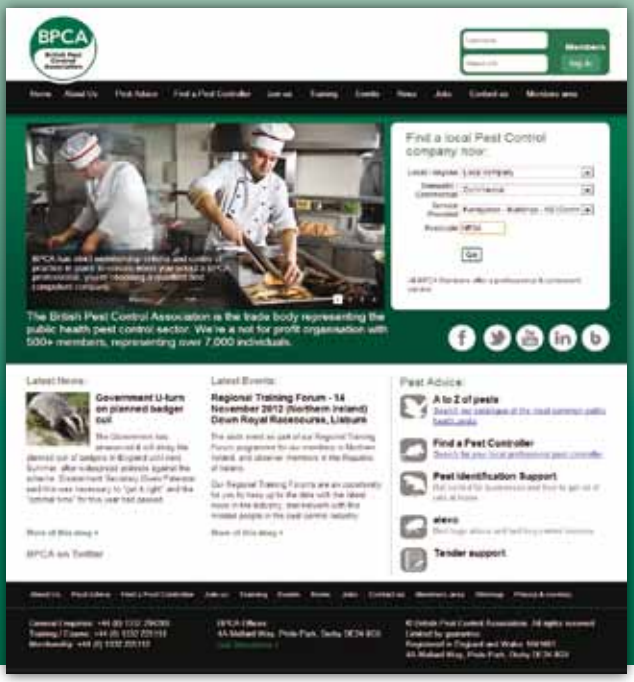
BPCA online

If you are searching for a professional pest controller, then look no further!

Searching for a professional pest controller?

Our database of hundreds of UK pest control companies with thousands of branches across the UK allows you to search by:

- **Domestic or commercial contract**
- **Pest type – bed bugs, wasps, rats, mice, birds, mammals, and many more**
- **Distance from your premises**
- **Area covered**



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BPCA British Pest Control Association

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Are you convinced it will protect your business?

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- **Producing pest control specifications, contracts and tenders**
- **Pest awareness training**
- **Associate membership of BPCA**
- **Consultancy services**
- **Pest identification**
- **Finding you a professional contractor**
- **General pest advice**

Find out more at **www.bpca.org.uk/advice**