



Nuisance News

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A bimonthly publication from the Ada County
Weed, Pest and Mosquito Abatement Department

Pest Facts



- Ada County Pest Control crews are wrapping up the 2010 gopher/rock chuck control season
- Gophers don't hibernate, but they do become less active when the ground is frozen
- The 2010 Pest Control season started in February
- As of mid-October, Ada County Pest Control crews worked 2,625 requests for service
- Those work orders totaled a combined 27,541 acres
- A gopher can make several mounds in one day; each mound can be many feet apart
- A gopher's burrow can be found up to 20 inches below the ground surface
- Burrow systems include tunnels that branch off the

main passageway; these are used for food storage and as nests for the rodents' young

- Burrowing activity is most intense in spring and fall, tapering off during summer months
- Typically a gopher's fur is the same color as the soil it's digging through
- Usually there is only one gopher per burrow system, except during breeding season and when females have their young

- Rock Chucks (or Yellow-Bellied Marmots) are the largest of the ground squirrels
- Rock chucks burrow in rocky areas to a depth of 3 feet when active - when they hibernate animals can burrow down up to 20 feet
- Rock chucks are a threat to the integrity of canal banks and small dams since they enjoy making their habitat in riprap - rock or other material used to protect water structures against erosion



A History of Ada County Pest Control

The Ada County Pest Extermination District was formed in 1968 by the Ada County Board of Commissioners in response to public outcry against damage caused by pocket gophers and yellow-bellied marmots (rock chucks). At the time, gopher damage to the Ridenbaugh and Settler canals and caused a loss of canal integrity and flooded areas in Garden City and Boise. Damage to local irrigation ditches and laterals caused the loss of thousands of gallons of water, reducing the capacity of Idaho's irrigation system and limiting the supply of water to its intended delivery point.



What's more, farmers and agriculturalists depend on water supply for their economies.

At the time, to create a specific taxing district designated for the purpose of controlling agricultural pests, the State of Idaho required the circulation of a petition that was to have been signed by at least 50 private landowners in the precinct and over 100 agricultural landowners. The citizens of Ada County circulated a petition declaring pocket gophers and yellow-bellied

marmots as agricultural pests requiring control. After sufficient signatures were collected, a petition hearing was held, and the original Ada County Pest Control District was formed. The district boundaries have changed very little from that time - it originally included Ada County land unincorporated by cities; as cities grew and annexed agricultural land, the acres in the Pest Extermination District have been reduced.



Gopher Control Alternatives

Flashy consumer gopher repellent products are widely advertised as sure-bets to help rid pesky rodents from your lawn and garden areas. However, these products, like vibrating plastic snakes, wind-powered pinwheels and ultrasonic devices have little effect on pocket gophers in field applications. Other misconceived gopher control methods include putting chewing gum, fabric softener sheets or laxatives down a gopher's burrow.

Ada County Pest Control believes that without the services provided by our department, an unchecked spread of these pests would cause a great reduction in property values. Additionally, it would increase operating expenses for agricultural producers, making them less competitive in their respective markets and decreasing their contribution to our local gross product.



Did You Know?

As a taxing district, Ada County Pest Extermination can levy a tax for district operations. This tax cannot exceed two-hundredths percent (0.02%) of market value for assessment purposes. The cities have opted out of the pest control district, so only those residents living in unincorporated Ada County are charged for (and can receive) services.

I found a _____ on my property - Where do I go for help?

Ada County Pest Control often fields calls for services regarding animals not listed as agricultural pests in Ada County (which are the Western Pocket Gopher and Yellow-Bellied Marmot, or rock chuck). Here are a few resources if you find an unwelcome pest or insect infestation on your property.



Idaho Humane Society	342-3508
Boise City Animal Control	343-3166
Garden City Animal Control	472-2950
Meridian City Animal Control	888-6678
Animals in Distress	367-1026
USDA APHIS Wildlife Services	378-5077
Idaho State Fish and Game	465-8465
University of Idaho Agriculture Extension Office - Ada County	377-2107
Honeybees - Call Ada County Pest Control for more information	577-4646

