



City of New York
Parks & Recreation

The Arsenal
Central Park
New York, New York 10021

Adrian Benepe
Commissioner

April 22, 2009

Ms. Sandy M. Schnettler
134 Colomba Road
Debary, FL 32713-3445

Dear Ms. Schnettler:

Mayor Bloomberg has asked me to reply to your email regarding rat control in Central Park.

Rats pose a risk to public health and safety. They contaminate food, damage structures and property, and transmit parasites and diseases to other animals and humans. We must protect people from the dangers of an uncontrolled rodent population, and we employ a variety of methods to do so, including improved sanitation, signage, baiting, and relying upon natural predators.

When our staff does bait, protecting Central Park's wildlife is of paramount importance. The Central Park Conservancy, which operates the park under a management agreement with the Department of Parks & Recreation, uses rat bait that poses the least potential for secondary kill and takes appropriate measures to minimize the risk to hawks and other predatory birds. We do not bait in areas where hawks and birds feed during nesting and fledgling season, from approximately late-March to October.

Over the past eight years, there have not been any recorded cases in Central Park of hawks or other raptors being poisoned by the active ingredient used in the limited baiting program. At the same time, the amount of rat bait applied in the park has significantly declined.

The thrilling sight of a red-tailed hawk against the skyline is one of the experiences that we all love to see, and we hope to ensure their presence in Central Park for many future generations of park users.

Sincerely,

Adrian Benepe

