

Baseless attack on DDT, redux

By ACSH Staff — November 16, 2010

DDT was banned in the United States since 1972 as part of a worldwide campaign against the pesticide a crusade that has perversely (and we presume unintentionally) been responsible for the loss of millions of African children from preventable malaria deaths. But the excellent powder is now being blamed for thinning condor eggs in California well, one or two eggs, anyway. [Writing](#) ^[1] in *The New York Times*, John Moir reports that biologists with the Ventana Wildlife Society suspect a handful of breeding pairs in Big Sur have been eating dead sea lions contaminated by the pesticide. There s no known source of DDT near Big Sur, but the biologists speculate the sea lions could have been contaminated from ocean deposits off the coast of Los Angeles, where Montrose Chemical Corp. released tons of DDT into the sewer system in the 1950s and 60s.

Dr. Ross calls the report thoroughly hysterical baseless. I don t even know what to call it. It s not even an article what would you say when someone is musing in The New York Times science section about DDT harming condors without any evidence? And it s not just idle musing as the end result will be that more Third World children will die of malaria.

A nonsensical screed, says ACSH s Dr. Josh Bloom. DDT is essentially non-toxic. In fact, it takes about four times as much DDT as caffeine to cause fatalities in rodents. Hardly the deadly poison that this article portrays it as.

Dr. Ross says studies purporting to show DDT thins birds eggshells were flawed; those birds were deficient in calcium, and when fed a proper diet, laid solid eggs. It s just another piece of anti-DDT propaganda but it s in The New York Times, he fumes.

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