

## FEATURE

## Entomologists offer relief from pesky problems

Story and photos by  
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Entomologists from the 437<sup>th</sup> Civil Engineering Squadron have the responsibility of keeping CAFB free from pests.

"Pest control," as it's often referred to, handles more than just bugs. Snakes, raccoons, rats and an occasional alligator are just a few of the other creatures that entomology has to deal with.

"We do some everyday stuff like surveying for termites and baiting for ants and rodents," said Senior Airman Daniel Allbright, 437 CES entomologist. "What some people don't know is that we also handle larger animals that are creating a problem. That might mean catching spiders, a raccoon, a cat or even the rooster that was hanging around the Shoppette."

"We set a dog trap at the Shoppette with a trail of birdseed from the sidewalk into the trap," said Airman Lorie Kopecky, 437 CES entomologist. "It didn't take very long before he walked right in. We're shipping him to a zoo in Myrtle Beach (S.C.) today



**Airman Lorie Kopecky treats the base picnic area with granules to help control the ant and bug population.**

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There isn't specific guidance for every situation entomology faces, said Kopecky. Sometimes, like with the rooster, entomologists have to use ingenuity.

One circumstance in which entomology has guidance is the controlling of mosquitoes, according to Allbright. Entomology works closely with Public Health in monitoring mosquito traps that have been placed on the base. Once the female count in the traps hits 27, entomology starts spraying.

"We try to get to all the areas where there's still water first," said Allbright. "That's the best place for eggs to hatch. I expect to get the word from Public Health anytime now that it's time to start. The combination of our recent rain and cloudy mornings isn't helping control the eggs any. At least a sunny morning can kill some of the eggs."

Kopecky said, "We do our best to help control the mosquitoes. We can't possibly get rid of them all, but the spraying reduces the numbers considerably."

Just because entomology works with all kinds of creatures doesn't mean they are lovers of all animals, according to Kopecky.

"I hate snakes," she said. "Usually by the time I get to a snake call, either the resident or the police have already caught it. All you really have to do is put your foot right below his head and pick him up. I don't like doing it, but I always do because that's my job."

Allbright said he loves his job, but he's no fan of alligators.

"The thought of having to apprehend an alligator isn't very appealing to me. Luckily

I've been getting psyched-up by watching the 'Crocodile Hunter' on TV," Allbright joked.

Along with the animal issues entomology handles, they also have to keep weeds under control.

"We spray herbicide in areas that need it for visibility and also for appearance," said Allbright. "The flightline is our number one priority to support the C-17 mission, but we also take care of the bricks at crosswalks and other places that make the base look better."

"It gets kind of hot when we're out there spraying for weeds," said Kopecky. "We wear a lot of safety equipment like coveralls, respirators and gloves that magnify the heat."

Entomology's efforts, while sometimes thankless, have earned them praise from squadron leadership.

"Senior Airman Allbright, Airman Kopecky and the entire entomology shop epitomize the team effort we see all around Charleston AFB; everyone complimenting the mission by doing their part, and doing it well," said Lt. Col. Jon Roop, CE commander.

According to Allbright, "Sanitation is everything. The best defense against pests of all kind is a clean work and living area."

For more information about entomology, or to request service, call 963-5268.



**Airman Lorie Kopecky exercises the "office mouse." The mouse was supposed to be used to feed a captured snake, but the snake died before it had a chance to make a meal of the mouse.**



**Senior Airman Daniel Allbright treats a kitchen cabinet. Allbright suggests keeping kitchen areas clean and free of food particles as a first line of defense against pests.**