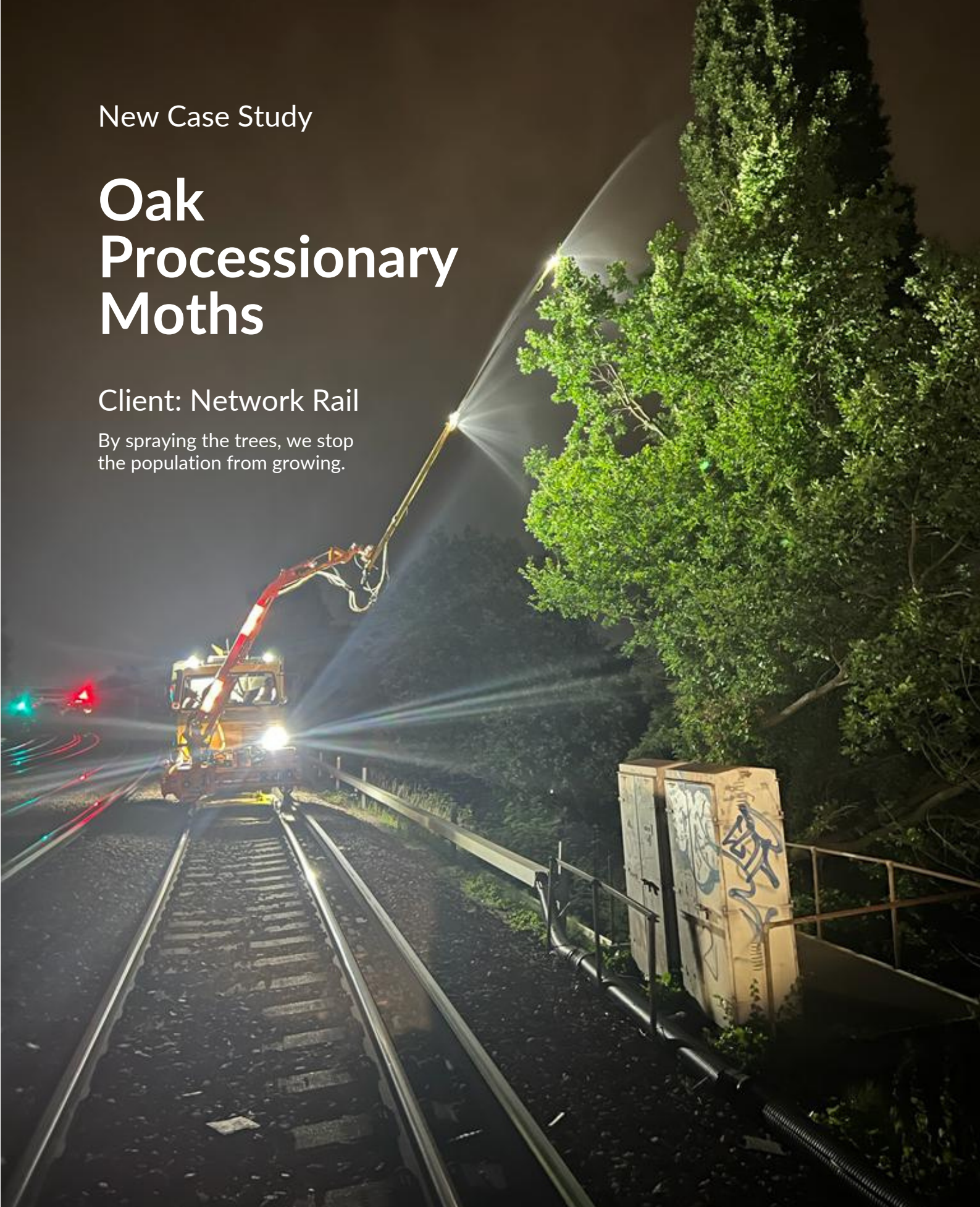


New Case Study

Oak Processionary Moths

Client: Network Rail

By spraying the trees, we stop
the population from growing.



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Problem

Oak Processionary Moths were accidentally introduced to England in 2005 and have, since then, been a threat to some species of oak trees in the South East and London areas.

The Forestry Commission has put in place a programme of survey and control to protect the species and keep a handle on the size of this moth population to protect our native trees.

Some species of oak trees can be severely damaged by the caterpillars which eat their leaves. Large populations have the ability to strip them bare, leaving them more vulnerable to other pests, diseases and drought, too.

Solution

Every year throughout March, we visit sites within the Network Rail infrastructure that the Forestry Commission placed notices on and are vulnerable to OPM infestation.

This year, we surveyed 13 sites on behalf of Network Rail to let them know levels of infestation. If they do not act against the moths on their land, the Forestry Commission can issue a fine, so they contract us to safely survey and then treat the affected areas to control the infestation.

The months of April - June are the ideal time for the treatment of OPM as this is when the tree has a full canopy of leaves. The chemical used for the treatment is sprayed on the leaves, dries, then when the caterpillar eats it, kills them, stopping them from becoming moths, laying larvae, and reproducing their population.

OPM treatment is made possible with the use of our specialised Rail Road Vehicle (Unimog Spray Unit), which has a spray boom attachment capable of treating the OPM infestation from the railway track and off track.

The boom long-reach spray arm is unique as it can be used on the track in short possession windows and can be used in band or spot treatments.

This is a unique mechanised solution provided by Avondale throughout the UK.

During treatment, we visit each site once to four times, usually at night or early in the morning depending on the size of the area to be treated, location and access to the worksite.

Outcome

By spraying the trees, we stop the population from growing. In time, OPM can destroy oak trees and can also give humans who come into contact with them, sore blistered skin.

For Network Rail, they are able, with our help, to fulfil their duties to the Government on controlling the OPM on their land.