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Baiting Method

+ When was the baiting approach decided?

+ Why aerial baiting? Why not do the whole island with bait stations?

- [Could the SenesTech fertility control method have been used?](#)

Fertility control has been used with limited success as a method of pest management in a few species, primarily larger mammals, where individuals can be targeted for treatment. Experimental sterilization methods have included chemicals and proteins delivered by vaccine, and genetically-modified viral pathogens. However, the effectiveness of these experimental techniques in the wild and their impacts to non-target animals are unknown.

The possibility of using a new rodent sterilisation technology called "Contrapest", developed by SenesTech Ltd, was considered with the following issues identified:

- The product "Contrapest" aims to reduce rat populations through sterilisation, limiting fecundity but leaving some animals to defend territories i.e. ongoing control not eradication.
- It requires every female to be dosed with the product i.e. it needs to be regularly dispensed as there is no inherited or contagious transmission of the reduced fertility.
- The fertility control compounds (VCD and Triptolide) are not species-specific and could affect other mammals including humans.

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Rodent Eradication Project

The Lord Howe Island Rodent Eradication Project (LHI REP) aims to eradicate introduced rodents: the Ship Rat (*Rattus rattus*) and the House Mouse (*Mus musculus*) from Lord Howe Island (LHI) and its associated islands and rocky islets.

Search

- Currently the product is designed for rats although the developers state that it has the potential to be modified to target mice, along with other species, although dispensing the appropriate dosage is problematic at this stage.

The product was not suitable for the rodent eradication program on LHI as:

- The product aims to reduce rat numbers, not eradicate them.
- The product needs to be ingested over a prolonged period (approx. 75 days) and all female rats would need to be exposed to the product. This would effectively mean that the product would need to be put out continually for the foreseeable future.
- While reducing rat numbers would have some benefits, only total eradication of rats and mice could give the anticipated ecological, social, economic and human health benefits.
- The product is currently dispensed by adding it to water. This is problematic for LHI as dispensers would have needed to be put over the whole island at approximately the same spacing as bait stations. The product needs to be consumed over many feeds as it affects the reproductive system slowly meaning that the bait would need to be made available in every territory for a prolonged period to affect even one generation of rats.
- Even if the product was used on the accessible areas and was able to reduce numbers, this would only be short term while the product was being dispensed. Also, rodents from the untreated areas would soon move in as resources, food and territory were freed up
- The current product Contrapest is only for rats which would leave mice untreated.

Contrapest has been investigated for both the LHI program and by other rodent eradication organisations internationally. Its use would be experimental, hence it has not been considered a feasible option for rodent eradication currently or in the foreseeable future.

Repeated baiting of uncertain oral contraceptives on an inhabited and rugged island across seasons or capturing, vaccinating, and releasing every member of a single gender of the LHI rodent population was not considered feasible. The lack of data and tools disqualified the use of fertility control from detailed consideration.

Baiting

- + How much poison was used?
- + Can the Board do more than two aerial bait applications?
- + Did the community and visitors have advanced notice of a bait application?
- + Was the aerial baiting done over people's houses?
- + If the program has been considered safe, why do you need to do monitoring afterwards?
- + How was the baiting undertaken and over what time period?
- + How did you plan to get the rodents off the sides of the mountains especially where there are cliffs and caves?

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- + What happened to all the dead rodents after the baiting occurred?
- + Why was 2019 the right time to eradicate rats and mice?

Biosecurity

- + How do we keep rodents off the island after the eradication?

Environment

Wildlife Impact

- + What will be the impact on birds and plants?

Marine

- + What would happen if bait went into the sea?
- + What about fish, was it true there would be a ban on catching and eating fish after the eradication?
- + What about the whale strandings on Kaua'i?

World Heritage

- + How does the eradication affect Lord Howe Island's World Heritage Status?
- + Why are islands so important for biodiversity?

Health

- + Was human health at risk during the REP?
- + How should people interact with baits?
- + What should someone do if they came into contact with bait?
- + Was there a danger from dust?
- + What about water tanks?
- + What about my vegetable garden?
- + What about the water and soil?

My Property

- + What happened on individuals' properties?
- + What changes did individuals have to make?

RODENT ERADICATION PROJECT

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