



MEDIA RELEASE

Norfolk Island Community Rat Baiting Program

We have successfully completed our first round of rat baiting! In the lead up to baiting we carried out extensive monitoring with chew cards to gather some baseline data. Baiting commenced on the 28th January, using a rat bait called 'Couma'.

Couma is a first-generation rodenticide, meaning that the active anticoagulant ingredient coumatetralyl is rapidly metabolised by the rodent, and poses little to no risk to any animal that might eat the poisoned rat.

Our precious Morepork Owl is the reason for choosing this particular bait at this time of year.

If the owls successfully hatched any chicks over the summer then they would be out hunting to feed their young.

A slow moving, docile rat would be the perfect dinner!

There has been great feedback from the community, with reports of high uptake of bait and plenty of dead rats around the place (if only they didn't have to smell!) A reduction of rat numbers has been observed by some, as well as an increase in mice.

Though this sounds counterproductive, mice populations can only increase when predation pressures by rats reduce. So it is a good sign!

We baited for 3 consecutive weeks and then collected any uneaten bait at the end to avoid it going mouldy and deterring the rats.

Post-baiting monitoring is now being carried out so that we can compare the numbers before and after our efforts.

The next round of baiting will occur in a couple of months. Hopefully, in time we'll start to see a reduction in rats overall.

Thanks to the Anson Bay community for getting on board with this initiative.

Here's to more food production, more natural regeneration of native plants, and more birds 😊

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Lilli-unna King

ENVIRONMENTAL PROJECT OFFICER

10 March 2023