

Eradication and pest-free: 5 years on from the Wellington symposium

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Parallel histories

- Pest-free – from the last deer and rabbit to ‘predator-free NZ ‘
- Mainland aerial control to Island eradication and back
- Validating eradication – from wait and hope to the Rev. Bayes and chew cards
- Control tools – from smarter use of the old to the search for magic bullets
- Control strategies – from one at a time to multi-pests and site based prioritisations

Consequences of the Pest-free paradigm

- All animals are equal (Orwell 1945)
 - All individuals are equally pestiferous
 - All species are equally pestiferous
- Only prioritisation needed is where to begin and how to roll it out - unless we do the whole lot at once
- Trophic cascades a killer?
- If intrinsic nonsense we waste a lot of money and forego optimised solutions
- Re-invasion critical constraint

Consequences of site-based paradigm

- Need to understand assets at site and key threats
 - \$ per ha to be effective limits number of sites
- Prioritisation essential but cannot be nationally optimised
 - Too many stakeholders with local needs
 - Too easy to rort the system

My take on research needs for both paradigms

- Why do some individuals survive?
 - Rats on tropical islands
 - All species (other than rodents?) in NZ
 - Mechanisms unknown – ad hoc chasing of new tools unlikely to solve it other than by chance
 - Mop-up costs a killer for reaching zero densities
- Rates and scales in re-invasions
- Cost effective detection at very low densities

Learned in 5 years?

- Why survivors?
 - Not a lot, Island Conservation's workshop apparently not much of a help
- Reinvasion?
 - Starting to get data (Tararua, etc)
- Search and detection?
 - Chew devices (possums and tb, rats on small islands)

Detecting panthers in NSW

