



Norfolk Island National Park

RODENT CONTROL EXPANSION TO PROTECT GREEN PARROTS

This project makes practical steps to enhance and expand the existing rat baiting program in Norfolk Island National Park. This will reduce direct and indirect impacts of rats on native and significant species and their habitats, including the endangered green parrot and ground-nesting seabirds.

Year 2 update (3-year project)

OVERVIEW OF PROGRESS

- The expansion of the Norfolk Island rat baiting network is complete, with an additional 1000 stations more than doubling the size of the network to 1800 bait stations. Monthly baiting of the extended network is underway.
- Community engagement about rodent control is ongoing, including meetings and presentations with the Norfolk Island National Park Advisory Committee, the Flora and Fauna Society and Wild Mob conservation volunteers.
- Analysis of monitoring data from 2016 on rat activity and bait take revealed a strong seasonal variation in activity levels, likely due to food availability and juvenile recruitment.
- A rat baiting strategy for 2017 has been prepared, aimed at improving bait efficacy. Pre-feeding will occur prior to baiting with the current D3 cholecalciferol bait. Following this a staged bait change will be rolled out across the entire network, using a “first generation” Diphacinone bait. First generation anticoagulant baits pose a low risk of secondary poisoning to non-target species, including the Norfolk Island boobook owl, owing to their short persistence time in living tissue. As rodents need multiple feeds of both the cholecalciferol or first generation baits to ensure a lethal dose, there is a risk that the rat population will develop a resistance to the baits and begin avoiding bait stations if either one is used for lengthy periods of time. Regular bait change will limit these risks.



Rodent control will protect the endangered Norfolk Island green parrot (photo by Cassandra Jones).