

# Rakiura/Stewart Island non-toxic cat bait palatability trial

Christmas Village, March-April 2021

## Bait



Non-toxic cat bait as used in this trial

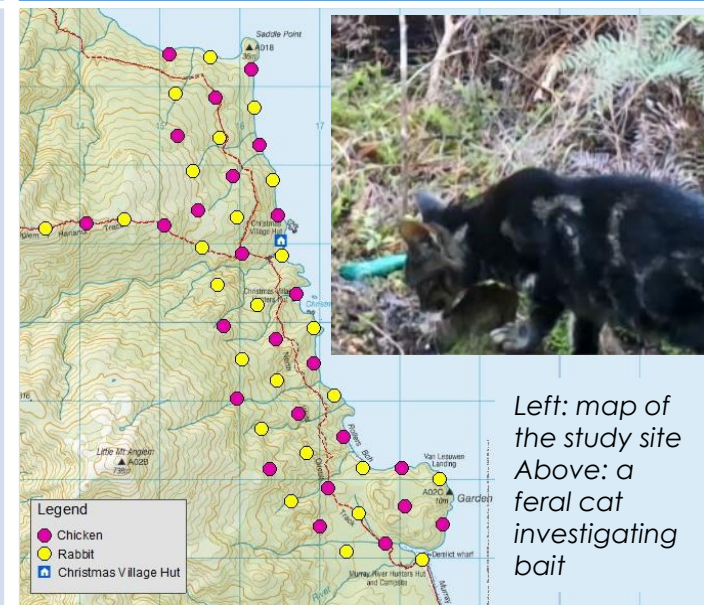
## PAPP background and trial design

A toxic bait is in development to target stoats and feral cats. This bait will contain the toxin PAPP (para-aminopropiophenone). PAPP is a carnivore-specific toxin that has low toxicity to non-target species including birds. PAPP kills target animals quickly and humanely.

As part of the development of this toxic bait, we need to understand if it is palatable to the target species and if there are any effects on non-target species (e.g. native birds). A trial was conducted on Rakiura/Stewart Island using a non-toxic form of the bait, to observe interactions of feral cats and non-target species, including kiwi.

The trial was conducted over 4 weeks in March/April 2021 between Murray River and Saddle point on the North-east coast of Rakiura. Baits were placed at 50 sites approx. 500 metres apart and cameras were placed overlooking each bait. Both chicken and rabbit sausage baits were used. Baits were replaced mid-way through the trial, resulting in 50 exposures of each bait type.

## Map

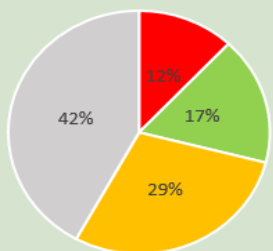


Left: map of the study site  
Above: a feral cat investigating bait

## Results

### Consumption of bait:

- Many baits were taken by rats and possums, limiting the amount of bait that cats could take. Only 17 of 30 cats detected encountered bait



■ Cat ■ Possum ■ Rat ■ No take

### Palatability of bait types to cats:

- Of the 17 cats that encountered bait 9 consumed bait
- Cats ate both bait types. Comparisons difficult given small sample size, but it looks like they preferred chicken over rabbit (not statistically significant)
- Cats are fussy eaters – they did not eat any bait more than 5 days old.

Cat interaction with bait (bait 0-5 days old).	C	R
Encountered	7	13
Eat bait	7	5
% Bait eaten	100%	38%

### Non-target interactions:

- Kiwi met baits 67 times
- 11 kiwi sniffed bait, 3 picked it up & dropped it
- No kiwi or other birds ate bait
- No deer ate bait



### Occupancy:

- Minimum of 30 individual cats were seen, a rough density of 3 per km<sup>2</sup>
- Possums and rats very common
- Kiwi were seen at over half of sites

Species	Number of sites seen at (50 sites)	% of sites seen at
Cat	35	70%
WT Deer	27	54%
Kiwi	28	56%
Ship rat	41	82%
Possum	49	98%