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## Managing New Zealand's marsupial menace

The following questions were asked during our live webinar with Graham Hickling and Bruce Warburton but due to time restrictions, we were unable to answer these in the session.

**For those wallaby that moved seasonally, could it also have been as a result of the other member of the pair having been shot?**

It was interesting that although we released them as a pair, they basically separated and had no overlap of activity ranges. Two of three that moved did so before its "pair" was shot. We thought it might have been disturbance from spring mustering, but that didn't happen at all sites - so just speculating that it was some seasonal cue.

**Do you have interest in developing traps that are effective and can reset automatically? I know of someone making prototypes but wondering if Manaaki Whenua would be interested in getting onboard? Thanks great presentation.**

If it was for research (live-capture), then we would be interested. If it was for control, then best to discuss with operational staff in councils.

**Do parma and dama wallabies have the molar strength to crush cyanide pellets?**

Possoms can easily crush them so wallabies should be capable too, but we don't really know the answer to that question presently. We are carrying on this research in the coming year and one aspect of the work will be to look closely at how the wallabies feed on the toxic pellets to better understand why they sometimes avoid them or drop them.

**Did the pairs of released wallabies stay together ?**

No they didn't. They parted company immediately after release and showed no inclination to find each other.

**Do they have distinctive pellets compared to other species?**

Yes wallabies have a distinctive faecal pellet. If you go the web site "pest detective" you can see some there. They are typically squarish and flat. <http://pestdetective.org.nz/clues/droppings/>

**Can aerial 1080 drop be an alternative for the wallaby control?**

Aerial 1080 works well but as a control method it has a range of constraints that restrict where it can be used. So Regional Councils and other pest control groups find it helpful to have a variety of control tools they can choose between.

**It looks like the historical spread was limited in the early-mid 20th century, but has increased in recent decades - is this accurate, and if so, what is increasing the rate of spread?**

Good question. Prior to the Biosecurity Act (1992) Bennett's wallabies were controlled by the South Canterbury Wallaby Board (farmers paid rates to fund this), and the dama by (I think) the BOP Pest Destruction Board (BOP council?). Under the Biosecurity Act the councils have to develop Regional Pest Management Plans, and these require consultation with stakeholders (farmers). The farmers decided they didn't want to pay wallaby rates and preferred self-help. Not much self-help control happened and wallaby numbers increased and they spread.

**May highlight the requirement to undertake 12 month studies to discover any seasonal changes. Would the GPS batteries ever last that long?**

The collars can last 12 months (depends on fix rate). There is a lot of biology we don't know yet.

**What are the scenarios where night shooting and aerial bait application are not appropriate?**

For Bennet's wallabies most of the area is farmed so councils cannot always get land cleared of livestock to make it available for doing aerial operations. For dama there are challenges around the social licence with using aerial 1080 and the much smaller land holdings that are challenging for large-scale aerial operations. Night shooting is carried out, but for Bennett's it is generally confined to areas with LUV access tracks and open (low) vegetation cover. For dama pasture is shot at night, but night shooting is probably not cost-effective when numbers are very high.