

## **1145 Eradicating the house mouse from Boullanger and Whitlock Islands, Western Australia – challenges and solutions; Tony Friend**

Boullanger and Whitlock Islands are home to the endangered dibbler *Parantechinus apicalis* and the grey-bellied dunnart *Sminthopsis griseoventer*, as well as six skink species and two geckos. At least fifteen bird species breed there, including the burrow-nesting wedge-tailed shearwater *Puffinus pacificus* and white-faced storm-petrel *Pelagodroma marina*. House mice *Mus musculus* were introduced prior to 1960 and a recent study showed that they compete with dibblers for food in winter, concluding that this competition will intensify as climates warm.

Feasibility studies were conducted into the eradication of house mice from both islands, which are separated by a shallow channel approximately 150 metres wide. Trials were conducted to determine non-target uptake of non-toxic Pestoff 20R bait pellets and their breakdown time. Dibblers and the larger skinks (King's skinks *Egernia kingii* and Jurien Bay skinks *Liopholis pulchra longicauda*) eat the baits and both dibblers and silver gulls *Larus novaehollandiae* take dead mice.

Eradication of the house mouse is proposed, using Pestoff 20R after establishment of captive groups of dibblers, King's skinks, Jurien Bay skinks and bull skinks *Liopholis multiscutata bos*. Whitlock Island (5 ha), where the only sensitive species are dibblers and Jurien Bay skinks will be treated in the first year and Boullanger (31 ha) the following year.

## **1205 Towards the eradication of the invasive African big-headed ant, *Pheidole megacephala* from Lord Howe Island; David Kelly**

The Lord Howe Island Board is undertaking a program to eradicate the African big-headed ant (*Pheidole megacephala*) from Lord Howe Island. *P. megacephala* is listed among the world's 100 worst invasive species, by the World Conservation Union and is listed as a key threatening species under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*.