

RODENTICIDE IMPACT—CHUDITCH RESEARCH

Gillian Stack

There are good reasons for mouse and rat control, but choice of method can have unseen flow-on effects. Rodent poisons can impact heavily on native predators like owls and chuditch, with some poisons worse than others. If physical traps are impractical in your situation, look for rodenticides that have warfarin or coumatetralyl as an active ingredient. These break down much faster in the body and so are less likely to be lethal to predators higher up the food chain. That is, the predator is more likely to be able to process that dose before receiving another dose in another meal, keeping the effects sub-lethal, although not necessarily inconsequential. Similar to the effects of alcohol on a human, the 'hangover' of processing the toxin can make them more vulnerable to other mishaps like car strikes.

Chuditch research - can you help with conservation of this threatened species?

High levels of multiple rodenticides have been detected in two chuditch from the Perth area, and researchers would like to investigate further to get a better understanding of how these predators might be impacted and by which rodenticides.

If you find a dead chuditch, please freeze it and label with the date and location it was found and contact

information for the collector. Road-killed chuditch can still provide very useful information. Researcher Mike Lohr can be contacted on m.lohr@ecu.edu.au to arrange delivery. Your assistance will be much appreciated.

This information will add to information gained recently about rodenticide impact on boobooks, another predator of small mammals.

[For more information on Mike Lohr's research into southern boobooks see Western Wildlife 20/1.]



Chuditch on the move. Photo: Kimberley Page



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