

 <p>Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels</p>	<p><b>Fourth Meeting of the Population and Conservation Status Working Group</b></p> <p><i>Wellington, New Zealand, 7 – 8 September 2017</i></p> <p><b>Rabbit haemorrhagic disease: Macquarie Island rabbit eradication adds to knowledge on both pest control and epidemiology</b></p> <p><b><i>Brian Cooke, Keith Springer, Lorenzo Capucci and Greg Mutze</i></b></p>
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#### **SUMMARY**

Rabbit haemorrhagic disease virus (RHDV), introduced into Australia and New Zealand as a biological control agent for wild rabbits, is least efficacious in cool humid areas where a non-pathogenic calicivirus (RCV-A1) also circulates. Heavy rabbit mortality following release of RHDV on cold sub-Antarctic Macquarie Island, where RCV-A1 was apparently absent, not only complemented the planned rabbit eradication operations, especially by reducing secondary poisoning of sea-birds (including two ACAP listed *Macronectes* species) from aerial brodifacoum baiting, but also ruled-out cool or humid climate as a major limiting factor of disease spread. In turn, this has advanced the idea that RCV-A1 antibodies inhibit RHDV spread as well as reducing disease severity and mortality.

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