

Saving Marion Island's Seabirds™

The Mouse-Free Marion Project



09 February 2024

Calls for Expressions of Interest to prepare: i) a review of the Feasibility Study for Eradication of Mice from Marion Island, and ii) a Mouse-Free Marion Project Research Plan

Following a Mouse Eradication Workshop held in New Zealand in November 2023, and a subsequent meeting with the NZ Department of Conservation's Island Eradication Advisory Group (IEAG), the Mouse-Free Marion (MFM) Project has resolved to seek professional input to inform some planning aspects of the MFM Project.

We are seeking Expressions of Interest (EOI) to prepare a Review of the Feasibility Study for Eradication of Mice from Marion Island (Feasibility Study) and a Mouse-Free Marion Project Research Plan.

Feasibility Study

A Feasibility Study ('Eradication of House Mice *Mus musculus* from Marion Island: a review of feasibility, constraints and risks' by John Parkes) was prepared in 2015.

Over the intervening years, a number of mouse eradication projects have been attempted globally – some successful, others not. Eradication strategy and design has been further refined over that timeframe. For the MFM Project, planning has progressed to a point where more is now known of the framework under which an eradication attempt of mice on Marion Island would be undertaken.

One recommendation of the IEAG in December 2023 was that the MFM Project undertake a review of the 2015 Feasibility Study.

The attached EOI document (Document 2) outlines the scope of the work required and the documentation that is available to support the review. The basis of the review is to consider the original Feasibility Study and subsequently available information and resources, to ascertain whether the original findings remain accurate, and to add any recommendations or further relevant information.

In the documentation, we have sought a view from respondents as to whether it is considered desirable (or necessary) to visit Marion Island on the 2024 Changeover Voyage, departing Cape Town on April 11th. If this is deemed desirable, MFM will undertake every endeavour to secure a berth; however, respondents should be aware that there is a strong likelihood that we will not be able to secure berths on the voyage. This is partly due to the high demand for berths on the ship for currently-approved scientific research projects, and partly due to the timeframe under which the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and Environment undertakes the voyage arrangements, including medicals.

Research Plan

Concurrently with the Feasibility Study Review, the MFM Project is also calling for Expressions of Interest to prepare a Research Plan. The intent of the Research Plan is to review previous trial and research work undertaken on Marion and to recommend further research work that should be undertaken prior to the implementation of the mouse eradication. The Research Plan should both identify and detail (prescribe) such further research.

The attached EOI (Document 3) outlines the scope of the work required and includes an outline of previous research that has been undertaken on Marion Island and documentation that will be provided to support development of the Research Plan.

Collaborating on the two documents

While each of the two documents we seek can be undertaken independently, we recognise that there is some potential for cross-over between them.

Accordingly, we would be happy to consider EOI submissions that propose to undertake both documents under one contract, as long as each is undertaken concurrently with the other and that each is led independently by an experienced practitioner. Such a collaborative approach can have synergies in terms of peer review and joint input into each document.

Distribution

Please forward this cover note and attached documentation to people in your networks who you consider would have the appropriate skills and experience to assist the MFM Project with the development of these documents.

Contact

Should you have any queries about the EOI process or content of the attached documents, please contact MFM Project Manager, Dr Anton Wolfaardt (anton.wolfaardt@birdlife.org.za) in the first instance. Please also copy the MFM Operations Manager, Keith Springer (keith.springer@birdlife.org.za) in any correspondence.

Yours sincerely,



Dr Anton Wolfaardt

Mouse-Free Marion Project Manager