Predator Control Can Have Unintended Consequences

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Introduced predators pose threats to biodiversity and are implicated in the extinction of many native species. A new Mammal Review analysis of published studies highlights unintended outcomes of predator control programs that are implemented to mitigate these effects.

In Australia, considerable effort is spent controlling populations of introduced predators, including the dingo Canis dingo and the red fox Vulpes vulpes, in order to reduce their effects on native species and livestock. The analysis found evidence that lethal control of dingoes and foxes has different outcomes for different mammalian species.

Dingo removal decreased the abundance of native mammals weighing less than the critical weight range of 30–5500 g, and increased the abundance of mammals above this weight range. Fox removal increased the abundances of ground-dwelling and arboreal mammals.

Lethal control of dingoes did not have a significant effect on cats, but where dingoes were removed there was a tendency for foxes to increase, and where foxes were removed there was a tendency for cats to increase.

Additional Information
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About Journal
Mammal Review is the official scientific periodical of the Mammal Society, and covers all aspects of mammalian biology and ecology. Hypothesis-driven analytical and systematic reviews of current theoretical and applied research on mammals, meta-analyses, practical assessments of techniques for studying mammals and large-scale considerations of the status, conservation and management of mammals are particularly welcome. We publish limited numbers of comments, in which authors respond to papers published in Mammal Review, and short communications, in which new findings or methods from the field of mammalogy are described. We also publish perspectives, in which authors present an original point of view on any aspect of mammalian biology, behaviour, ecology and evolution, or on a management issue in mammalogy

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