

Gough Island Restoration Programme
Mouse Eradication Project Implementation
Prospective Team member briefing

N.B. This document relates to the baiting positions. If you have avicultural experience and are interested in a role with the aviculture team, please contact Richard Switzer Richard.Switzer@rspb.org.uk, who is managing that team.

Background

The RSPB are leading the eradication of mice from Gough Island in 2020 as a key component of the Gough Island Restoration Programme. The operation is divided into three main operational phases:

1. March – May. Establishment of baiting and aviculture infrastructure. Capture and holding of Gough buntings and Gough moorhens.
2. May – August. Arrival of baiting team, helicopters etc. Baiting undertaken and demobilisation of baiting team. Ongoing captive holding of buntings and moorhens.
3. September – December. Captive holding of buntings and moorhens. Staged release of the birds. Demobilisation of Aviculture team.

The baiting operation will involve the aerial application of approx. 200 tonnes of cereal bait over the island using 4 helicopters. A team of approx. 20 are required for the baiting team (with the aviculture team being additional to this). The team will leave Cape Town on the South African icebreaker Agulhas II in mid-May and return to Cape Town at the end of August. Accommodation while on Gough Island will be in shared dormitories either in the South African weather station or in a Weatherhaven tent.

The primary role for the baiting team is to manually load 25kg bags of bait (up to 36 bags per load) into the helicopter spreader buckets, in rapid succession. All team members have to be able to lift 25kg bags approx. 1m high for most of a day. As team members will be rostered between roles it is unlikely any one person will need to lift bags for more than a couple of hours, but it is possible that it may be required. Two loading sites will be operated simultaneously.

Other operational tasks that the team will undertake include: – training for the required tasks, assisting with unloading and reloading the ship, setting up the loading site for each operational day, disposing of empty bags and the wooden storage pods which will have contained the bait, cleaning up the base (this needs to be to a very high standard throughout the operation), and assisting with hand baiting around the base. Team members will also be required to undertake normal camp duties – assisting with cooking (we will have a chef to oversee cooking), doing dishes etc.

Since one of the bait-loading stations will be at a remote location, team members will be involved in establishing and maintaining this camp and its resources.

All personnel will be working directly with cereal bait containing Brodifacoum, a second-generation anticoagulant. While the required Personal Protective Equipment, (overalls, gumboots, goggles, gloves) will be provided and the risk is negligible, if you have any concerns about working with toxicants, this is not the job for you.

The team will be living with approx. eight South African National Antarctic Programme weather station staff, and it will be important to remember it is their home for a year and they have high priority work tasks that they need to undertake (including shift work at night).

Key desired skills

Crucial

- Physically fit and able to lift 25kg bags repeatedly over a long duration.
- Self-motivated to be ready to every morning even after prolonged periods of bad weather
- Experience working around and under helicopters.
- Experience working as a team member in isolated situations and challenging working environments.
- Previous experience working in remote field stations, in close living and camping, and in challenging working environments.
- Ability to live in close quarters with other people and get on with personnel from a diverse range of cultures, including the South African Weather station staff.
- Awareness of safety issues – particularly relating to helicopters, cargo operations and fieldwork, but also wider issues.
- Ability to work safely and responsibly with toxins.
- Practical/ technical skills- carpentry, mechanical, computing/GIS.

All personnel will be required to undertake a thorough medical prior to confirmation of appointment.

The timeline for the selection of the team is yet to be confirmed but is likely to be around September.

If you are interested in being part of the team undertaking this important project, please complete the following form and send to pmcclelland@xtra.co.nz. If you have any questions you can email Pete McClelland at that address.

Gough Mouse Eradication prospective team member information.

<i>Name</i>	
<i>Contact email</i>	
<i>Any periods between now and September when you may be uncontactable?</i>	
<i>Current Organisation (if relevant) Option</i>	
<i>Previous relevant experience (isolated work environments, small teams, work under helicopters).</i>	
<i>Any medical issues which may be a concern.</i>	Yes /No. Details should not be provided here but if there are specific concerns please contact the Operations Manager separately to discuss in confidence.

<p><i>Additional skills/ experience/ qualifications. – medical, mechanical, carpentry, helicopter work</i></p>	
<p><i>Relevant referees. Managers, co workers etc. preferably with at least one with a link to a member of the Gough team. Give relationship and roles!</i></p>	