



DOCUMENT 4: The Sentinel Shield Brief

(The "Why Killing Cats = More Rats" Explainer)

How it Works:

SCIENTIFIC BRIEF: THE LANDSCAPE OF FEAR

Topic: Mesopredator Release & Rodent Suppression

1. **The Devastation:** Rats are expert swimmers and prolific nest-raiders. A "Rat Surge" following a cat cull leads to significantly higher bird-nest failure than the presence of managed cats ever did.

The Fact: In New Zealand's complex ecosystem, removing a top predator (cats) without a 100% effective, simultaneous rodent eradication plan triggers **Mesopredator Release**.

The Scent Barrier: Resident cats create a "Landscape of Fear." Their mere scent acts as a natural, non-toxic population brake on rodents. (Ref: *Dielenberg & McGregor, 2001*).

The Solution: Maintain the **Sentinel Shield**. By managing cats humanely (Unwilding/TNS), we keep the "biological brake" on rodents while protecting the cats' right to life.

2. **The Surge:** When cats are culled, this psychological barrier vanishes. Invasive rodents (Norway and Ship rats) become bolder, breed faster, and expand their territories.

Respect Life. Respect Nature. Restore the Balance.
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