

## Should we use gene editing to stop spread of invasive species?

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Every year, the mouse population on the South Farallon Islands explodes to plague-like densities. These mice have spread the seeds of invasive plants and eaten several endemic species, substantially disrupting the island ecosystem.

It's a familiar story on islands all over the world where invasive rodents have taken over and scientists are trying all they can to exterminate them. However, rather than rodenticide, could scientists genetically engineer a house mouse that would breed itself out of existence if set loose on an island? Thanks to CRISPR-Cas9, the idea is very possible.

But are we ready for a world where whatever ails wild populations of species can be "fixed" with a tweak of the genes? Given that we've already made a grand mess of every place on earth, do we dare go to the deepest level of the genome? These aren't theoretical scenarios anymore. In places around the world, scientists are pursuing such projects. Yet, even as scientists work on safeguards, it's clear that regulators and the public need to catch up with the science.

**Read full, original post:** [Re-Coding for Conservation](#)