

‘Morally appropriate’? Entomologists question effort to eradicate disease-causing tsetse fly in Africa

Sleeping sickness (or trypanosomiasis), endemic to sub-Saharan Africa, is a horribly debilitating disease.

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[Why not] end sleeping sickness by eradicating the tsetse (pronounced TET-see) fly from the entire African continent? This is the stated goal of the African Union’s Pan African Tsetse and Trypanosomiasis Eradication Campaign. But [another new study](#), published in December [2018] in BioScience, calls for reexamining that approach. “The important ethical question remains: Is tsetse fly elimination morally appropriate?” entomologist Jérémy Bouyer and his co-authors wrote.

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For one thing, tsetse fly eradication is not about getting rid of a single species—but rather an entire taxonomic family called Glossinidae, with 31 species and subspecies across Africa. Conservationists commonly eradicate introduced or invasive species from habitats where they do not belong; but tsetse flies are native to Africa, the study notes, and have “a complex biology and unique evolutionary history.”

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After considering a long list of such pros and cons, the study concludes, “arguments predicated entirely on instrumental value do not provide compelling support for global tsetse fly eradication.” But the study says it is “morally justified” to identify areas where tsetse flies pose a threat, and then control or eliminate local populations.

Read full, original post: [Should We Kill Off Disease-Causing Pests? Not So Fast](#)