

**Press Release**  
**22 September 2009**

**SPCA requests detailed proposal from RIM Management re proposed cull**

The Cape of Good Hope (CoGH) SPCA has requested Robben Island Museum Management (RIM) to prepare and submit a detailed Animal Management Plan on their proposed eradication, via lethal shooting, of feral cats, European Rabbits and Guinea Fowl and any other non-endemic animals.

In a letter sent last week to RIM's resident conservator, James Makola, the CoGH SPCA's Senior Wildlife Inspector, Kira Joshua lists the information required by the SPCA, enabling it to fully review the proposed new and revised methodology to eradicate the island's populations of alien, non-endemic species, including but not limited to the above.

The request is borne out of the SPCA's concern that mistakes and lack of commitment, such as those shown by the Island's previous management during the first rabbit cull, will be repeated.

"We accept the need to manage these populations of introduced (non-endemic) animals, but believe that the decisions being considered today are largely as a result of gross mismanagement in previous years", said Allan Perrins, CoGH SPCA CEO. "A year ago after all non-lethal options had been explored, culling of feral rabbits by passive trap capture and lethal injection took place. Whilst that operation did not result in any animals being inhumanely treated, RIM's failure to secure sufficient resources to sustain the project, resulted in long periods of downtime between culling periods, with it eventually being completely abandoned. As a result the rabbits have continued to breed unchecked, denuding the island of almost all palatable vegetation and undermining historically significant buildings", he said.

"We are asking that RIM demonstrate that they have given the necessary thought and consideration to this mass eradication operation, estimated to take several months, if not years to complete", he said.

The CoGH SPCA has also requested details on the planned emergency procedures for injured animals (both target species and non-target species) and the infrastructure that will be provided to attend to these animals.

"Our overriding concern is to ensure the humane and ethical treatment of animals on the island and whilst we accept that there is scientific evidence to support the cull, it must be conducted responsibly and with the necessary care", said Perrins.

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