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Smelling a Rat: The Mysterious Giant Rodents of the Mallee

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Coman, BJ

Abstract: As a young biologist, I began my career studying a variety of pest animals, most of which had, wittingly or unwittingly, been introduced into Australia. I began with foxes and wild dogs, later moving down the scale (in size, but not in

significance) to rabbits and plague mice. In the course of my investigations, I had cause to work with scientists from the various states as well as from the CSIRO. As you might imagine, ours was a rather small and close-knit circle. We got to know each other fairly well. There were specialised "Pest Control Conferences" held every three years, as well as an Australian Wildlife Management Society, which held annual conferences. Joint projects were not uncommon and, in the case of plague mouse research, the Australian Wheat Board funded coordinated studies in the drier grain-growing areas of all those states which had a significant mouse problem in plague years.



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