
Investigating the effectiveness of lures for feral cat (*Felis catus*) detection





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Key Research Questions

- Are there lures that are better than current best practice (rabbit meat) for **detecting** feral cats in Aotearoa (New Zealand)?
- How do detections over time with different lures compare?
- Are there lures that are better than current best practice for **trapping** feral cats?
- Are there lures that are better than current best practice at detecting other invasive predators in Aotearoa (Possums, Rats, Stoats, Weasels)



Methods

- Sites within the rural landscape, containing native bush in North Auckland & Whangārei
- Cameras ~200m apart with lure/ lure combination ~3m in front
- 30s Video triggered 24hr - behaviour, detection and time in front of camera categorised
- Each lure out for 21 days
- Trapping trials followed the same methodology as monitoring trials with lures inside cage traps



Lures trialed:

Visual

- Artificial birds nest
- Mouse cat toy
- Feather boa

Audio

- Blackbird nest
- Cat aggression
- Cat meow
- Juvenile possum
- Mouse squeaker
- Possum courtship
- Rabbit meat (control)

Food

- Canned fish
- Dried fish
- Peanut butter and cat biscuits
- Rabbit meat
- Tuna oil
- Wet cat food (chicken)

Olfactory

- Catnip

Social

- Ferret bedding
- Cat scat (Female)
- Cat urine (Female)

Combination

- Cat scat, feather boa, cat meow audio

Trapping trials only tested
cat meow audio and **cat scat** compared to rabbit meat



Overview

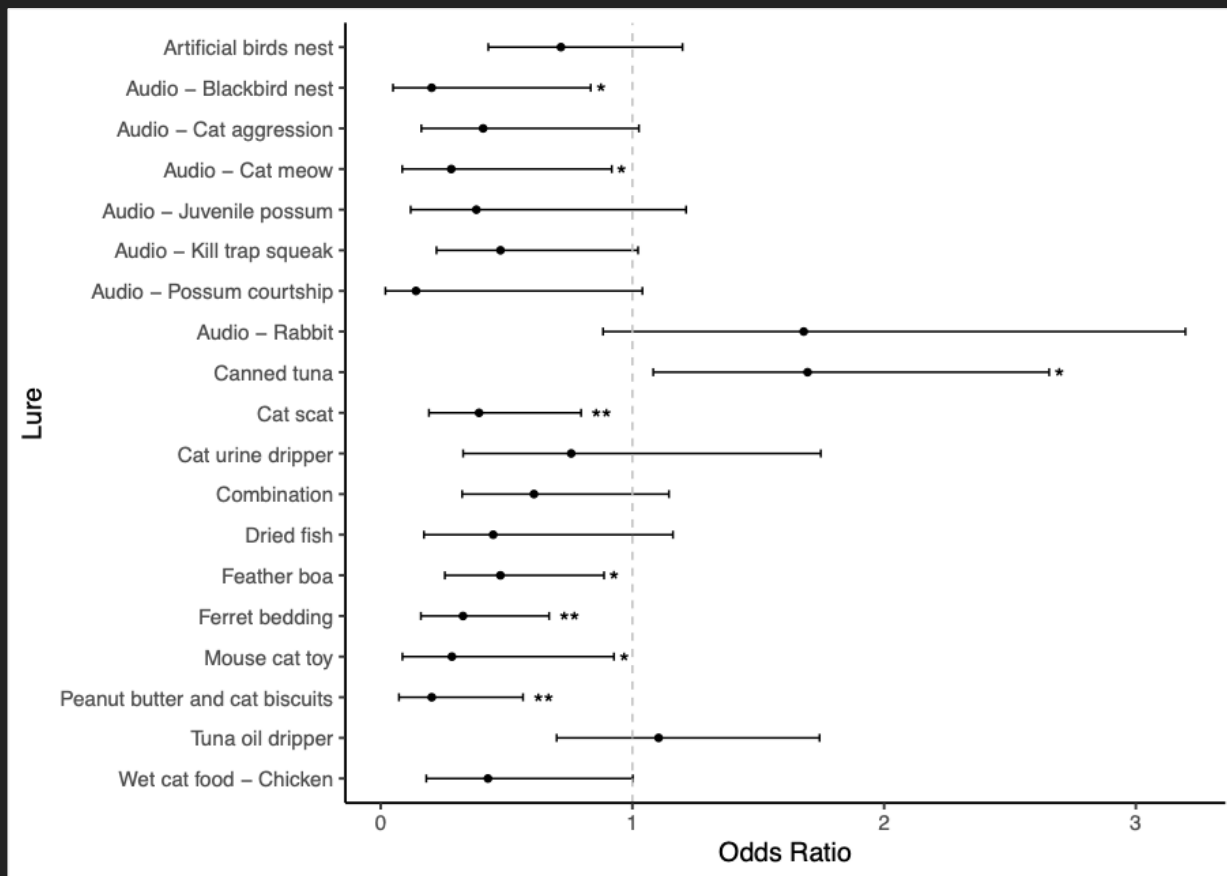
- Dec 2024 - June 2025
- ~10,000 trap nights
 - 75 Cameras
 - 18 sites
- 60 individual cats detected
 - 11 Identified as domestic
- 436 Observations of cats
- 124 Observations of stoats
- 3027 Observations of rats
- 4176 Observations of possums
- Hedgehogs, ferrets, pigs, goats, mice, birds, weasels



Research Question 1

Are there lures that are more effective at detecting feral cats compared to the current best practice (rabbit meat)?

Odds of detection compared to rabbit meat

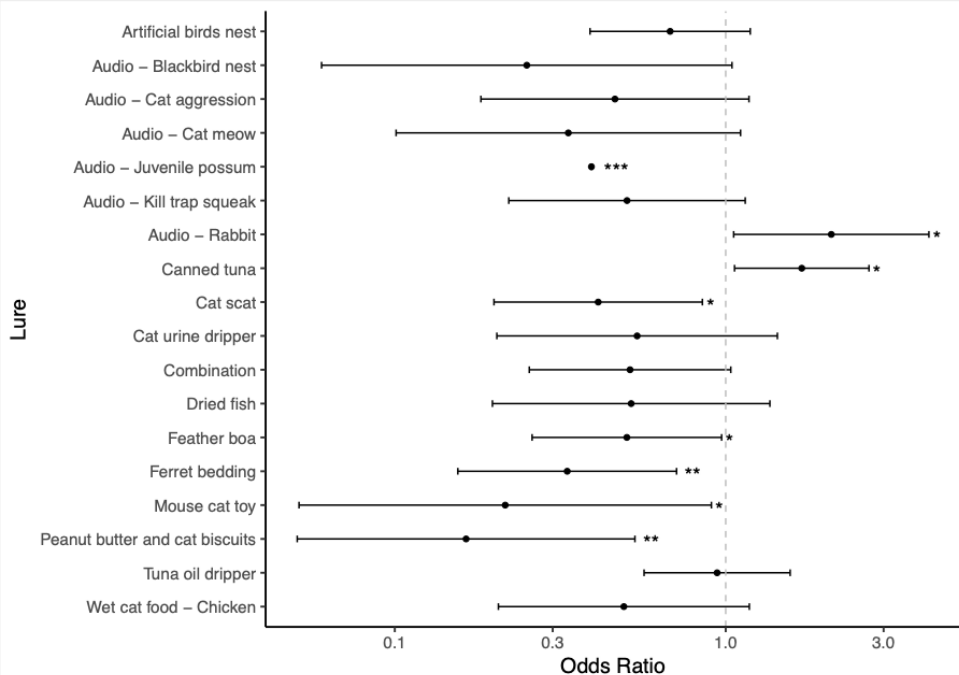


Worse than rabbit

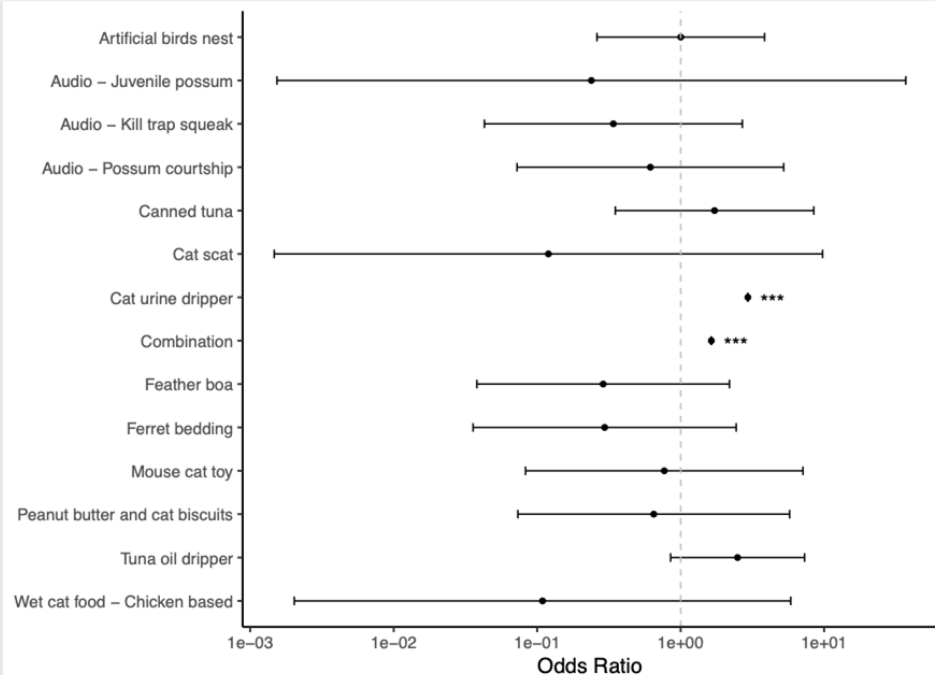


Better than rabbit

Feral cats only

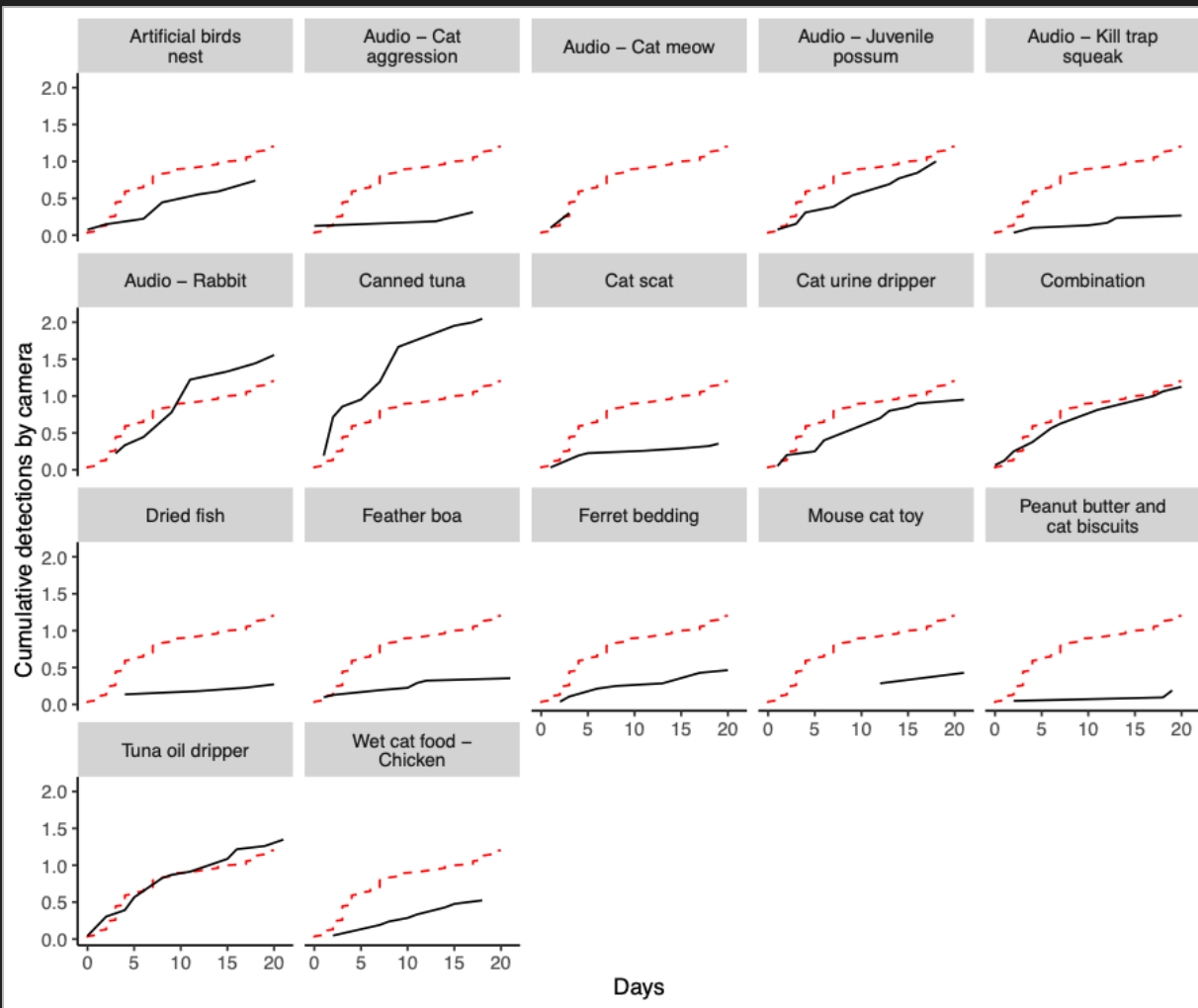


Domestic cats only



Research Question 2

How well do lures perform over time compared to rabbit meat?



--- Rabbit meat

Research Question 3

How do different lures impact trapping success of feral cats compared to current best practice (rabbit meat)?

Summary

- No significant difference between the cat meow audio, cat scat and rabbit meat at trapping cats

Even for rabbit meat, only %11 of encounters then resulted in a cage entry



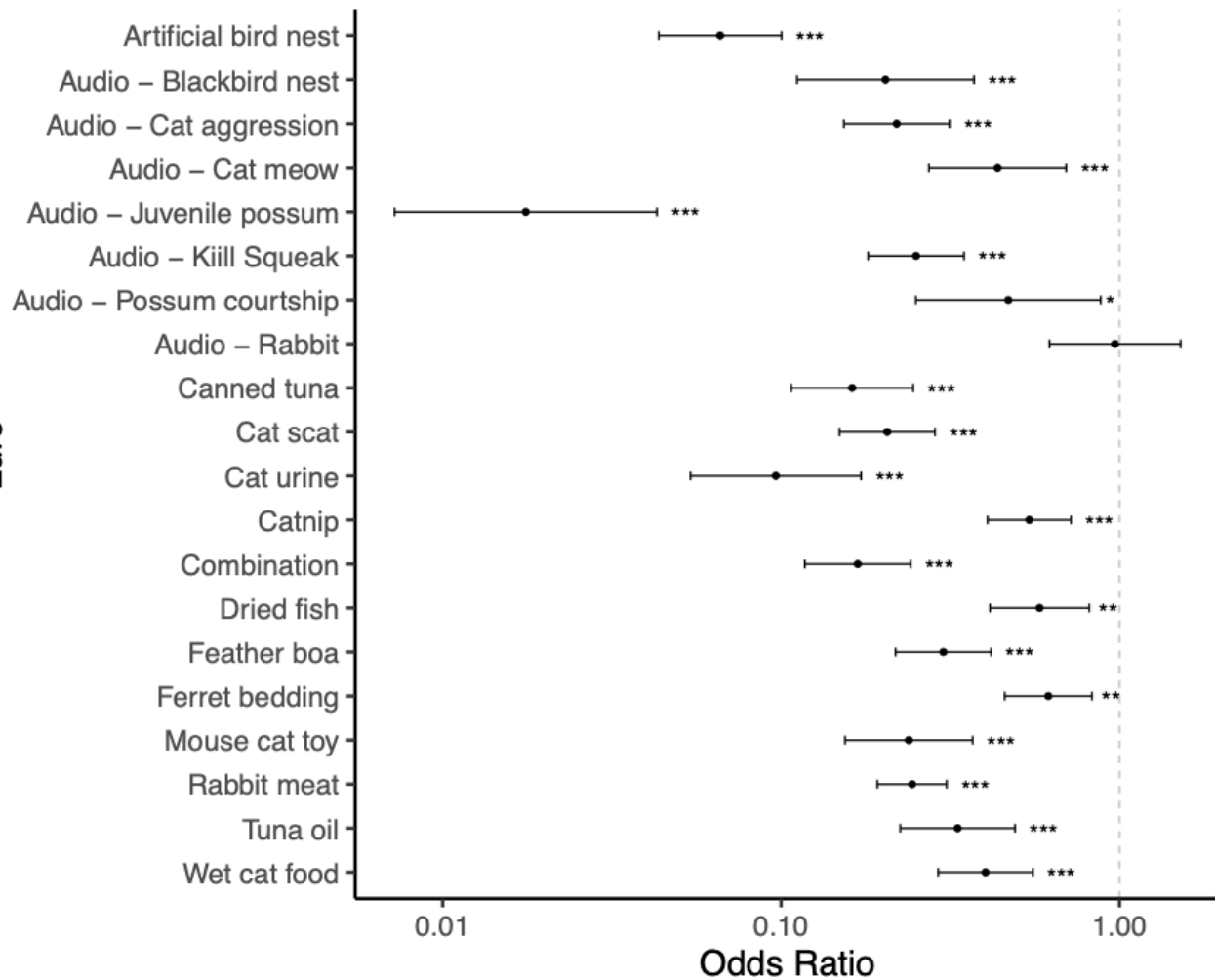
What about other invasive predators detected during the study?



Rats



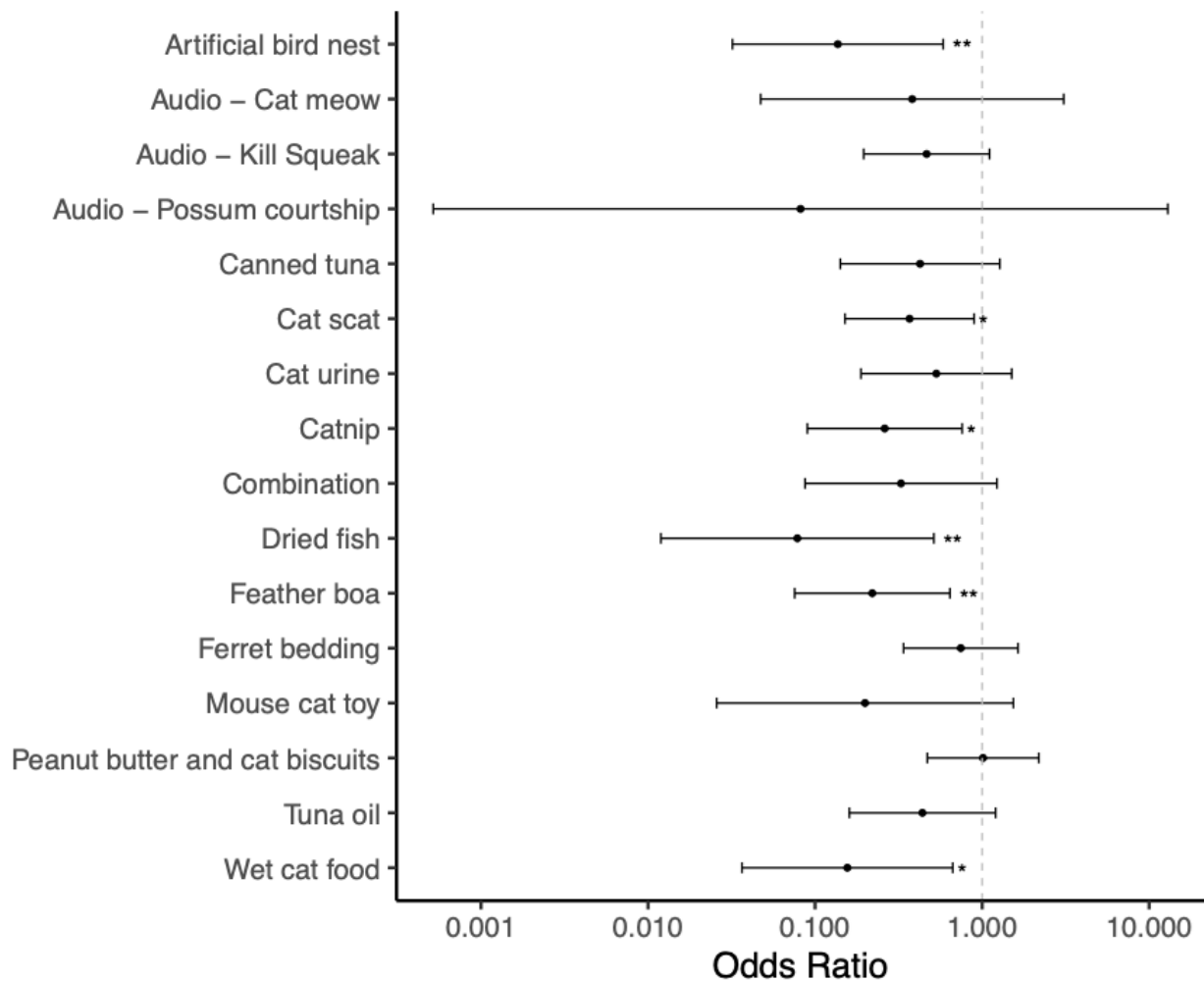
Lure



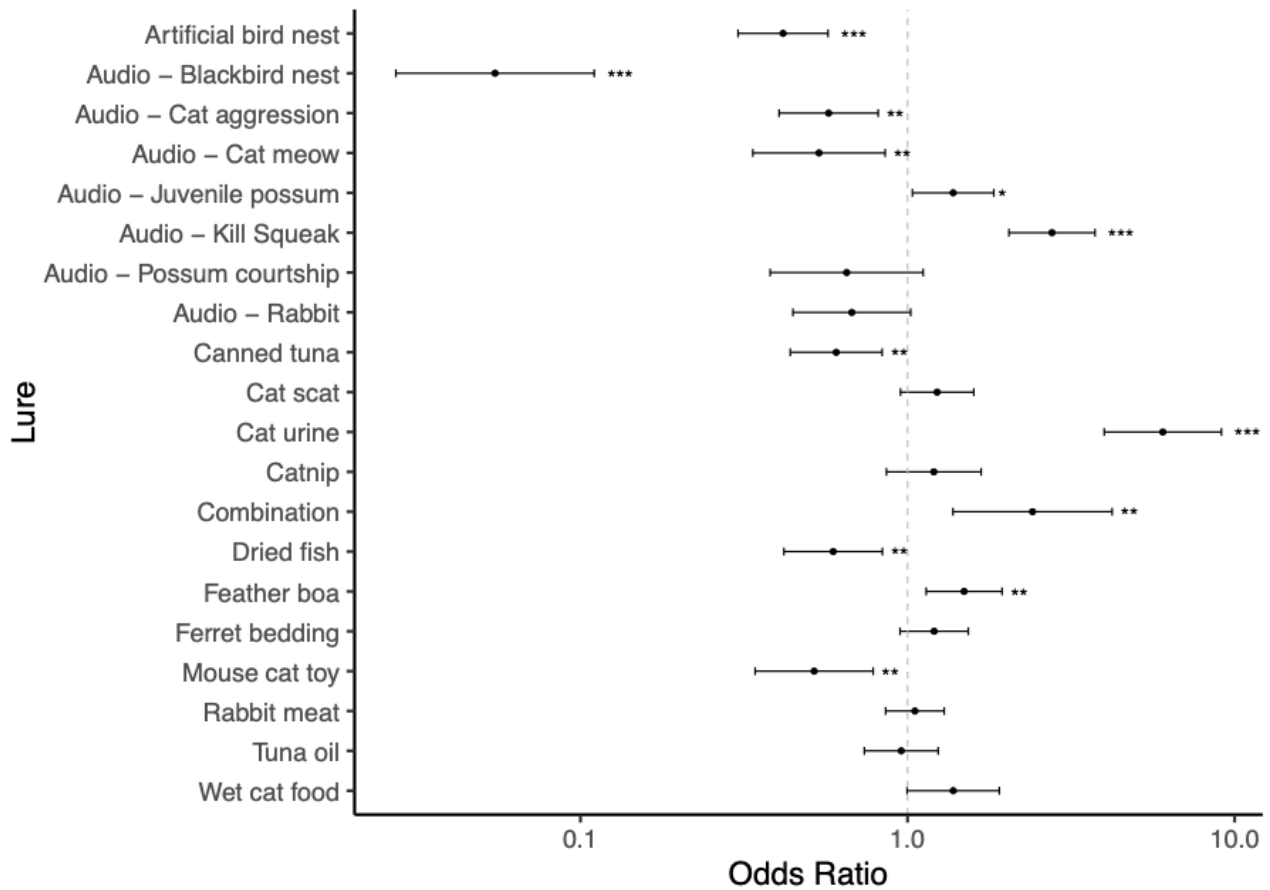
Stoats



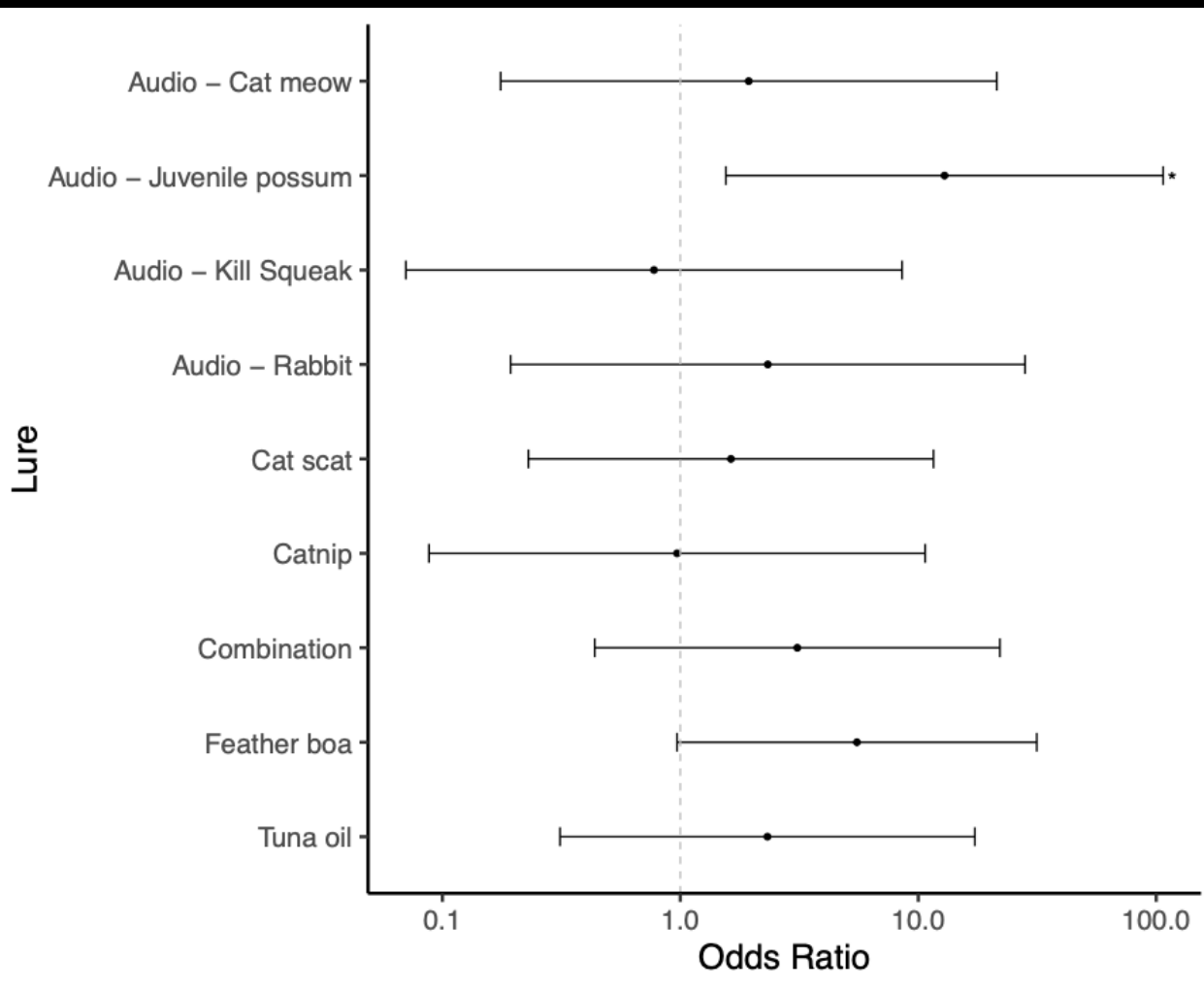
Lure



Possums



Weasels



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Questions?