

Japan's mongoose problem finally ends

Have you ever heard about mongooses before?

Vocabulary

1. population 2. released 3. eradicated 4. campaign 5. monitoring 6. recover

True Story

In 1979, about 30 mongooses were _____ on Amami Oshima to control dangerous habu snakes. However, the plan failed because mongooses hunt during the day, while habu snakes are active at night. Instead, the mongooses began eating native animals, including rare birds, frogs and the Amami rabbit.

With plenty of food and few natural competitors, their _____ grew to about 10,000 by 2000. Japan began a major _____ to remove them from the island. Thousands of traps were used, and specially trained dogs helped find their scent. The last mongoose was caught in 2018. After six more years of careful _____, Japan declared the species _____ in 2024. Native wildlife is now beginning to _____.

Quiz

1. How many mongooses were released on Amami Oshima in 1979?
2. Why did the plan to control habu snakes fail?
3. What animals did the mongooses start eating?
4. When did Japan declare the mongooses eradicated?

True or False

- | | |
|---|--------------|
| 1. 1979 mongooses were released on Amami Oshima. | True False |
| 2. The mongooses and habu snakes are active at the same time. | True False |
| 3. Native wildlife on Amami Oshima is beginning to recover. | True False |

Conversation

- A: So, releasing mongooses was a good idea, right?
- B: Not really. They didn't even catch the snakes!
- A: What did they do then?
- B: They ate everything else instead.
- A: Oh no! That sounds like a disaster.
- B: Yep, but we finally caught the last one in 2018.

Discussion

1. Do you think animals can help control other animals?
2. What's your favorite animal and why?
3. Have you ever seen a snake in real life?
4. Would you like to visit an island like Amami Oshima?
5. Do you know anyone who tried to solve a problem but made it worse?