

Can gene drives make wasps extinct in New Zealand?

Peter Dearden *¹

¹ Genetics Otago, University of Otago, P.O. Box 56, Dunedin 9056

Development of gene editing technology has led to the implementation of gene drive ideas, first suggested in the early 2000's. Gene drives are a transgenic strategy to 'drive' a transgene through a population of organisms, in effect cheating genetics. By linking the gene drive mechanism to something that upsets the biology of the organism it is possible to cause local extinction of a population. Gene drives have been described in the popular press as being a great solution for New Zealand's Predator Free aspirations, but are they? In this talk I will discuss the possibilities of using gene drives to target that pernicious New Zealand pest; the common wasp.

