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Benefits of Rhodamine B in Monitoring Mammal Populations

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ABSTRACT: When used in non-lethal doses the biomarker Rhodamine B may offer distinct benefits in monitoring and studying animal populations. This orally delivered fluorescent dye has been shown to persist for several months in hair and can be detected by exposing fur samples to specific wavelengths of light. The dye has recently been used to determine consumption of baits for efforts such as vaccination and contraceptive administration. In a project being conducted on the Clemson University campus, Rhodamine B is being used as a biomarker to assess the effectiveness of DiazaCon™ as a contraceptive in gray squirrels. Future research with Rhodamine B should involve identifying long term effects of the dye on animal behavior and survival, as well as environmental impact.

Key Words: biomarker, contraception, DiazaCon™, gray squirrel