

## The Extinction of Species, Bill Gates, and the US Military

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There is a technology called gene drives.

It asks the question: what species should we make extinct today?

Why are Bill Gates and the US military involved in forwarding that technology?

A gene-drive scientist might say, "I have a plan. By manipulating genes, we can make invasive rodents extinct, on an island where humans are living."

In the next fraction of a second, a flurry of questions pops up.

The overarching question is: Does this mean genetic manipulation can make ANY species extinct?

Here is a passage from Gene Drive Files, a site with a referenced information on the subject:

"Gene drives are a gene-editing application that allows genetic engineers to drive a single artificial trait through an entire population by ensuring that all of an organism's offspring carry that trait. For example, recent experiments are fitting mice with 'daughterless' gene drives that will cascade through mouse populations so that only male pups are born, ensuring that the population becomes extinct after a few generations."

"Proponents have framed gene drives as a breakthrough tool for eradicating pests or invasive species. However, the Gene Drive Files reveal that these 'conservation' efforts are primarily supported by military funds."

Gene drive technology could be deployed to wipe out troublesome plant-parasites, weeds, crops, animal pests, animals, and...what about humans? Mull that over with your morning coffee.

Several years ago, UN member nations were considering a recommendation to call a moratorium on the use of gene drives. However, Bill Gates showed up to try to squash the moratorium.

The Gene Drive Files reports:

"Documents received under Freedom of Information requests reveal that the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation paid a private agriculture and biotechnology PR firm \$1.6 million for activities on Gene Drives. This included running a covert 'advocacy coalition' which appears to have intended to skew the only UN expert process addressing gene drives..."

"Following global calls in December 2016 from Southern countries and over 170 organizations for a UN moratorium on gene drives, emails to gene drive advocates received under a Freedom of Information request by Prickly Research reveal that a private public affairs firm 'Emerging Ag' received funds from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to co-ordinate the 'fight back against gene drive moratorium proponents'."

There's more from the Gene Drive Files. It involves the military:

"A trove of emails (The Gene Drive Files) from leading U.S. gene drive researchers reveals that the U.S. Military is taking the lead in driving forward gene drive development."

"Emails obtained through a freedom of Information request by U.S.-based Prickly Research reveal that the U.S. Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) has given approximately \$100 million for gene drive research, \$35 million more than previously reported, making them likely the largest single funder of gene drive research on the planet. The emails also reveal that DARPA either funds or co-ordinates with almost all major players working on gene drive development as well as the key holders of patents on CRISPR gene editing technology."

"These funds go beyond the US; DARPA is now also directly funding gene drive researchers in Australia (including monies given to an Australian government agency, CSIRO) and researchers in the UK. The files also reveal an extremely high level of interest and activity by other sections of the U.S. military and Intelligence community."

For the moment, put aside the notion of intentional extinction of species. Consider unintended consequences.

As I've shown in past articles, the latest and greatest gene-editing tools (e.g., CRISPR), which are used for gene drives, are far from slam-dunk precise, despite official assurances.

For example, this study: Genome Biology, July14, 2017, titled, "CRISPR/Cas9-mediated genome editing induces exon skipping by alternative splicing or exon deletion." An exon is "a segment of a DNA or RNA molecule containing information coding for a protein or peptide sequence." So you can see that exon skipping or deletion is a very bad outcome.

ANY gene editing done on ANY species opens the door wide to all sorts of errors and unforeseen consequences.

As for intentional destruction, we have this: MIT Technology Review, 2/8/16: "We have the technology to destroy all Zika mosquitoes."

"A controversial genetic technology able to wipe out the mosquito carrying the Zika virus will be available within months, scientists say."

"The technology, called a 'gene drive,' was demonstrated only last year in yeast cells, fruit flies, and a species of mosquito that transmits malaria. It uses the gene-snipping technology CRISPR to force a genetic change to spread through a population as it reproduces."

"Three U.S. labs that handle mosquitoes, two in California and one in Virginia, say they are already working toward a gene drive for Aedes aegypti, the type of mosquito blamed for spreading Zika. If deployed, the technology could theoretically drive the species to extinction."

"...a gene drive [gene editing] can...make mosquito populations disappear. The simplest way to do that is to spread a genetic payload that leads to only male offspring. As the 'male-only' instructions spread with each new generation, eventually there would be no females left, says Adelman. His lab discovered the Aedes aegypti gene that determines sex only last spring. The next step will be to link it to a gene drive."

Bill Gates favors this technology. So shouldn't we? After all, Bill is the number one humanitarian on the planet, right?

Right?

No?

Oops.

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