

Rescue Teams Train Rats to Help Earthquake Survivors

VOCABULARY WORDS

1. innovative /'inəˌvādiv/ (adjective) (of a product, idea, etc.) featuring new methods; advanced and original
Example: Several modern furniture stores also sell innovative foldable sofa beds.
2. up to speed /əp too spēd/ (phrasal) performing at a desired rate or level.
Example: We arranged for some home tutoring to get him up to speed with the other children in his class.
3. prototype /'prōdəˌtīp/ (noun) a first, typical or preliminary model of something, especially a machine, from which other forms are developed or copied
Example: The company is testing a prototype of the weapon.
4. rodent /'rōdnt/ (noun) a type of small mammal with sharp front teeth: They expect to catch rodents, mostly mice.
Example: The mouse trap caught a small rodent in it, and the home owner disposed of it quickly.
5. prone /prōn/ (adjective) likely to or liable to suffer from, do, or experience something, typically something regrettable or unwelcome.
Example: Years of logging had left the mountains prone to landslides.



Rats are being trained to be sent into earthquake debris wearing tiny backpacks, so rescue teams can talk to survivors. The **innovative** project is being worked on by 33-year-old research scientist Dr Donna Kean from Glasgow. So far seven rats have been trained, taking only two weeks to get them **up to speed**.

At the moment homemade **prototype** backpacks containing a microphone are being used, and scientists are sending them into mock debris. Specialist backpacks containing

microphones and video gear as well as location trackers will be created to allow rescue teams to communicate with survivors during real earthquakes.

Donna has been based in Morogoro, Tanzania, for one year, working with non-profit organization APOPO for a project named Hero Rats. The **rodents** will get the chance to work in the field when they are sent to Turkey, which is **prone** to earthquakes, to work with a search and rescue team. (Good News Network)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Do you think an earthquake is the world's scariest natural disaster?
2. How can people prepare for a natural disaster?
3. How do you react when you see a rat?
4. What do you think about rat movies such as Ratatouille?
5. Do you think rats can really help in rescue missions? Why or why not?
6. What do you think of animals being used in rescue missions?