Trapping for pest animal control – possums and mustelids

Why are possums and mustelids a problem?

Possums are a serious threat to our native forests and economy. Possums consume large amounts of native vegetation and predate on the eggs and young of native birds. Possums also do considerable damage to agricultural and horticultural crops and can carry bovine tuberculosis.

There are three species of mustelid in New Zealand; ferrets, stoats and weasels. Mustelids are a serious threat to our native animals. All three species prey on native birds, lizards and invertebrates. Mustelids can also kill domestic fowl.

Trap management

Do not touch traps unless authorised to do so. Setting and un-setting traps can cause injury if not handled correctly. Ensure children and dogs are kept away from kill traps when they are set. GWRC traps will be checked regularly.

Types of possum traps

Possum Master

The Possum Master trap is constructed with a plastic shell with a noose mechanism housed inside the casing. The trap is fixed to a tree and baited with fruit or cereal bait.

The noose contracts around the neck when the possum takes the bait, killing the animal.

Timms

The Timms trap is a yellow plastic case with a steel kill mechanism inside. It is set on the ground and secured with steel pegs. The trap is baited with fresh fruit or extruded cereal bait.

The possum pushes its head through the opening on the front of the trap casing and pulls on the bait on the trap trigger. A spring-loaded metal bar is activated by the trigger, constricting the neck and killing the animal.

Warrior

The Warrior is a steel construction kill-trap. It is set by mounting to a tree or fence and baited with fruit or cereal bait inserted on the trap trigger. When the possum takes the bait the steel jaws of the trap clamps shut on the possum’s neck, killing the animal.

Trapping

Traps are an important tool for controlling possums. There are a variety of possum traps available that can kill the possum or capture it alive. Kill traps are very effective when used correctly. Greater Wellington Regional Council uses three types of kill trap to control possums.

Greater Wellington Regional Council uses the DOC series of kill traps to control mustelids. These traps vary in size depending on the target species; from the smaller 150 to the large 250. These traps can be set on or above the ground depending on the location and trap type.

Left to right: sip rat, weasel, stoat and ferret
Types of mustelid traps

DOC mustelid trap series

DOC traps are a metal kill trap housed in a wooden box to exclude non-target species. Mustelids enter the box through a small entrance and must cross a trigger plate to reach the food bait usually an egg or meat. Stepping on the trigger plate releases the spring-loaded killing bar, crushing the target animal on release.

DOC 150

The DOC 150 is designed to trap weasels, rats and hedgehogs. It has a light trigger mechanism than the larger DOC traps.

DOC 200

The DOC 200 is designed to target stoats, weasels, rats and hedgehogs. This is the most commonly used of the DOC trapping series.

DOC 250

The DOC 250 is the largest of the DOC traps. In addition to stoats, weasels, rats and hedgehogs it is also designed to humanely trap and kill ferrets – the largest of the mustelid species in New Zealand. The DOC 250 is more difficult to set than the smaller traps and requires the use of a trap-setting tool.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ON TRAPPING CONTACT A GWRC BIOSECURITY OFFICER:

Masterton
PO Box 41
Masterton 5840
T 06 3782484
www.gw.govt.nz
pest.animals@gw.govt.nz

Upper Hutt
PO Box 40847
Upper Hutt 5018
T 04 5264133
www.gw.govt.nz
pest.animals@gw.govt.nz

January 2017
www.gw.govt.nz
info@gw.govt.nz