

Pest Animal Workshop

6 September 2023

Notes taken from the presentation by Steve Thompson, Greater Wellington Biosecurity Officer



Greater Wellington Biosecurity team provide

- Advice
- Traps and toxins at cost

They can be contacted by email Pest.Animals@gw.govt.nz

The Greater Wellington website is a comprehensive source of information

<https://www.gw.govt.nz/environment/pest-management/pest-animals/trapping/>

Some key points

The Predator Free 2050 mission is focused on the complete removal of five predators: rats, stoats, ferrets, weasels and possums.

It is acknowledged that the most harm is done by the mustelids - weasels, ferrets and stoats. Rats and possums are lesser threats but still significant predators. Hedgehogs and feral cats are also a threat but not in the top 5.

Use chew cards to help identify the presence of pests and the type of pests which then helps with the choice of trap or toxin to use.

<https://predatorfreenz.org/toolkits/know-your-target-predators/chew-cards/>

Different traps will target different combinations of species e.g. Doc200 will catch stoats and rats while a AT220 will catch possums and rats.

“Try and use every trick in the book”

Possoms & rats

Possoms and rats are omnivores so will respond to a variety of baits/lures.

Baits for possums can include fruits, aniseed smell, vanilla or orange essence, cinnamon apple, canola oil with orange essence

Spread something else as a lure near the trap to lead the pest in e.g. flour or icing sugar with raspberry essence

Be prepared to change lures and baits as different ones will appeal to different animals

AT220 is a possum and rat trap that will self-reset up to 100 cycles, requiring new lure and/or battery 4-6 monthly. It rebaits automatically each night so there is always fresh bait present. It is an expensive option at \$400 approx but is less time intensive monitoring

Other possum traps include

Trapinator

Possum Master Trap

Warrior trap - a cheap and effective trap

Timms

Flippin timmy

Other rats traps include

Doc150

A24 Goodnature

Victor

Rat trap in long tunnel

Toxins

Bait stations are very effective for possums and rats. Brodifacoum is an anticoagulant poison used for rats and possums. It does not require a user licence so can be used by landowners to undertake possum and rat control on their own land. Because of the delayed effects of this type of poison, rats and possums don't usually associate poisoning symptoms with eating this bait, which means they don't learn to avoid it.

Mustelids - Stoats, weasels, ferrets

Traps are generally from the Doc series i.e. Doc200 or Doc250

Mustelids are carnivores so the best lures are fresh meat-based e.g. a freshly caught pest, fresh rabbit as a lure. The best bait for a weasel or stoat is another weasel or stoat! Eggs are also an effective bait.

Place the trap on a "run line" i.e. where the pest is most likely to follow a path e.g. along a fenceline or stream bank

Mustelids respond to freshly exposed soil so rough up the ground near the trap

If not catching anything, move the trap. If using multiple traps, set them 100-150 metres apart.

Check traps regularly

If a stoat has a near miss with a trap it will never go back

Human scent does not make a clear difference either way to the success of a trap. Anything done to avoid leaving human scent e.g. gloves leaves an 'alien' scent of its own

Feral cats

Generally are caught in live capture traps. If using a live capture trap, you have to use the most humane despatch method, usually a firearm

Cats respond to dug up soil.

Also be patient. Use lures to encourage them before trapping

Note: Pest Free Pauatahanui advocate only trapping feral cats in isolated areas to avoid accidentally catching pet cats. If a cat is trapped we encourage trappers to check whether the cat has been microchipped or whether it might belong to a neighbour.

Rabbits & hares

Shooting is usually the preferred method.

Pindone can be used but is less effective

Birds

Methods for dealing with pest bird species e.g. magpies, rosellas, pukekos are challenging as any method of control risks catching native birds also.

Magpies

GW can only control magpies that attack people

Live capture magpie traps are available. Instructions for making these are also available by searching online.

Wasps

Vespex is the most effective toxin. It targets wasps and is not attractive to bees.

Vespex will only be provided to approved users. The process for approval to use Vespex is outlined on the website <https://www.doc.govt.nz/nature/pests-and-threats/methods-of-control/wasp-control/>

It is used when wasps are taking protein (mince, meat) i.e. February-March

Links to commercially available and homemade wasp traps are available online

Deer, pigs, goats

The larger pest animals tend to go in boom and bust cycles and are currently in high numbers. Control is usually done by hunters with skills in the specific animal control.

Information sources

Predator Free website

<https://predatorfreenz.org/>

<https://www.doc.govt.nz/nature/pests-and-threats/predator-free-2050/>

Bionet.nz has some very comprehensive resources containing very specific information

<https://www.bionet.nz/library/>

<https://www.bionet.nz/assets/Uploads/A8-Pest-Mustelids-2018-04-LR.pdf>

Trap & trigger <https://www.trapandtrigger.co.nz/>

Information on the effects of different pest control methods on domestic animals/pets

<https://www.mpi.govt.nz/animals/animal-welfare/animal-welfare-and-pest-management>