

PREDATOR BLITZ - TRAINING 101

Possums

WHY CONTROL POSSUMS?

Possums browse native vegetation, eating vital seedlings and destroying forests. They also predate on bird eggs, chicks, adult birds as well as a wide range of invertebrates. In backyards they are also fond of fruit trees and rose bushes. Possums cause a huge amount of damage, and can greatly damage everything in Kaipātiki reserves and neighbourhoods.



HOW CAN WE MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

Together, we can make a huge impact on reducing predators across the landscape.

Get together in a reserve trapping team (contact us at enquiries@pestfreekaipatiki.org.nz) or place a timms trap if you have a bush block or know possums are around.



PREDATOR BLITZ - TRAINING 101

Possums

HOW TO CONTROL POSSUMS EFFECTIVELY

The most effective and efficient way to control predators, is to '**Pulse**' (conduct predator control at intervals) – **FOUR TIMES a year.**

- You can 'pulse' possum control at the same time as rat control.
- Pulse in February, April, August and November – these months match the availability of resources and breeding times for native birds.
- Each possum pulse lasts two weeks although in areas surrounded by a great deal of bush, you may extend this pulse to four weeks.
- Pulsing is more resource effective, targeted to Possum's curiosity, easier on volunteers and residents.

~Timms traps are available to borrow from the PFK toolshed, or you can purchase your own from the Glenfield local board service center at \$40each. Trapinators are also available for borrowing from PFK. We have a number of donated wooden platforms too for locating standard Timms traps off the ground for children and pet safety.

PREDATOR BLITZ - TRAINING 101

Possums

TRAPPING PART ONE

Timms traps, Trapinators and Flipping Timmies are the preferred tools (we don't bait possums in Kaipātiki) which should be checked TWO times in the first week and ONE time in the second week as a minimum. If your area is new to possum control, we highly recommend checking more frequently.

Always secure standard timms traps down with long pegs, secure to a tree or build a special platform for them. The two latter cases are useful as an additional precaution against catching non-target animals or if you are worried about children tampering with them. Trapinators are automatically attached aurally - and we recommend you use a strong but relatively small diameter tree when installing Trapinators. Make sure all FOUR screw holes are used when installing.



TRAPPING PART TWO

Never use anything other than apple, cinnamon, icing sugar or flour as a lure for timms traps. Never use meat. Use 1/8th to a quarter of an apple to encourage possums to reach into the trap with their mouths rather than paws. For trapinators, peanut butter or jam can be used.

Don't forget to use monitoring tools such as chew cards or tracking tunnels to measure before and after your control, especially if you are working in a reserve.

Trap Pulsing Programme for Possums																								
Month	August				Sept/October				November				January				Feb/march				April			
Week	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Check 2x																								
Check 1x																								

PREDATOR BLITZ - TRAINING 101

Possums

HARDWARE

- **Spacing:** In general one trap per hectare is a good rule – meaning tools every 100x100m in a reserve environment. You can club together with one or two neighbours to purchase and share one too.
- **Trap location:** Locate traps along ridges, tracks, road edges, near kohekohe, totara, pine, pohutukawa, macrocarpa, roses or fruit trees. Locating them in close vicinity to suitable dry nest sites such as in roofs and around houses, hedges , tree ferns or flax is also recommended.

Don't forget to
log your catches
or bait take on
the free app



PREDATOR BLITZ - TRAINING 101

Possums

PUTTING DOWN LIVE PEST ANIMALS

The traps mentioned above are designed as kill traps and they work very well. If however a control tool fails and the animal is caught but not dead, then that animal needs to be humanely destroyed as quickly as possible. It is also important to know that possum can have two young a season, with joeys usually birthed in Autumn. If you find joeys with a recently trapped possum, you also need to be able to humanely destroy it too despite it's unpleasantness. If you are not confident in destroying live animals humanely, then we recommend you contact either a Pest Free Kaipatiki Possum Response team (email enquiries@pestfreekaipatiki.org.nz for more information), a confident neighbor or your local vet.

First, render the animal insensible (unconscious), usually through stunning with a blow to the head, followed by death immediately. A blow with a hammer will render it unconscious first, followed by a second more accurate blow to make sure the creature was killed (do this on a sturdy surface such as a log). Finally, cut the throat to ENSURE the animal has died – this is recommended by the Council and SPCA. We recommend you get trained how to do this in the most efficient, humane way. There is a good demonstration of this procedure on youtube at the following link address. **Please note this video does depict footage of a live animal being killed.** Please also note the footage depicts a leg hold trap which is not a variety or method we recommend for Kaipatiki residents: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dkclfYhei7k&has_verified=1

PREDATOR BLITZ - TRAINING 101

Possums

DISPOSAL

To dispose of dead bodies, either dig a hole in the garden and bury it deeply or double wrap it in newspaper, seal in a plastic bag tying a firm knot and dispose of in your general rubbish collection.

TIPS AND TRICKS

- Possums are very curious and will investigate new objects. Use this to your advantage.
- Possums dislike wet weather, you will have best success in fine weather but also cold weather.
- Use a 'blaze' to attract possums to your trap. Mix 10 parts of flour, 1 part of icing sugar and a pinch of cinnamon in an empty (dry) PUMP water bottle. Expel this (or just smear with your hand) in a long streak down from a tree, to the foot of your trap (or in a line leading to your trap).
- Place your trap near pine trees in July-August, totara and kahikatea in late summer and anywhere near fruiting trees or roses.
- The sensitivity of a Timms trap can be changed by bending the trigger bar backwards or forwards. Towards the entry hole makes it more sensitive.
- If attaching your timms trap to a flat platform 2m up a tree, screw one side of the trap down to allow it to swivel so it can be re-baited from the underside, or use a purpose built platform (available from our toolshed)

PREDATOR BLITZ - TRAINING 101

Possums

HEALTH AND SAFETY

For you and your family:

Keep fingers clear from the front of the trap at all times (timms) or the bottom (trapinators).

Locate your trap 2m up a tree (on a platform attached to the trunk) if you are concerned about children or pets.

Always check the trap is unset before handling it. Do so by checking the length of draw-string (short = unset)
AND check spring is not taugt. If in doubt, use an object to triple check.

Teach children early on to respect traps and do not let them interact with it without supervision.

For pets:

Non-target animals such as cats and dogs do not typically interact with the traps so long as apple is the lure. If concerned, locate the trap off the ground. Wooden platforms, a Flipping Timmy trap or a trapinator trap can enable your trap to be located out of reach of children and pets.

Install your new timms trap and leave for a week or two unset for curious cats to get used to the new object and dismiss it.

Never use meat in the trap, and if blood gets on the trap after use – wipe it off.

Finally after all the precautions above, you can also set the trap just before dark, keep your cat indoors, and then unset the trap the following morning.

[Link to extended health and safety sheet.](#)