



Version 2023

Stoat image credit Kentish Plumber Flickr 2016

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DOC 200 credit Department of Conservation

# PREDATOR BLITZ - Info Sheet

## Hedgehog and Mustelids

### Why control Hedgehog or mustelids

Hedgehogs are special and endangered where they came from in Great Britain, but are strangers and key predators to New Zealand's wildlife. They easily kill ground nesting birds like the kiwi or spotless crane, eat bird eggs, our native lizards and insects. They are chicken egg thieves, can host TB and are often covered in fleas or carry ringworm.

Mustelids (including the Ferret, Stoat and Weasel) are top predators in New Zealand. They easily kill native birds, eggs, lizards and invertebrates. Stoats need to eat 1/3rd of their body weight each day! If we want our native species and taonga to survive and flourish, considering controlling these species at home wherever they are detected.

### How to control these predators effectively?

'Pulse' (conduct predator control at intervals) – **FOUR TIMES** a year

- You can 'pulse' control at the same time as your usual rodent control (i.e. February, April, August and November – these months match the availability of resources and breeding times for native bird life) OR
- put out a trap when you have seen, heard or detected (using monitoring chew cards for example) the pests themselves. You may also consider maintaining it constantly to protect your property and surrounding area.

### TRAPPING Hardware

We recommend mechanical trapping within Kaipatiki which is a mix of urban bush. **DOC 150's are used for weasels** and **DOC 200's for hedgehog and stoats**. Traps are checked at a minimum of weekly during your pulse, however more frequently is good and more pleasant if you do catch something.

All DOC traps are screwed shut since they pose the greatest risk of crushing injuries and should never be touched by children without supervision. At Pest Free Kaipātiki, we won't release a trap to you without a safety demonstration on how to safely and effectively use it.

#### 1. Spacing

In general one trap per 20 hectare is a good rule for mustelids due to their wide home range. You can club together with one or two neighbours to purchase and share one too. Hedgehog have smaller home ranges of about 1.4kms so more traps can be used.

#### 2. Trap location

Locate traps for Mustelids along stream edges, ridges, fence lines, animal runs or near chicken coops, near fallen logs or trees and open pasture. Locate along dry hillsides, sandy areas and near wood piles or backyards for hedgehog.

#### 3. Lure

Peanut butter, eggs or meat for Hedgehog. Egg, fresh or salted rabbit or long life Erazz blocks for Mustelids.



## Destroying live pest animals

DOC 150's and 200's are designed as kill traps. 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. If you are not confident in destroying live animals humanely, then we recommend you contact either a vet, confident neighbour or email us on [enquiries@pestfreekaipatiki.org.nz](mailto:enquiries@pestfreekaipatiki.org.nz).



First, render the animal insensible (unconscious) usually through stunning with a blow to the head, followed by death immediately. For hedgehog, you will need to release the mis-caught hedgehog first from the trap (ideally get help from a second person for this and wedge the trap unable to be set off - talk to PFK about this methodology that is safest). 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 find another humane means is to carefully drop the hedgehog onto the trigger of a pre-set DOC trap from above the box well out of harm's way which will mean the trap kills the hedgehog instantly as originally intended.

## 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 for catching Mustelids

- Try not to contaminate your box with strong chemicals or pet urine – Use gloves
- Make sure at the entrance no sharp edges of wire are present
- Make sure the visiting animal will line up with the trap plate for a cleaner catch
- If using an egg as lure, prick (with a pin) the top of the egg – to let the smell out – making sure the hole is upwards! Farm eggs (rather than washed store bought eggs) are more appealing
- Make sure your traps 'Spring-off' weight (the weight that triggers the trap) is sufficient. Contact PFK for more information about this. The setting should be at 80g and weasels require a smaller DOC150.
- If you catch a stoat, let your street coordinator know asap and if possible KEEP the stoat. If it can be promptly frozen, they are useful to 'wipe against the DOC trap' as the smell later attracts more mustelids
- Keep traps out of direct sunlight to help fresh lures last longer (whereas the opposite might last with dry lure)
- Tilt your tunnel slightly so liquid from any bait runs out of the tunnel not around the trap to avoid corrosion

## Doing it safely

For you and your family:

- Keep fingers clear from the trap until you are certain it is unset and always lock your trap by screwing down the corner which can swivel. Always check the trap is unset before handling it. If in doubt, use a soft 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 cannot access the trap due to the size of the entrance hole, and it being locked.

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