



# Trap Audit Manual

May 2023  
Version 1



PREDATOR FREE  
HAURAKI COROMANDEL  
COMMUNITY TRUST

## **Acknowledgements**

This PFHCCT Kiwi at Home Peer Review Manual was compiled by Lou McNutt (Project Manager - Contract) PFHCCT would also like to acknowledge John Bissell (Save The Kiwi - National Predator Advisor) for his expert input. We are also indebted to Sara Smerdon, Jeff & Raine Williams for sharing their knowledge and skills.

# Introduction

This manual is an outcome of the PFHCCT Kiwi i te Kainga project's peer-reviewing program, a Save the Kiwi Jobs for Nature funded initiative in the Hauraki-Coromandel region. The primary goal of this program is to achieve 100% efficiency for all mustelid traps in the region while promoting collaboration among community groups and trappers and facilitating the exchange of ideas and knowledge.

The purpose of this manual is to assist in identifying potential issues with DOC200 and DOC250 mustelid traps and to provide recommendations for corrective measures. By using the manual as a guide, users can effectively identify problems, make any necessary adjustments, and ensure that each trap operates at its maximum potential. This will ultimately improve the quality of our trapping network, making us more successful at trapping our target species and reducing the likelihood of 'educating' predators to become trap shy.

Thank you for your commitment to protecting Aotearoa's native flora and fauna, and we hope this manual will be a valuable resource in your efforts towards reaching our predator-free 2050 goal.



# Using This Trap Audit Manual

This guide provides an audit process for each Trap Review Scale component of mustelid traps. The components evaluated in this guide include trap position, lid security, internal and external mesh screens, exit and entry points, and trap mechanism.

The evaluation criteria for each trap component vary. For some components, such as lid security, it is a simple yes or no. Other components, like trap mechanism, are scored on a 1-3 review scale, with 1 indicating poor performance, 2 being good, and 3 being excellent. In addition, the trigger weight component is evaluated by recording the grams at which the trap is triggered.

For each component, this manual breaks down the corresponding criteria and review scale, making it easier for users to assess and identify areas that require improvement. This manual also provides instructions on how to check each component effectively in the field.

At the end of this manual is the data sheet used by PFHCCT to evaluate traps while working in the field. Please refer to this data sheet to ensure a consistent approach to the auditing process. This data sheet is referred to throughout this manual.

## Trap Review Scale

A general interpretation of the trap review scale.

<b>3</b> EXCELLENT	No maintenance work required. Trap is in great condition and functioning optimally.
<b>2</b> GOOD	Trap functional but requires some minor maintenance work for optimal performance.
<b>1</b> POOR	Trap is non-functional. Urgent attention for repairs required OR trap needs to be completely replaced with a new build.



# Equipment List

2mm Square head screwdriver



Safety Clips (DOC200 & DOC250)



Scraper



Gloves



GPS



Trap trigger test weights (50g - 150gm)



DOC250 Setting Tool



Note: The trap trigger test weights are made using a combination of washers, each weighing either 10g, 15g, or 50g, which were secured using a thin but durable rope.

# Trap Audit Process

## Conducting Trap Audits

### Step 1: Trap ID

Record the trap ID on the data sheet.

### Step 2: GPS Trap

Stand beside the trap and mark a new waypoint in the GPS to record the trap location. Name the waypoint using the same name as the trap ID on the data sheet.

### Step 3: Trap Type

Record which type of mustelid trap is being reviewed (DOC200 or DOC250).

### Step 4: Set Type

Record if the trap being reviewed is a single set (SS) or double set (DS).

### Step 5: Lid Secure

Check the trap lid is securely fastened closed and cannot be lifted. Traps must have the lids secured down (i.e. screwed shut) to be safe and effective. Record on the data sheet Yes/ No.

### Step 6: Box Secure

Place hands on the top of the trap box and gently rock it to assess if it is correctly bedded in or wobbles. Ideally, there should be zero wobble. Record the score according to the review scale below.

- 3 Zero wobble. Trap securely bedded in and level.

---

- 2 Trap wobbles slightly. Improvements could be made to bed it in better. Trap may require some adjustments to make it level.

---

- 1 Trap wobbles significantly or is not level and needs to be moved or bedded in.



### Step 7: External Mesh Screen

To evaluate the external mesh screens, assess their condition at each end of the trap. Run a finger firmly around the inside of the external entry hole to check for any sharp points. The entrance way should be smooth, without causing any snagging or grazing to your finger.

Next, examine the front and back external mesh screens to ensure that all staples are firmly in place. Record any missing staples, rusty or damaged screens, or lifting corners. Use the review scale below to assign a score to the trap's external mesh screens.

- |          |  |
|----------|--|
| <b>3</b> | Well secured, intact, all staples present, no rust, no damage. Entrance hole is smooth and well filed.   |
| <b>2</b> | Screen fairly secure, perhaps missing one or two staples or slight damage/ surface rust in places. Entrance hole fairly smooth but could do with a touch up.       |
| <b>1</b> | Screen loose, many missing staples, badly damaged, or very rusty and should be replaced OR requires attention. Entrance hole is very sharp and has not been filed. |

### Step 8: Entry / Exit Clear

To evaluate the external mesh screens, assess their condition at each end of the trap. Run a finger firmly around the inside of the external entry hole to check for any sharp points. The entrance way should be smooth, without causing any snagging or grazing to your finger.

Next, examine the front and back external mesh screens to ensure that all staples are firmly in place. Record any missing staples, rusty or damaged screens, or lifting corners. Use the review scale below to assign a score to the trap's external mesh screens.

To evaluate the trap entrance, assess how clear the lead into the trap is and whether a mustelid can move freely around the trap. The trap should allow for clear visibility through the trap, and the back of the trap should not be obstructed, such as being pressed against a tree trunk. Remove any overgrown vegetation or grass that could impede a mustelid's movement. Record the score for the trap entrance based on the following criteria:

- |          |  |
|----------|--|
| <b>3</b> | Entry is clear and open, preferably freshly scuffed dirt near entrance. Can see clearly through the trap, there is no vegetation blocking the tunnel ends. |
| <b>2</b> | Sufficiently clear, could use some adjustments (removal of overgrown grass, scuffing of fresh dirt near entrance).   |
| <b>1</b> | Access to the trap entrance is blocked OR significantly overgrown by vegetation.   |

**Note:** An ideal trap has a clear run to the trap entrance and around it.

### Step 9: Trigger Weight

Use calibrated weights to release the trap. Start with the lightest weight (i.e. 50g) and add weight until you find the release weight. Record the release weight.

**1:** Place a safety catch (between the hold handle) to prevent the trap from closing onto the weights or the operator's hand.

**2:** Gently lower the weights onto the release mechanism in the center on the plate; don't drop them.

The trap release weight should be as follows:

**DOC200** - between 80 to 100gm.

**DOC250** – between 100 to 120gm.

DOC200 traps should hold and not trigger at 50g. If traps trigger over the maximum recommended weight (i.e. 110g for a DOC200), please make a comment that the trap needs to be recalibrated.

Note: To avoid damaging the trap mechanism, never spring a trap in an uncontrolled manner or onto the trap weights. Always use a safety clip when conducting any trap evaluations.

**Note:** If the trap did not fire at the correct weight initially or was stiff and creaky, it is recommended to move the kill bar up and down a few times in a safe and controlled manner. Often traps that have not been used for some time will fire more smoothly and within the correct range once the spring tension has been released. If the weight has changed after being unset, record this in the notes on the datasheet.



### Step 10: Operation Check

To evaluate the operation of a trap score the below criterion:

**3** Operates fairly smoothly, releases reliably and springs with good tension. No 'creep' when setting off.

**2** Sticks while resetting, may not release or releases with creep. Springs may be weak. Trigger plate may not be level when set or trigger bar bent. Requires attention.

**1** Mechanically unreliable or broken.

After completing steps 9 and 10, carefully release the trap by removing the safety clip and using the approved method to unset the mechanism. It is common to use a hand on the opposite top side of the trap box as a brace, or a knee to rest on the near side of the trap box to steady it when lowering the trap bar. However, always make sure that your hands are not in a position where they could get caught in the trap. When handling DOC250 traps, it is essential to use a DOC250 setting tool to unset and reset the trap. Make sure not to position your head over the setting tool during handling. In case of accidental discharge, the setting tool handle can fly forward and cause serious injury.



### Step 11: Trap Secure

Is the trap mechanism firmly attached to its box?  
Are there any loose screws or signs of rotting in the timber base of the box?

**Y** - Trap mechanism secured to box. No wobble.  
No missing screws.

**N** - Trap mechanism wobbles or has loose/missing screws. Requires attention.

### Step 12: Trap Clean

Asses the trap for cleanliness. Remove any remains and debris present in the trap. Use a scraper to clean the pan and ensure no remains are lodged under or around the pan or between the pan and the wall. Also, clean the entranceway to ensure it's clear. Record the score for trap cleanliness using the below criteria.

- 3** Clean box and trap bars, minimal leaf litter/dirt in box base. Animal remains and old bait are absent.

---

- 2** Debris may interfere with operation 2 or trap mechanism has remains stuck to it. Trap requires a clean.

---

- 1** Operation compromised due to the amount of debris (i.e. too much debris under pan preventing the trap releasing).



### Step 13: Internal Mesh Screen

Remove the internal baffle and assess its condition. Note any difficulties encountered while removing it, or if it is not the correct size for the trap box. Check for any deformations or rust. Run a finger firmly around the inside of the external entry hole to ensure there are no sharp points, and that the entranceway is smooth with no snagging or grazing. Verify that the entry holes are the approved size (60mm for DOC200 and 80mm for DOC250). Record the score for the internal screen based on its condition.

3

Secure, intact, perhaps slightly deformed manner. Often traps that have not been used deformed in places but can be some time will fire more smoothly and easily straightened. Right size for box. Smooth edges.

2

Thin mesh or mesh is loose fire at the correct weight initially or was stiff damaged, or rusty and should be replaced or will soon require attention.

1

Severely rusty, missing or otherwise dysfunctional. Incorrect size for box.

### Step 14: Device Rust

1-3 Assess the amount of rust showing on metal devices.

3

New, shiny or perhaps some slight surface discolouration, but no rust OR minor surface rust that isn't compromising functionality in any way.

2

Rust on some components. Currently functional but operation may be compromised or will soon require attention.

1

Too rusty to function OR rust has 1 weakened trap components to point that breakage likely to occur.

**Note:** Make a comment if the trap mechanism is a mix of stainless steel and non-stainless parts.





DATE:			SITE:
LINE ID:			
TRAP ID	ADDITIONAL COMMENTS		