

Trapper's Guide

Welcome to the Predator Free Port Hills initiative, and thanks for your commitment to protecting our native wildlife. The Summit Road Society is coordinating this project and is supporting volunteer trappers in local communities which border the Port Hills and Whakaraupō/Lyttelton Harbour. As part of this, the Society provides subsidised traps for sale and organises workshops and public events on trapping.

Please read through this booklet thoroughly.

Obligations and responsibilities

When buying a trap from the Summit Road Society, you must agree to following conditions.

- Our funding is for backyard trapping. The trap is only to be used in your own garden or backyard. Traps are provided at a subsidised price (generally 30-50% subsidy). This subsidy is funded by grants and donations to the project. The trap is then yours to keep permanently.
- Traps may also be available for short term loan from your local tools library.
- Please sign up through our website www.predatorfreeporthills.org.nz. You will be sent an email putting you in touch with your local co-ordinator and added to our trappers database.
- Map your traps and log your catches through our website www.predatorfreeporthills.org.nz. This helps us to assess the effectiveness of the programme and identify hotspots and gaps. This reporting is also very helpful for funding applications, which enables the Summit Road Society to offer the traps at subsidised prices and run free trap building days.
- You must follow all safety precautions. This includes setting the trap in a suitable location and position and using a suitable lure. These measures minimise the risk to non-target species including pets and children. Read thoroughly all the instructions supplied with your trap, and ask your volunteer coordinator if you are unsure of anything. There is additional information available on the Predator Free New Zealand website, including best practice guides for various target species, and links to instructional videos.
- If you already have your own traps, we encourage you to join our project, map your traps and log your catches through our website www.predatorfreeporthills.org.nz. We are building up a picture of backyard trapping across the Port Hills. You will be added to our trappers database and receive our e-newsletter with trapping tips.
- If you wish to trap in a reserve, please contact the Secretary of the Summit Road Society to discuss possible options marie@predatorfreeporthills.org.nz. Christchurch City Council has put together an excellent book on trapping in parks. <https://ccc.govt.nz/parks-and-gardens/volunteer-in-parks/organise-a-group-or-community-volunteer-event/>

Traps available

The Summit Road Society provides subsidised traps for sale. Your local co-coordinator can give you advice on the type of traps that best suit your situation. These traps are heavily subsidised thanks to grants and donations to the project. If you are outside the Port Hills, you can buy a trap from Predator Free NZ <https://shop.predatorfree.nz/>

Subsidised trap prices – only available to households on the Port Hills and Lyttelton Harbour

Item	Price
Victor professional or T-rex rat trap in wooden tunnel for ship rats	\$20
DOC200 for rats, hedgehogs and mustelids	\$40
Trapinator possum trap	\$30
Goodnature A24 rat and stoat trap with counter	\$130
Goodnature A12 possum trap with counter (discontinued – only a few left in stock)	\$130
Predator Free Port Hills t-shirt (kids and adults)	\$25

Traps can be purchased from your local co-ordinator. Please visit www.predatorfreeporthills.org.nz to sign up. T-shirts can be purchased directly from the Summit Road Society marie@predatorfreeporthills.org.nz.

Trapping Instructions

This section lists some basic safety instructions and tips for the five traps that the Summit Road Society has available. Please read the relevant section for the trap you have purchased, along with any other information provided with the trap. Ask your volunteer coordinator to demonstrate how to set the trap if you are unsure. Always wear gloves when handling traps and dead animals.

Trapping is a bit of an art and requires an intentional approach. If you set the trap and forget about it, you are unlikely to achieve success. Make sure you rebait the trap regularly and if a particular location or bait isn't working, try something different. The Summit Road Society runs regular public workshops on trapping to help you achieve success. Keep an eye on our Facebook page for updates <https://www.facebook.com/PredatorFreePortHills/>

Victor Professional or T-rex rat trap in Wooden Tunnel

- These traps are designed to kill ship rats. Lures you could try for rats include rat lure blocks, peanut butter, bacon (raw, unsmoked), dried fruit, grain, lard, chocolate, nutella, mild cheese, dog biscuits.
- Place the lure in the box and around the entrance without setting the trap for a week or two, so the rats get used to entering the box. This helps establish your trap as a source of food and creates scent trails that other rats will follow. Then set the trap and catch them.
- The tunnel is specifically designed to minimise accidental by-catches. Place the rat tunnel on a flat surface near walls, sheds or under cover. If you're not getting results, try a different spot.
- Urban trapping is often complex and challenging as there are multiple food sources available. Please remove all other food sources whenever possible. For instructions on rat proofing your compost bin, see <https://predatorfreenz.org/toolkits/backyards-toolkit/how-rodent-proof-compost-bin/>
- Check the trap daily if possible until you're getting results and the catch rate goes down, then check every week.
- Please take great care with curious children. Do not set the trap in an area where young children can access. You can also modify the trap by adding a screw so that a screwdriver is required to remove the mesh. If your child is old enough, show them the trap and how it works so that they are aware of the risk.
- It is possible that a small kitten could fit through the openings. If you (or your neighbours) have a kitten that you think could fit through the openings, keep the kitten indoors while the trap is set (i.e. at night). Make sure the trap is sprung before allowing the kitten outdoors.
- The following video from Zealandia provides detailed instructions on how to set the victor rat trap safely <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OxkxWnxwEho> Regular maintenance on the victor rat trap is essential, including checking and oiling springs and trigger mechanisms, weakened springs and broken trigger mechanisms. Traps should be cleaned regularly with a wire brush.
- To set the T-rex rat trap, remove the bait cup from the underside of the T-Rex. Simply twist left to unlock, and pull out. Fill the bait cup with peanut butter or utella and replace. To set, squeeze the back end of the trap until you hear it click. Carefully slide your set trap, bait-end first, into a wooden tunnel box until it's just inside. Squeeze the back end to release catches. Watch this video from Predator Free Taranaki on how to set a T-rex trap https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-_xgKvRHhCs
- You can stain or paint the wooden tunnel to extend its life.

Trapinator

- This trap is designed to kill possums, and can be baited with commercial products like possum dough or possum lure or items from the kitchen. We recommend fruit, spice or sugar lures such as apple or flour-icing sugar lure with spices added like cinnamon, aniseed, oil of roses, curry etc. Place bait on the white bait block inside the trap, ensuring that the lure goes into the small holes provided. If desired, place bait around the trap opening and down the tree that the trap is attached to, to lure the possum towards the trap.
- As the majority of our trappers live in residential neighbourhoods, it's vital that pets and kids are kept safe. The Trapinator needs to be mounted and baited appropriately so as to attract possums and deter pets.
- Mount the trap on a tree, at least one metre above the ground. See the manual supplied with the trap for detailed mounting and setting instructions. A copy can also be found on the manufacturer's website: https://www.cmisprings.com/trapinator_instruction.html
Please also view this video for instructions on how to set a Trapinator <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=looHelAgMJg>
- Give careful thought to the tree or post chosen. The trunk of the tree should be about a dinner plate in diameter — a good size for a possum to climb up. In urban settings, we recommend an upright tree with no low branches or natural ladders, steep enough that the cat can't walk up it. Some trappers mount their Trapinator onto a plank of wood to keep it flat and extend its life. The plank is then attached to the tree. This also helps make the trap easier to move.
- Set the trap close to potential food sources such as fruit trees, or where there is visible possum sign. If possible, remove other food sources to increase the chances of the possum going in to the trap.
- Keep your fingers well clear of the trap opening when it is set. Unset the trap before rebaiting. Use a flat palm to unset the trap e.g. keep your hand and body away from the path of the lever as it will rapidly swing back to the unset position. We recommend you set the trap in the evening, and check it early the next morning. The trap should be sprung during the day, to further reduce the risk to non-target species.
- The trap needs to be baited appropriately. **Never use a meat or fish bait.** Fruit, sugar or spice-based baits (eg cinnamon) are best. If you have a cat, we recommend putting the unset baited trap out for a few weeks to ascertain your cat's interest in the trap, most people comment that aside from an initial sniff, their cat is not interested in the trap or the bait. You can also sprinkle flour and curry powder around the trap. The curry will deter cats and attract possums.
- Mounting the trap on a tree reduces the risk to ground birds and dogs. The trap should be mounted out of reach of young children. Please be cautious and use your judgement. Set the trap when young children are asleep and make sure you spring it first thing in the morning.
- We also encourage you to keep your cat inside overnight. Cats do the bulk of their roaming and hunting at night. Keeping your cat inside overnight keeps them safe from the road and protects our native wildlife.
- Based on our research, discussions with the manufacturer and discussions with predator free groups across New Zealand, we believe the risk to pets is very low provided the trap is mounted and baited appropriately. Thousands of these traps have been deployed across the country in urban areas and we are not aware of any injuries to pets. The Otago Peninsula Biodiversity Group has created an excellent video on trapinators and pet safety, including extra safety measures you may wish to take: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sQM3y_1DdU

DOC200

These traps are used primarily to trap stoats but they will also effectively and humanely kill ship rats, Norway rats, weasels and hedgehogs. DOC200s have a very powerful trap mechanism. Make sure you have attended a trapping workshop and/or thoroughly viewed these [online instructional videos](#). The DOC200s come with a safety catch to reduce the risk of trapping fingers.

In terms of lure, for stoats use fresh rabbit, hare, possum, Eraze, salted rabbit, freeze-dried rabbit and/or fresh hen eggs. For hedgehogs use an egg. For rats use peanut butter (you can place it in a milk bottle top). Lures should be changed regularly (exactly when and how often will depend on where the traps are) and disposed of away from the trap. Do not change the lure without unsetting the trap or using the safety catch.

The DOC200s lids are screwed on and a screwdriver or spanner is required to open them. Please take special care with curious children and place them in an area that young children cannot access. If your child is old enough, show them the trap and how it works so that they are aware of the risk.

As the trap is housed in a wooden box with 2 entrances that are diagonally offset, the risk to pets is extremely low. Please make sure that if you remove the middle grid to clean it, you return it correctly. The entrances need to be diagonally offset. As with the wooden rat tunnels, it is possible that a small kitten could fit through the openings. If you (or your neighbours) have a small kitten, keep the kitten indoors while the trap is set (i.e. at night). Make sure the trap is sprung before allowing the kitten outdoors.

The DOC200 needs to be properly calibrated so that it sets off at the correct weight. Maintenance of the trap is also critical. Check out these videos for more information on [calibrating](#) and [servicing](#) your trap. Try to avoid the trap going off with nothing in it as this affects the calibration. Use a piece of hose or small towel to provide cushioning. Alternatively slowly lower the trap mechanism.

Goodnature A24

- This trap is designed to kill rats and stoats, with separate long life lures available for each species.
- The trap is supplied with a detailed instruction booklet, including information on how to set and maintain the trap, and safety information. Read this booklet thoroughly before using your trap. A copy can also be downloaded from the Goodnature website <https://goodnature.co.nz/pages/support>
- Please take great care with curious children. Do not set the trap in an area where young children can access. If your child is old enough, show them the trap and how it works so that they are aware of the risk.
- Goodnature's long life rodent lure is not attractive to cats. The shroud entrance is also too narrow for a cat to fit its head into, and the trap is installed 12cm off^[SEP] the ground to further prevent a cat interrogating^[SEP] the trap. For more information, see their website <https://goodnature.co.nz/pages/support>

Goodnature A12

- This trap has been discontinued however is included in this trapper's guide for completeness. The A12 is designed to kill possums, and is baited with a possum-specific long life lure.
- The trap is supplied with a detailed instruction booklet, including information on how to set and maintain the trap, and safety information. Read this booklet thoroughly before using your trap. A copy can also be downloaded from the Goodnature website <https://goodnature.co.nz/pages/support>
- Please take great care with curious children. Do not set the trap in an area where young children can access. If your child is old enough, show them the trap and how it works so that they are aware of the risk.
- A12 traps have been carefully designed to deter cats. Please see their website for details <https://goodnature.co.nz/pages/support>

Humane Trapping

All traps offered by Predator Free Port Hills have been chosen because they are effective, easy to use and humane. All our traps have passed the NAWAC testing. This means that they reliably and humanely kill pests if correctly set and baited.

Disposing of dead predators

- We recommend burying dead predators in your garden.
- If you do not have a suitable area, you can wrap small predators in plastic and put them in the red bin. Please do not put them in your green bin. Living Earth is not consented to process animal carcasses (only domestic food scraps), hence not being able to put these in the green bin. Large amounts and possum carcasses need to be wrapped and then taken to the transfer stations for disposal.
- Predators can carry diseases so keep yourself safe. Always use gloves when checking traps and dealing with dead predators then wash your hands. We recommend you have a dedicated set of gloves for this task.

Traps and keeping kids and pets safe

As a backyard trapping programme in a mainly urban area, we want to make sure that pets and kids are kept safe. We have done extensive research on traps and safety, and the traps we have chosen for our programme are widely used in urban areas across New Zealand. Please ensure that you follow the safety instructions outlined in this trapping guide and please don't hesitate to contact your local co-ordinator or the Summit Road Society if you have any questions.

The Halo Project in Dunedin has undertaken two studies with local school children on trap safety around cats.

<https://www.haloproject.org.nz/s/How-safe-is-my-cat-summary-info-98aw.pdf>

<https://www.haloproject.org.nz/news/2017/3/10/how-safe-is-my-cat>

<https://www.haloproject.org.nz/s/Halo-cat-brochure-April-2021.pdf>

The Otago Peninsula Biodiversity Group has also put together a video on Trapinators and pet safety.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sQM3y_1DdU

Being a responsible cat owner

We strongly encourage people to be responsible cat owners. This includes spaying and microchipping your cat. Please encourage people to take any unwanted kittens to the SPCA or Cats Protection League rather than dumping them in rural areas. This condemns these cats to a life of hardship and deprivation. They grow up feral and are a huge threat to our native wildlife.

We also encourage you to keep your cat inside overnight, from dusk to dawn. Cats do the bulk of their roaming and hunting at night. Keeping your cat inside overnight keeps them safe from the road and protects our native wildlife. You may like to consider an anti-predation collar (also known as clown collars or birdsafe collars). They are easy and fun to make:

<https://kidspot.co.nz/activities/make-cat-collar-save-birds/>

Signing up

If you are keen to get started with backyard trapping, please sign up via our website www.predatorfreeporthills.org.nz. You will receive an email putting you in touch with your local coordinator. You will also be added to our trappers database and receive our e-newsletter. Our e-newsletter provides tips and tricks on trapping, updates on the project and information on upcoming events. If you are on Facebook, please like our page for regular updates:

<https://www.facebook.com/PredatorFreePortHills/>

For queries please contact:

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Some Useful Links:

Predator Free NZ - information and resources: <http://predatorfreenz.org/>

PFNZ trapping guides: <http://predatorfreenz.org/tools-resources/trapping-best-practice/>

DOC Predator Free 2050 info: <http://www.doc.govt.nz/predator-free-2050>

Thank you for being part of our Predator Free Port Hills initiative to bring back our native birds, lizards and invertebrates. Together we can make a difference.