

## ANIMAL PEST CONTROL

### POSSUM CONTROL

#### Cage Traps for Possum Control

##### **Introduction**

This Environment Topic describes how to use cage traps safely and effectively.

Cage traps are made from wire mesh and have a swing door that falls shut once the bait inside is moved. Cage traps are ideal for sites where poison baits and leg-hold traps are unable to be used.

##### **How effective are they?**

The possum will not escape from the cage, but may become distressed if left for a long period so cages must be checked daily.

**Important Note: The Animal Welfare Act 1999 requires all set traps must be checked at least once every 24 hours.**

##### **How safe are they?**

Other animals may be caught in the cage but can be released unharmed. Pets will not be attracted to a fruit bait and deterrents such as a curry/pepper and flour mix around the cage will keep inquisitive cats away.

##### **How do I use a cage trap?**

Set the cage late afternoon or evening on a known possum "pad run" - a track used by possums - or set at the base of a tree showing possum scratch marks up the bark. Make sure it is in a shady spot by day to protect the possum from the sun the next morning.

A firm quarter of apple, kiwifruit or orange is a good bait. A coating of cinnamon and flour, and a little of this sprinkled around the cage acts as a lure. Change untouched bait every couple of days. When you discover a possum has been caught, cover the cage with a sack or cloth until it can be destroyed. It will help stop it from



*Baiting a cage trap. Ensure the bait is fresh.*

becoming distressed. Keep pets and children away - the possum will be frightened and may lash out with its sharp claws. The most humane method of destroying a caged possum is by shooting.

##### **Disposing of possum carcasses**

Returning carcasses to the soil replenishes the forest. By burying possums under trees suffering from possum damage, or in your garden, you help recycle nutrients they have taken. Ensure carcasses are buried well away from waterways.

##### **Acknowledgements**

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##### **For further information**

For further information on animal pests or the Regional Plant Pest and Animal Pest Management Strategy, please contact the Biosecurity Animal Pest Officers at the Hawke's Bay Regional Council for advice.

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