

Observations on trap use

There are a number of specific concerns that have occurred or been raised relating to trap use. These arise in several ways including incidents resulting from use or mis-use and where reports are received that highlight problems encountered in practical situations. Good basic training combined with the benefit of experience gained in the 'field', enable correct and proper decisions to be made.

The nature of trap use dictates that the operator must take account of variable conditions and situations and respond to these by how, when and where it is decided to apply these techniques. Examples that illustrate this point include:

Outdoor protection of approved spring traps

There are two instructions in the conditions of using such traps that must be complied with but that are open to some degree of interpretation. The first, applicable to those traps that were approved some time ago state; **'set in a natural or artificial tunnel which is, in either case, suitable for the purpose'** and more recently, **'set in a natural or artificial tunnel which is suitable for minimising the chances of injuring or killing non-target species whilst not compromising the capture and killing of target species'**.

Two illustrations of where problems can arise in this respect are:

- Where Kania 2000 traps are attached to tree trunks to catch grey squirrels and no tunnels are fitted. This failure has resulted in the killing of protected bird species;
- The use of a spring trap on a log crossing a stream where the wire mesh tube installed to limit access is providing inadequate protection to non-target animals that might also use this location.

The basic principles, in the absence of specific guidance or instructions, should be to carry out an assessment that identifies the presence and risks to other species in the proposed trapping location and that any tunnel used must be sufficiently robust and have access limited so that only the target animal can enter.

Cage traps – welfare aspects

Any animal captured will immediately become vulnerable to a number of adverse factors.



The wire mesh installed here is providing inadequate protection to non-target animals



Protected species can find themselves caught in Kania traps unless tunnels are fitted

These include:

- Environmental aspects such as the possibility of flooding and exposure to adverse weather conditions particularly extremes of temperature – both heat and cold and heavy snow or rainfall;
- Human or other presence, such as walkers with dogs, that may lead to increased stress and greater risks of injury and interference or vandalism;
- Predators including foxes, badgers and birds of prey that may investigate and attack trapped animals.

Such problems can be addressed by an initial assessment that takes account of and fully assesses the risks, ensuring that traps are suitably located and providing cover (usually vegetation) that will protect and also have the advantage of camouflaging the trap. Avoid setting when poor weather is anticipated. Increasing checking intervals (twice daily is often the ideal) will also help.

Glue or sticky boards

There are widely held views that these techniques available for use against rats and mice are inhumane and should not be available. The main concern is that stress is likely to occur as soon as a rodent becomes caught and held before being dispatched.

Reflecting a desire to retain this method as a 'last resort' option, the Pest Management Industry Alliance is currently producing a code of practice for professional use. This aims to strengthen use aspects and makes a recommendation that the technique should not be available to the public. Humaneness problems are reduced by treating the method as a live capture trap and by making regular visits (several times over a 24 hour period), at which any captured rodents are dispatched.



Trendy traps!

How's this for a novel idea? Tired of the sight of the traditional mouse traps used in their apartments, two enterprising women in New York have come up with their own trendy designer traps – called Mousesnaps.

Having found evidence of mice in her apartment, inventor Nova Halliwell placed snap traps throughout her premises. Whilst the traps were functional, they were unsightly. As she explains: "I found myself hiding the traps when people came round, or even putting them away so no-one would see them. One day I decided that if I'm going to have to place them throughout my apartment, I may as well make them pleasing to look at, so I painted them."

Almost by accident, a business was born. "People would ask me where they could buy my painted traps," explains Nova. At this point Nova made contact with an ex-university friend, Mimi Davis, who was now working as a marketing executive in Philadelphia. "When I first heard of the idea I was really excited as it gave me an excuse to paint and be creative," said Mimi.

Putting their heads together, the pair did some consumer market research to identify their target audience (mainly independent, one-person householders aged 35 to 64) and formulate a marketing plan. Most shopped extensively of the Internet, so a website was created – www.mousesnaps.com

Designing and painting the traps is the fun part, explain Nova and Mimi. They usually use spray paint for the traps, with the design either hand-painted or stencilled. Traps have been designed to look like an iPod, a deck of cards, flowers and fleur-de-lis designs. Makes you wonder what the mice think? Maybe they would like one featuring Tom & Jerry?



Trendy trap inventor Nova Halliwell



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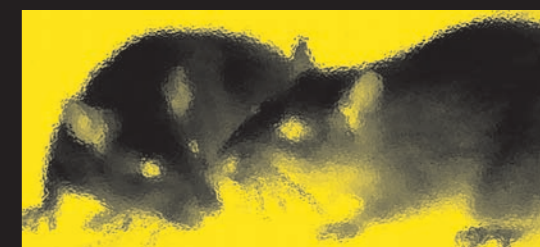
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