Controlling possum populations is important for the health of our forests and the long term survival of their native inhabitants. Possum control has also become an important source of income for some people and possum hunters have become very active in the forest again.

Some of the techniques we use to kill possums, can also kill kiwi. Smart trappers can avoid this and can play a part in ensuring the survival of their local kiwi populations.

### POSSUM TRAPS

How a trap is positioned on site and lured can provide greater safety for kiwi while not compromising the trap catch rate.

In general:
- The golden rule is to elevate traps off the ground or put them in boxes that kiwi cannot access.
- Kiwi do use possum and other animal runs so setting the traps directly on the runs increases the risk whereas setting raised sets next to the run will still catch the possum travelling through.
- Kiwi do get caught by ground set traps even if tucked into the base of a tree as the lure attracts bugs that they feed on.
- Hazing is designed to lead animals directly onto a trap to ensure they stand on it - it does not stop kiwi.
- Kiwi often feed around and on top of fallen logs so avoid setting traps against or on them.
- Using plenty of lure will draw even the most vertically challenged possum to your trap.

The 100% effective solution to prevent kiwi injuries and deaths is to mount the trap 70 cm off the ground where kiwi feet or bills won’t get caught. In the field it is sometimes difficult finding suitable and practical sets and more equipment may need to be carried into the bush. When using elevated sets apply lure above the trap, make sure the trap is secure, and attach all leg hold trap chains at a height which allows the possum to rest on the ground. Staple the chain behind the tree or under the ramp so it is not fouled by possums as they climb.

### RAMPS

- Place a sloping branch against a tree at a 50° angle. This angle will also restrict non targets such as weka and cats as they have difficulty climbing angles greater than 30 degrees. A tree with a platform to lean the ramp on increases catch rates.
- Attach the trap near the top of the ramp. Ensure a caught possum can sit on the ground.
- Finely spread some lure up the ramp and on the ground to attract the possums to the raised set site.
- You will need to take a hammer and nails as well as other equipment when setting up the trap line.
- Baiting with meat or peanut butter and cat biscuits will also draw in cats and mustelids as well as possums.

### SOME RAISED SET IDEAS
**Scott boards:** These are the most commonly used. They are pieces of 8mm x 240mm x 195mm wood wedged onto the tree using three 125mm nails (one above and two below the wood). Sometimes they have holes in them. The trap is held firmly on the board using rubber bands made from rubber inner-tubes.

**L-brackets:** Brackets (45 x 45mm) designed to hold the trap either by the springs or trap-base extension so that it sits at right angles to the tree.

**Spikes:** A metal spike that is hammered into the tree and holds the trap either by the springs or trap-base extension. Jolt head nails (125mm) can also be used to nail through the springs into the tree.

**Shelf:** Connovation has designed a spike/shelf for Victor traps. Note well that the trap dog should be facing away from the tree.

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**BRACKETS**  
A range of sets are available.

**KILL TRAPS**

Landcare Research has identified a range of kill traps which increase the raised set catch rates. These must all be set out of reach of kiwi.

SA3 traps are very effective and easy to set. Warrior traps, SA modified conibears, Trapinators, Belisle traps, BMI traps and Sentinels, all attain good catches but require extra equipment and skills in setting them correctly. Timms traps can also be raised on ramps or stumps and catch just as well as on the ground when lured correctly.

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**FENN, DOC 200, SA CAT TRAPS, TUNNEL TRAPS AND POISONS**

Traps set for mustelids or cats (such as Fenns, DOC 200s, DOC 250s) on the ground must also be set in tunnels with small entrances so they will not catch kiwi. Best practice boxes have been designed and tested that prevent kiwi getting their bills snapped off in the traps and also stop kiwi chicks from climbing into the boxes. See www.predatortraps.com

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**POISONS**

Kiwi have also died from eating cyanide paste laid on the ground, so cyanide should be placed in bait stations out of a kiwi’s reach. It is highly effective and affordable to place small plastic pots up in trees at a safe height and draw the possums up the tree with lure. This will also stop weka, pig and hedgehog interference on cyanide baits.

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**FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT THE FOLLOWING ORGANISATIONS:**

Landcare Research  http://possumdss.landcareresearch.co.nz/

Department of Conservation  www.doc.govt.nz

Kiwis for kiwi  www.kiwisforkiwi.org

QEII National Trust  www.openspace.org.nz

NZ Landcare Trust  www.landcare.org.nz

CREATED BY: Wendy Sporle, National Mentor for Advocacy, Kiwis for kiwi

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**INJURED AND DEAD KIWI**

If you find an injured kiwi, regardless of the cause of injury, wrap it gently in a towel or clothing and take it to a local vet or the Department of Conservation (DOC) ASAP so it can be treated. Dead kiwi should also be handed in to DOC.