

Traps and pet safety

- As a backyard trapping programme in an urban area, we want to make sure that pets are kept safe. We have done extensive research on traps and pet safety, and the traps we have chosen for our programme are widely used in urban areas across New Zealand.
- Rat trap tunnels and DOC200s – these traps are housed in wooden boxes and tunnels. The entrance is small (rat sized) to reduce bycatch and keep pets and kids safe. It is possible that a small kitten could fit through the entrance. If you have a small kitten, please keep them inside while the trap is set e.g. at night.
- Trapinators – we have put a great deal of effort into sourcing a low cost possum trap suitable for urban use. We have chosen the Trapinator as it's effective, easy to use and humane. Based on our research and discussions with predator free groups across New Zealand and the trap manufacturer, we believe the risk to pet cats is very low. Thousands of these traps have been deployed across the country in urban areas and we are not aware of a case of where a pet cat has been caught. The trap needs to be mounted onto a tree at least 1m off the ground and baited appropriately. **Never use a meat or fish bait.** Fruit, sugar or cinnamon baits are best. 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. As an added precaution, you can set the trap at night only and keep your cat inside overnight.
- Goodnature traps – Goodnature self-setting traps have been carefully designed to deter cats. Please see their website for details <https://goodnature.co.nz/pages/support>
- In October-November 2016, the Halo Project (Dunedin) worked with school children to investigate cat interactions with two traps, the DOC200 and Timms possum trap (which had been baited with cinnamon scented apple). Their findings: "Cats and (some dogs) were attracted to the DOC200 traps, with cats predominantly using them as a perch Cats and dogs were not interested in the Timms traps at all". See <https://www.haloproject.org.nz/s/How-safe-is-my-cat-summary-info-98aw.pdf> for more information on this interesting study.