

Code of Best Practice - Live Capture Trapping

A BPCA Code of Best Practice is a set of written rules which explains how people working in our industry should behave in a particular situation. It encompasses relevant legislation, but is not law in itself. However, were a member to act outside of the norms outlined in the COBP, they may be subject to disciplinary action and/or be in breach of legislation. Members must abide by Codes of Best Practice in their day-to-day work. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal from the Association.

Live capture traps are essential control measures for professional pest controllers. They allow us to control a number of species that cannot be treated with toxic compounds, and also allow us to be species specific with our control measures as non-target species can be released. However, pest controllers must ensure that their control measures are legal, humane and are carried out with sensitivity.

Legislation

Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, (England, Wales and Scotland) & Wildlife (Northern Ireland) order 1985. It is illegal to:

- “Set in position any trap calculated to cause bodily injury to any wild animal in schedule 6”. It is also illegal if any person ‘ Intentionally (or recklessly) kills, injures or takes any wild animal included in Schedule 5 he shall be guilty of an offence’

Wild Mammals (Protection) Act 1996, it is illegal to:

- “mutilate, kick, beat, nail, impale, stab, burn, stone, crush, drag, drown or asphyxiate and wild mammal with intent to inflict unnecessary suffering”

Live Capture Traps

- Live capture cage traps are cage boxes that open at 1 or both ends
- The doors are triggered by a plate or hook that may have bait placed on them
- They are used to capture species such as foxes
- They should be large enough to accommodate the target species
- Cages should be inspected at least once every day.
- Target species must be humanely dispatched at the most suitable opportunity
- The body should be responsibly disposed of
- Non target species must be released unharmed as soon as possible
- Traps must not be set in a position where the captured animal will be exposed to extremes of temperature or the risk of flooding.

Species not Resident in the United Kingdom

Under the terms of the wildlife and countryside act 1981 and the wildlife (northern Ireland) order 1985, it is an offence to release the following wild animal that is not a resident or regular visitor to the united kingdom in a wild state, or any of the following animal listed in Part 1 of schedule 9.

- Muntjac deer,
- Mink
- Black rat
- Grey squirrel

Visit Frequency

The Wildlife and Countryside act 1981 places no legal requirement on the pest controller to check live capture traps. However, the Animal Welfare act 2006 (Animal Health and Welfare (Scotland) 2006 and Welfare of Animals Act (Northern Ireland) places a duty of care on the person who sets the trap and captures the animal. A pest controller will commit an offence if “an act of his, or a failure of his to act, causes a protected animal to suffer unnecessarily”

The pest controller must ensure that any caged animal has access to food, water and shelter from the elements. Live cage traps should be visited on a daily basis as a minimum to meet the animals requirements and to allow human dispatch as quickly as possible.

Domestic Animals and Pets

Non – poisonous bait can be used to attract pest species into cage traps. However, care should be taken to avoid attracting domestic animals as injury to a domestic species can result in prosecution under The Criminal Damage Act 1971.

Where domestic cats can be shown to be feral (1st generation born wild) live capture trapping followed by humane dispatch is an appropriate control measure if the animals are posing a risk to health or to native species. However, cat owners cannot be held liable for their animal's action, and every effort should be made to determine if the cat is a pet by, for example, allowing a vet to check for the presence of a microchip.

If you have any concerns, consider another method of control.

Further Reading

- Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981
- Animal Welfare Act 2006
- BASC Trapping Pest Mammals Code of Practice