

Further update on Goodnature Ltd A12 and A24 Self-Resetting Traps

Further information has come to my notice since my advice note sent mid May, and I am aware some people read my note and drew the wrong conclusions. Hence this note offers updated advice regarding the purchase by DOC of self-resetting traps.

Background

Goodnature Ltd, supported by DOC, has developed self-resetting traps: the A12 for possums and the A 24 for rats and stoats. Goodnature also markets lures for use with the traps.

A key advantage of a robust self-resetting trap and long-life lure is the saving in labour costs due to longer intervals between field servicing visits, and the benefit of constant, effective pest control, thus the life of the lure and the reliability of the trap are critical. The reliability of the trap and the lure also determine whether the traps are available to predators at all times and underpin the spacing of the devices.

DOC has a 4 year project testing the efficacy of using self-resetting traps and the company's lures for rats, stoats and possums. A variety of operational DOC projects and other users are testing the traps during operational use. An example is the recently successful removal of rats and possums from 64 hectare Native Island, 30 metres off Stewart Island. Another example is sustained rat monitoring at 0% at Harts Hill, adjoining the Kepler track. Feedback from the research program and these other trials is being used by Goodnature to further improve their traps and for continuous improvement of their lures.

Current best practice advice:

The results from DOC's formal trialling to date demonstrate that:

1. A12 traps can effectively and humanely control possums in moderate to low density situations, when set out at approximately 1 trap per hectare, with the lure refreshed monthly as recommended.
2. A24 traps have proven humane and very effective controlling rats when set at 2.3 – 5 traps per ha using Goodnature's "Rat Lures" refreshed monthly as recommended.
3. A24 traps will humanely kill stoats. However stoat lures limit their effectiveness. Development of stoat lures is ongoing and latest formulations by Goodnature and Connovation (Erayz) show promise, but further trialling is required before DOC should consider self-resetting traps and lures effective for stoats.

Mechanical Reliability

Initial DOC trials highlighted mechanical reliability issues with early versions of the Goodnature traps, compromising their effectiveness in the field. The formal DOC trialling of current versions gives assurance that the mechanical reliability of the traps has been much improved in versions made since late 2013. I consider the traps reliable. The evidence comes from the formal DOC trialling of current versions and other operations using the latest versions of these traps that have shown good reliability to 6 months, which is the recommended gas refresh period.

DOC also commissioned an independent engineering assessment in early 2014, which concluded the operating principal of the A24 trap was robust and well resolved. It is noted that Goodnature Ltd offers a 2yr warranty with the traps and can be considered a professional provider.

The cost-effectiveness of self-resetting traps as a management option, is dependent on the pricing of the traps and of alternatives, required density of devices, site specific considerations, the sensitivity of the user to labour costs, as well as their effectiveness. As always; tools appropriate to each particular project should be considered on a case by case basis.

Conclusion- Advice

The Goodnature self-resetting traps can be considered a reliable and effective tool for controlling rats and possums, when the above protocols for traps and lures are followed.
Improvement is needed in stoat lures before self-resetting traps can be recommended for stoats.

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