



Remote monitoring of live capture traps for vertebrates

Guidelines for good practice

The use of remote monitoring technology to provide inspection of live-capture traps for vertebrates is an emerging practice in New Zealand. These systems are expected to provide cost efficiencies and there is also scope for improved animal welfare outcomes through earlier attendance to trapped animals, when compared to manual inspection systems. These guidelines are intended to support developers and users of remote monitoring systems to adopt good practice and ensure animal welfare outcomes are improved (or at least not worse) in comparison to manual inspection.

These guidelines in no way derogate from the Animal Welfare Act 1999 and, more specifically, nothing in these guidelines absolves users of live-capture traps from meeting their obligations under Section 36 of the Animal Welfare Act 1999 (see Appendix 1, but also check www.legislation.govt.nz for the most recent version of the Act).

The following is considered good practice for the use of remote monitoring systems for live capture traps in New Zealand¹:

1. Fail-safe design

Systems need to be fail-safe to ensure that captured animals do not go unnoticed. This means that any fault in the trigger sensor or communication network needs to be detected quickly and responded to with physical inspection of all traps affected by the fault. Any remote monitoring system should operate in such a way that each trap must confirm it has not been sprung (i.e. that it is assumed sprung unless the system communicates otherwise). If the un-sprung confirmation is compromised in any way, the system should communicate that it should be inspected.

2. Testing and record keeping

Systems should be regularly tested for reliability. Records of test outcomes, animal catch times and animal clearance times should be kept for at least a year. These records should enable audit of actual trap clearance data against the requirements in section 36 of the Act.

3. Responsibility for systems

A nominated individual should be identified and responsible for determining the status of all traps via the system and physically inspecting the traps as required. The system should allow for immediate escalation or delegation in the event of that individual being unable to carry out their duties for any reason.

4. Backup capacity

Sufficient capacity for people to physically 'check and clear' all traps within the timeframes stipulated in Section 36 of the Animal Welfare Act 1999 must be available as a contingency in the event of a complete system failure or in the event that all traps capture animals.

¹ These guidelines were developed in consultation with organisations involved in the use of remote monitoring systems



Appendix 1

36 Obligations relating to traps

(1) A person who, for the purpose of capturing alive a mammal, bird, reptile, or amphibian, sets a trap or causes a trap to be set must inspect that trap, or cause a competent person to inspect that trap, within 12 hours after sunrise on each day the trap remains set, beginning on the day immediately after the day on which the trap is set.

(2) A person who, for the purpose of capturing alive a mammal, bird, reptile, or amphibian, sets a trap or causes a trap to be set must—

(a) remove, or cause to be removed, any live animal found in that trap; or

(b) attend properly to the care of the animal or, without delay, kill the animal.

(3) A person who, without reasonable excuse, fails to comply with subsection (1) commits an infringement offence.

(4) A person who, without reasonable excuse, fails to comply with subsection (2) commits an offence and is liable on conviction,—

(a) in the case of an individual, to a fine not exceeding \$5,000; or

(b) in the case of a body corporate, to a fine not exceeding \$25,000.