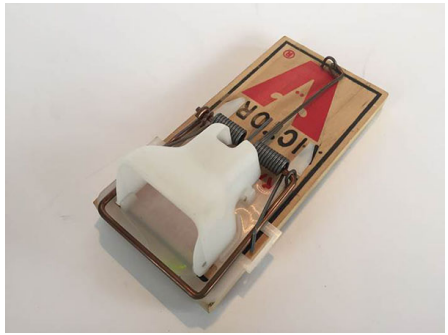
Traps for Predator Free NZ: Clarifying which traps have passed the NAWAC guideline



Grant Morriss

Background

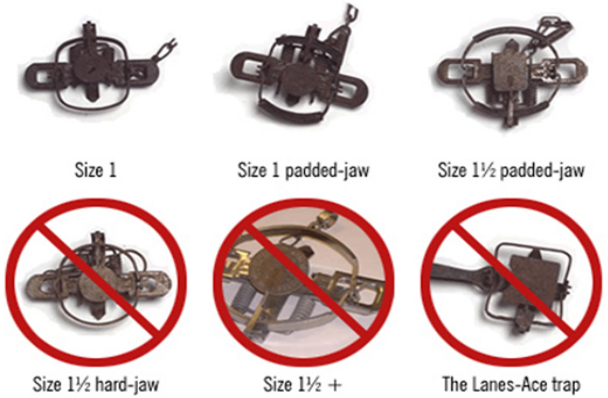
- 1980's increased international opposition from animal rights activists to trapping/fur harvesting
- 1990's The International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO) developed a standard for testing traps
- 2000 The National Animal Welfare Advisory Committee (NAWAC) adopted these standards and developed New Zealand specific guidelines for assessing the welfare performance of restraining and kill traps

NAWAC GUIDELINE 09:
Assessing the welfare performance of restraining and kill traps

Why do a NAWAC trap test?

- No legal obligation to use traps that meet the NAWAC trap-testing guideline, but public pressure for more humane pest control tools
- Agencies and manufacturers wanting to be seen to be promoting more humane traps
- Predator Free NZ Trust advising use of traps that meet the NAWAC guideline
- No kill traps have been prohibited in NZ but some leghold traps have

  precedent for prohibiting traps with excessive welfare compromise.



Kill trap testing

- Animal Ethics Committee approval required for animal testing

- Class A kill traps

  Animals irreversibly unconscious under 30 seconds

- Class B kill traps

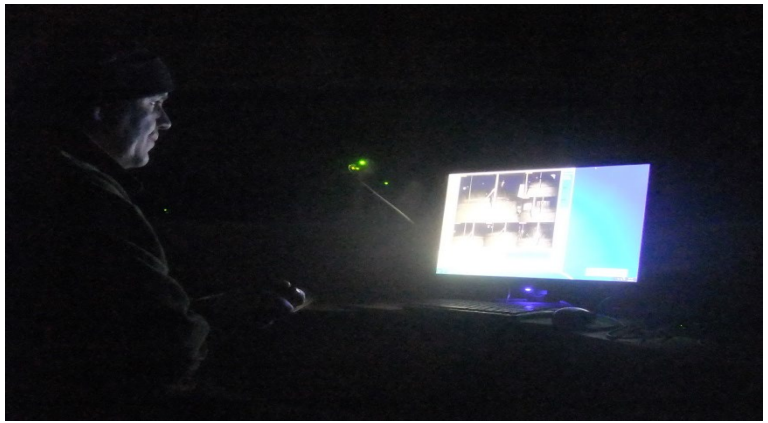
  Animals irreversibly unconscious under 3 minutes

- Choice of sample size, but minimum of 10 animals

  Larger sample size allows leeway for animals to exceed the threshold but they still need to be killed

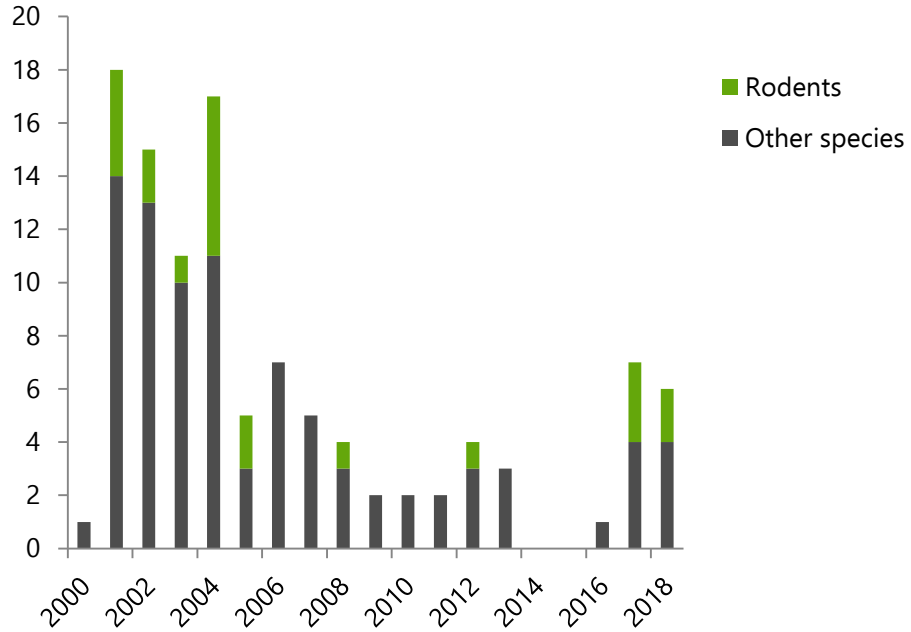
Testing: How is it done?

- Live capture feral animals and acclimatise them to captivity
- Individually house animals in testing arenas or pens
- Set up traps and video cameras
- Sit in the dark with thumb poised over stopwatch
- Wait……
- and wait……
- and wait some more……..



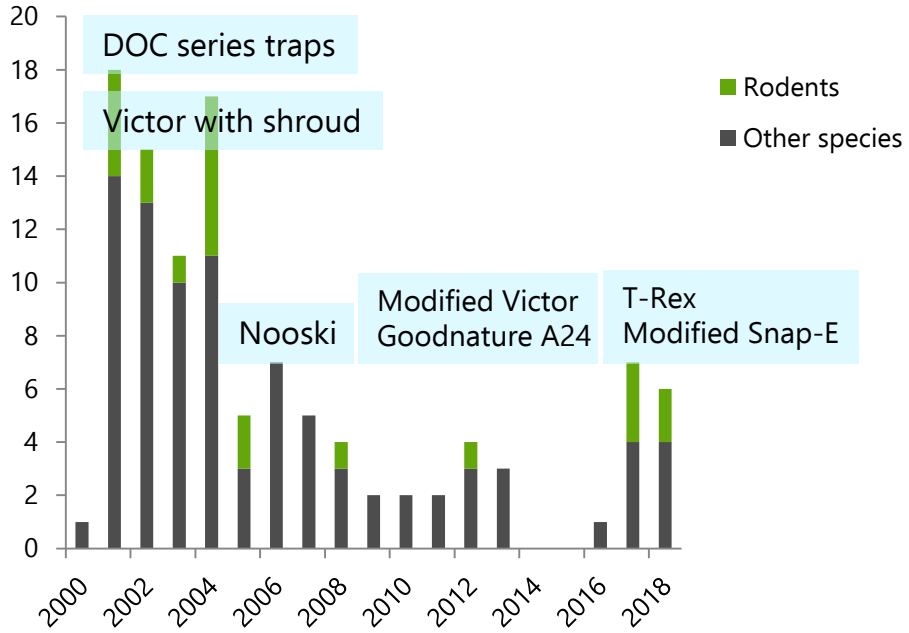
- Finally, when animal captured, monitor time to loss of blinking reflex and heart stop

Timeline of NAWAC kill trap testing



89 trap tests including 22 rodent tests
37 tests passed the guideline: 18 trap models currently available (all species)

Timeline of NAWAC kill trap testing



Predator Free 2050

- An ambitious goal to rid New Zealand of possums, rats and stoats by 2050
- Preference for traps that have met the NAWAC guideline
- Many community group initiatives –
  - bundles of enthusiasm but sometimes little trapping experience
  - desire for humane **AND** easy-to-set traps

- So which rat traps have passed the NAWAC guideline?

Rat traps that have passed the NAWAC guideline

	Norway rat	Ship rat
DOC150	√	
DOC200	√	
DOC250	√	√
Victor Professional with shroud	√	
Nooski	√	
Modified Victor Professional		√
Goodnature A24		√
Modified Snap-E in PF tunnel		√
T-Rex/Tomcat in PF tunnel		√

Comparison between species

An average 300 g adult Norway rat
(Large specimens >450 g)

An average 120 g adult ship rat
(Large specimens 220 g)

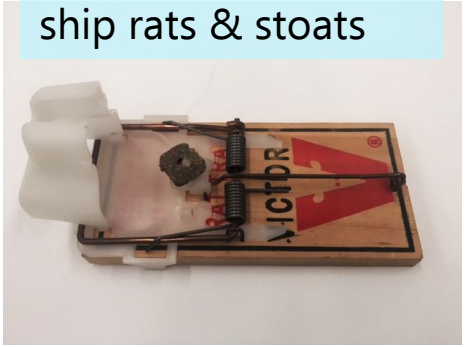
Rat traps that have passed the NAWAC guideline

So has the Victor Professional passed the NAWAC guideline?

Not exactly….

Tested & passed on Norway rats

Tested & passed on ship rats & stoats



Not tested yet…

Trap type or trap system? What has passed?

From the NAWAC guideline:

Trap system:
Includes the trap and how it is set (that is, additional equipment such as trap covers, and whether the trap is set on or above the ground, baited or not baited). **In most cases it is the trap system that is tested not just the trap.**

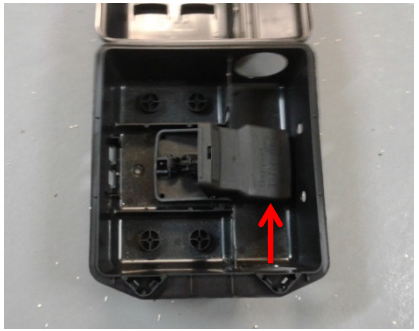
Use of tunnels/covers can direct target species to enter a trap from a consistent angle

→ consistent strike location

→ consistent kill

Keep out non-targets too

Consider the angle a rat will enter the trap



Do trap designs that look similar also pass the NAWAC guideline?

Graham's rat trap

T-Rex/Tomcat rat trap

Hippo rat trap

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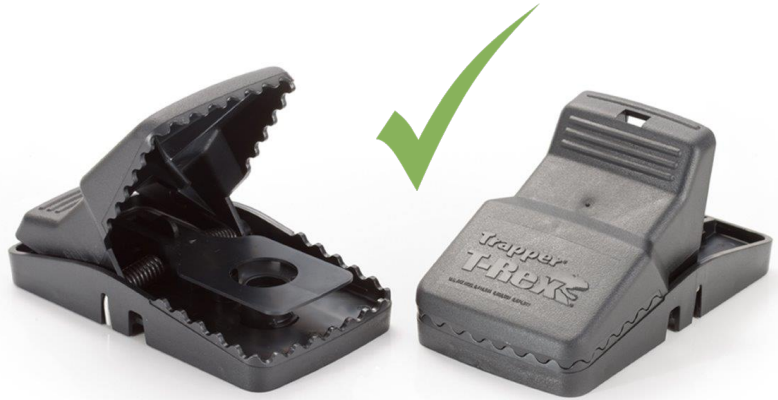
Graham's rat trap



T-Rex/Tomcat rat trap

Hippo rat trap

Are dimensions, impact momentum, clamping and triggering the same??

What about the rest???

Discussions with MPI:

1. Can mechanical testing be considered as an alternative to animal testing when trap designs are very similar?
   Need to consider commercial fairness/"piggy backing" with copies
   But potential reduction in number of animals tested
2. Modifications to existing NAWAC-passed traps
   Need for full retest?
   Assessment of change & whether it influences captures
3. Field testing on new trap prototypes
   Risk of injured animals escaping
4. Do traps deteriorate with time & use?
   Test old traps as well as new
5. Which traps should be tested in future?
   Who pays for it?
   Mice have been forgotten…

The future

- More new kill trap designs
- More NAWAC testing of new and currently available traps (funding dependent)
- More awareness of animal welfare
- Incremental improvements in the welfare of trapped animals

- Note: The NAWAC guideline focusses on animal welfare not on capture efficiency – should this also be tested?

- NAWAC trap testing results can be found at: