



This is an example of a double fenn trap set.

Traps

DOC traps can be set in a single or double set configuration as well, however they are required to be fixed inside a box. Fenn sets can also be set in a box. There are specifications for baffles and entry sizes where traps are used in areas with Kiwi and Weka.

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Mustelids

Ferret - Mustela furo

Stoat - Mustela erminea

Weasel - Mustela nivalis vulgaris



Introduction

The introduction of mustelids (ferret, stoat and weasel) is regarded as one of the worst mistakes ever made by European colonists in New Zealand. They were introduced to reduce the rabbit population, but have since become a major predator of native birds. Mustelid predation has helped lead to the extinction of some native birds and they have aided in the decline of the kakapo, takahe, and little spotted kiwi. They are known predators of kaka, kakariki, yellowhead and saddleback.

Mustelids are also carriers of bovine TB, parasites, and toxoplasmosis (which causes abortions in sheep and illness in humans).

Status

Mustelids are declared animal pests in the Auckland Regional Animal Pest Management Strategy. The Auckland Regional Council aims to make people aware of the threat to the environment posed by mustelids and to carry out control operations where there is a link with other pest control operations.

The Wildlife (Farming of Unprotected Wildlife) Regulations 1985 administered by the Department of Conservation, regulate the keeping, farming, selling and transporting of all mustelids. Under these Regulations it is an offence to sell, farm or keep more than 3 mustelids without a licence. It is also an offence to keep, liberate or take any mustelids to any offshore island in New Zealand except the North and South Islands.

Origin

Mustelids were introduced to New Zealand in the mid 1880's to control rabbits, because rabbit damage to pasture was having a serious effect on the economy. Imports were restricted by 1936 but the 1980's saw renewed interest in ferrets with farms being developed to supply the fur trade. The industry soon collapsed but ferrets have gained popularity as pets in some areas.

Description

FERRET - *Mustela furo*

Ferrets grow up to half a metre long and have a creamy-yellow undercoat, with long guard hairs that are black at the tip, giving a generally dark appearance. The lighter facial region has a dark, mask around the eyes and across the nose. Their smell and hearing are the main senses. Ferrets eat birds, eggs, rabbits, lizards, hedgehogs, frogs, eels and various insects. Ferrets are nocturnal, so they are not often directly observed in the wild.



STOAT - *Mustela erminea*

Stoats have long thin bodies, smooth, pointed heads, short round ears, and round black eyes. They are smaller than ferrets with males growing up to 40cm long. Their fur is dark brown with creamy white underparts and a bushy black tipped tail. Stoats are very nimble tree climbers, and there are few places they cannot reach. They are strong swimmers in both fresh and salt water, and islands within 1.5km of the mainland are probably vulnerable to stoat invasion.



They most commonly eat birds, mice, rabbits, rats, possums and insects (wetas) and can be found anywhere from beaches to remote high country, in any kind of forest, native or exotic; in scrub, dunes, tussock grassland and farm pastures.

WEASEL - *Mustela nivalis vulgaris*

The smallest and rarest mustelids in New Zealand, weasels are about 20cm long. Their fur is brown with white underparts often broken by brown spots. Their tail is short, brown and tapering. Weasels run, swim, and climb as well as stoats, but they have a shorter stride and cover less distances. They eat mice, small birds, geckos, tree wetas. Weasels prefer disturbed areas like suburban gardens, farmland, scrub and cutover or exotic forest, and forest margins.



Control Options

The Fenn kill-trap comes in two sizes - Mark 4 traps for weasels and stoats, Mark 6 traps for ferrets. The traps should be set in pairs on a firm, level base in a tunnel or box not more than 200-300m apart. Covers for Fenn traps are available commercially. They should be regularly baited with fresh food (meat, eggs, fish). Where double Fenn sets are used bait should be placed between traps. Ensure that the entrance hole is only large enough for the target animal.

The DOC Traps 150, 200 and 250. The DOC 150 and 200 are designed for weasels, stoats, rats and hedgehogs, and the DOC 250 for ferrets. Information on these traps can be sourced through the Department of Conservation web site www.doc.govt.nz. The location for purchase of traps and boxes can be found by searching under DOC 200.