



Orkney Wetland Trapping Factsheet

June 2025

An amazing group of volunteers in the Thomsons Catchment has been leading trapping efforts at the Orkney Wetland. This self-motivated and enthusiastic team formed a trapping group in August 2024, with trapping starting in late October. This factsheet summarises what's been observed and trapped so far, along with some key lessons learned.

Trapping

The group set up a trapping system targeting rats, stoats, ferrets and possums around the wetland. They began with monitoring cards over several months to identify which pests were active in the area, then worked with experts to design a tailored trapping programme.

- ▶ Ten DOC250 traps have been installed around the wetland.
- ▶ The traps are checked weekly and re-baited throughout the year.
- ▶ The group uses [Trap.NZ](#) to log their trap data and track results.

The Results

The group was told it might take a few weeks to catch anything, but in the very first week, they caught a ferret! Since then, at least one trap has had something in it most weeks. Activity slowed down in mid-May, and nothing has been caught from mid-May to mid-June (when this factsheet was written).

The group plans to keep trapping through winter, as removing even a single ferret now can help prevent spring breeding.

Between 1 November 2024 and 16 May 2025, the team caught 37 predators:

16 hedgehogs, 11 ferrets, 4 rats, 2 possums, 1 stoat and 3 small feral (half-grown) cats.

THOMSONS PROJECT		Trapping Results		Date
		TOTAL TO DATE: 37		6 May 2025
	Hedgehogs		Rats	
Today	1	Today	4	
Total to date	16	Total to date	4	
Notes		Notes		
	Ferrets		Stoats & Weasel	
Today	1	Today	1	
Total to date	11	Total to date	1	
Notes		Notes		
	Possums		Other	
Today	2	Today	3	
Total to date	2	Total to date	3	
Notes		Notes		

Trapping results

Key learnings

- ▶ There's a lot of information out there, and people have been really willing to help, which has been fantastic and helped get us off the ground. Jo's experience has been especially valuable, particularly her practical bucket setup and safe bait hook design.
- ▶ Although our initial monitoring didn't show much pest activity, we've ended up catching quite a few pests. Don't be discouraged if your monitoring cards look quiet!
- ▶ Weekly checks and re-baiting seem to work well, with more frequent checks in summer and less often in winter. Fresh rabbit has been very effective, but it's good to mix it up. Chicken necks work well and are cheap and easy to get, and even random freezer meat has done the trick.
- ▶ We replace eggs roughly every six weeks, and have started experimenting with a dollop of peanut butter for extra scent. Scraping bait on the front of the trap also helps spread scent and attract predators.
- ▶ After attending a talk in Arrowtown, we've started experimenting with scent trails by dragging a piece of bait behind us to see if it improves catch numbers.
- ▶ [Trap.NZ](#) has been a really useful recording tool. It shows what we've caught, where and when, and helps us spot any traps that aren't performing so we can try a new location. We recently discovered their QR code feature, which we've printed, laminated and attached to the top of each trap to make logging easier on the go.



First ferret caught in a DOC250 trap



Monitoring card

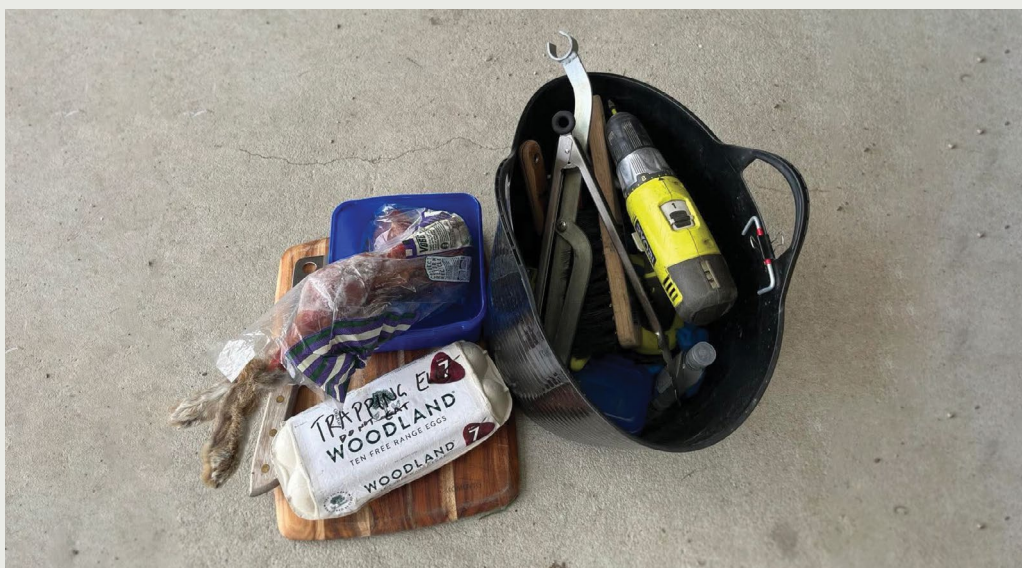
What's next?

The group plans to install five Flipping Timmy traps for possum control, upgrading the older traps they had. They're also planning to install an AT230, a self-resetting trap that automatically reactivates after a possum is killed.

A huge thanks to Jo Wakelin, DOC's Dave Goodman and Joanna Corrie, and to Otago Catchment Community and Wai Connections for providing advice and training opportunities.



The foundation members of the trapping team: Nikki Williams, Johanna Perez, Kim Hore, Susan Heal, and Raf Wyatt. Picture taken in October 2024.



Trapping materials: We've found it really handy to have a weekly trapping kit ready to go. This includes bait, spare screws and other trap maintenance gear, including the tools needed to open and service the DOC250 traps.

Biodiversity Boost at Orkney Wetland

The newly constructed wetland is home to pūkeko, swans, pied stilts, plovers, and occasionally black-billed gulls - and more recently, a marsh crake! The trapping programme helps give these birds and their offspring a better chance of survival. The group is excited to see biodiversity in the wetland continue to flourish.



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