



The Possum Trappers Guide.

Possums are New Zealand's most well-known pests with an estimated 30 million yet to be caught.

Possums damage our native forests by browsing on foliage, flowers and fruit. It's said that on forest edges 6-7 possums are estimated to eat as much pasture as one sheep. But possums have also been filmed eating the eggs, chicks and even adults of many other native birds including kererū, kiwi, harrier hawk, fantail, muttonbird, and tūī. They also eat the nectar and berries that native birds like to eat, so there is less food for the birds.

Following are some basics to help you understand a little more about possums, along with some trapping tips and tricks. But be patient, as like all things, it takes time to become an expert possum trapper!

Contact Lawrence Smith with any questions or if you are having trouble catching these cute but destructive possums! Email Lawrence@rewildwainui.nz or phone 021 346 486.

Make sure you visit our website for more information on the project, including pest facts and the best traps! Visit www.rewildwainui.nz.

And please join our project on Trap.nz, add your traps, then register your catches, <https://trap.nz/project/3124039/info>

Happy Trapping!



The 4 P's of Possum Trapping!

1. PESTS? Know thy enemy!

Which ones do you have, and where?

- Possums are nocturnal. They only spend 10-15% of their time on the ground. You may not be able to see them, **but they are there!**
- They make a range of sounds, including screeches, grunts, growls, hisses and chatters.
- Possums are messy eaters, often leaving partially chewed or torn leaves, with the ground beneath a tree often littered with partially eaten leaves.
- In urban environments, fruit, nut and citrus trees are favourite targets - look for eaten fruit.
- Look for droppings or chewed bark and scratches on trees. Pestdetective.org.nz is an excellent resource to help identify both.
- Better yet, [buy a camera](#). See what is lurking in the dark and watch what they are up to. Possums are naturally inquisitive and are an addictive watch!

2. PLACEMENT.

Put the right trap, in the right place.

- Trap placement is very important. As they say, “fish where the fish are”!
- Possums tend to follow a pathway or “pad run” in the bush, often on ridges, look out for them. They look like a track.
- Possums have favourite foods, or trees, so look for scratchings or markings on trees, then start with traps there.
- Trees should be around a 30cm diameter so they can get their paws around them.
- Attach traps around 1 metre off the ground to avoid non target species. Try using a ramp to make access easier. A rough sawn fence paling at 45° works well, terminating at least 30cm from the bottom of the trap.
- Possums sense of smell is not that great - only around 3 metres but they do respond to visual cues. White or shiny things can attract them.
- But scent trails from other possums, or even rodents, are important. You'll often find once a trap has caught one possum it then starts catching more.

3. PERSUASION.

Use the right lure to attract your possums.

- Start with peanut butter, the standard, or Nutella (our favourite lure!). Or try fruit, such as apple sprinkled with cinnamon.
- There are numerous commercial baits, try them if you wish and see how they perform.
- Possums are omnivores but prefer fruit or sweet things rather than meat. If domestic cats are present never use fish or meat as bait and avoid using ramps.
- Try using a “blaze” of flour on a tree to attract them, especially up the ramp if you have one.

4. PERSISTENCE.

Regularly check and rebait your traps.

- Check your trap and refresh your bait as often as you can. Rodents will compete with possums for the bait!
- Some trap locations will perform better than others. If you've not had results after several weeks, try a new location.
- After a few catches it can take some time for new possums to reoccupy territory. Don't be afraid to occasionally take a trapping break.



For more information on possums, visit www.rewildwainui.nz/help-and-guides/possums