



Code of Best Practice

Live Capture Trapping

Version 2. August 2020.

British Pest Control Association Code of Best Practice for Live Capture Trapping

A BPCA Code of Best Practice is a set of written rules which explains how people working in our industry should behave in a particular situation. It encompasses relevant legislation but is not the law in itself.

However, were a member to act outside of the norms outlined in the COBP, they may be subject to disciplinary action or be in breach of legislation. Members must abide by Codes of Best Practice

in their day-to-day work. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal from the Association.

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British Pest Control Association

Code of Best Practice for Live Capture Trapping

Live capture traps can be an essential control measure for pest management professionals. However, pest controllers must ensure that their control measures are legal, humane and are carried out with sensitivity.

Legislation

Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, (England, Wales and Scotland) and Wildlife (Northern Ireland)

Order 1985 state it is illegal to:

- "Set in position any trap calculated to cause bodily injury to any wild animal in schedule 6"
- "Intentionally (or recklessly) kill, injure or take any wild animal included in Schedule 5"
- For birds - general, individual and class licenses are available (some need applying for) and describe the conditions of live capturing certain birds - you must make yourself familiar with these.



A brown rat in a live capture trap.

The **Wild Mammals (Protection) Act 1996** states it is illegal to:

- "mutilate, kick, beat, nail, impale, stab, burn, stone, crush, drag, drown or asphyxiate any wild mammal with intent to inflict unnecessary suffering"

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A person shall not be guilty of an offence under this Act by reason of:

- the attempted killing of any such wild mammal as an act of mercy if he shows that the mammal had been so seriously disabled otherwise than by his unlawful act that there was no reasonable chance of its recovering;
- the killing in a reasonably swift and humane manner of any such wild mammal if he shows that the wild mammal had been injured or taken in the course of either lawful shooting, hunting, coursing or pest control activity.

Animal Welfare Act 2006 (England and Wales) states:

- "An animal is a 'protected animal' for the purposes of this Act if - it is under control of man whether on a permanent or temporary basis."
- "A captured animal must not suffer and should be provided with appropriate shelter, water and food".

Species not resident in the United Kingdom

The Wildlife and Countryside Act (WCA) 1981 (as amended) makes it illegal to release, or allow to escape to the wild, any animal listed on Schedule 9.

The grey squirrel is regarded as an invasive non-native species following its inclusion under Schedule 9 of the WCA.

Grey squirrels are also listed in the IUCN international list of 100 worst invasive non-native species.

This highlights the damage that grey squirrels cause to our native flora and fauna; a problem severe

enough to be recognised at a level of global significance. As such, the grey squirrel is regarded as a pest species and is afforded no protection under the WCA.

Under Schedule 9 of the WCA, it is illegal to release a grey squirrel into the wild, or allow one to escape. This means if you trap one, you are obliged to humanely dispatch it. You must not let it go as this act would be illegal.

Anyone who carries out, or knowingly causes or permits any of the above acts to occur could be committing an offence.

Live Capture Traps

1

The cage should be in good condition and large enough to accommodate the target species.

2

Traps must not be set in a position where the captured animal will be exposed to extremes of temperature, open to predation or the risk of flooding.

3

Appropriate food and water must be provided, to prevent unnecessary suffering.

4

It may be advantageous to leave the cage un-set for a period of time, to allow the target animal to feel safe around the cage and hence increase the chance of success.

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5

Cages should be inspected at least once every day, once set. There are some remote monitoring devices that could be used in some situations, however, you need to be confident in their reliability and your legal responsibility to ensure traps are inspected as per legislation.

6

Target species must be humanely dispatched as soon as possible after capture and responsibly disposed of.

7

Non target species must be released unharmed as soon as possible.

Visit frequency

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 places no legal requirement on the pest controller to check live capture traps, in terms of timescale.

However, the Animal Welfare Act 2006, Animal Health and Welfare (Scotland) 2006 and Welfare of Animals Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 place a duty of care on the person who sets the trap and captures the animal.

Trapping of pest birds

When using live capture traps for pest birds, it is important that you refer to GL33 (standard licence conditions for trapping wild birds and using decoys under a Natural England licence) which is a document supporting

the general licences.

Each country of the UK may have its own individual licence wording and will have different species of birds listed. You must ensure you check these regularly. But in general, the follow applies:

“When in use, every cage trap used in accordance with this licence must be physically inspected at least once every day at intervals of no more than 24 hours, except where this is not possible because of severe weather conditions. In such cases, every effort must be made to inspect the cage trap as soon as possible.”

A pest controller will commit an offence if “an act of his, or a failure of his to act, causes a protected animal to suffer unnecessarily”. The pest controller must ensure that any caged animal has access to food, water and shelter from the elements.

For Scotland, there is an important extra condition: users must place, on each trap, a sign that gives the operator’s ID number and the number of the local police station or the Wildlife Crime Officer for the area.

Domestic animals and pets

Non-poisonous bait can be used to attract pest species into cage traps. However, care should be taken to avoid attracting domestic animals, as injury to a domestic species can result in prosecution under The Criminal Damage Act 1971.

Where domestic cats can be shown

to be feral (1st generation born wild) live capture trapping followed by humane dispatch, preferably by a veterinary professional, is an appropriate control measure if the animals are posing a risk to health or to native species.

However, cat owners cannot be held liable for their animal’s action, and every effort should be made to determine if the cat is a pet by, for example, allowing a vet to check for the presence of a microchip. If you have any concerns, consider another method of control.



The British Pest Control Association requires that its members meet a range of criteria including strict abidance to all of our Codes of Best Practice. You can search for our members on the BPCA website bpca.org.uk/find

BPCA makes strenuous efforts to ensure the accuracy and current relevance of its publications, which are intended for use by technically competent persons. However, this does not remove the need for technical and managerial judgement in practical situations. Nor do they confer any immunity or exemption from relevant legal requirements, including by-laws.

If you suspect something in this document is incorrect or out of date, please report it to technical@bpca.org.uk.

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Further reading

- Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981
- Animal Welfare Act 2006
- BASC Trapping Pest Mammals Code of Practice
- Welfare of Animals Act (Northern Ireland) 2011
- Animal Health and Welfare (Scotland) Act 2006.

