

**MAINLAND ISLAND RESTORATION OPERATION  
(MIRO) INC.**

**Parangarahu Lakes  
Trappers' Handbook**

**December 2018**

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## **MIRO's Health & Safety Principles for Volunteers**

- First and foremost, always be thinking about the safety of yourself and those around you. What are the main hazards and how can you mitigate them?
- If it doesn't feel safe, don't do it! Take your time; think of another way; ask for help if you need it, so that you are always working within your capabilities.
- It is essential that you follow the relevant H&S Guidelines for the task you are undertaking. The Guidelines have been developed over a number of years by experienced people and are reviewed annually.
- Immediately report to a committee member any incident or activity that you think is unsafe. And if you see ways of doing things better and safer, share your thoughts with a committee member so that we can all benefit.
- Make sure nothing you do endangers other users of the East Harbour Regional Park.
- If you're not feeling well that day — don't go!

**Remember — at the end of the day, everyone must go home safe!**

### **Handling Dead Animals**

- Dead animals may be infected with diseases such as TB, leptospirosis or campylobacter. Use protective gloves at all times when handling carcasses and wash your gloves when you have finished your run.
- Dispose of carcasses by throwing them well clear of the track and waterways.
- Should you feel unwell after a trap servicing trip, seek medical attention and be sure to tell your doctor that you have been handling carcasses. The symptoms for TB, leptospirosis and campylobacter are easily accessible on the internet.

### **Handling Kill Traps with Powerful Springs**

At the Lakes, MIRO uses Timms kill traps for possums and DOC200 traps in wooden boxes for stoats, rats and hedgehogs. You must be trained by a designated MIRO trap trainer before using any of these traps because they are strong enough to break fingers and cause lacerations if they go off unexpectedly. Wear your protective gloves in case of disease or infection.

The Timms trap does not have a safety catch, so must be triggered before renewing the lure. This can be done by stamping on the top with your foot. However, there is also a gentler way of releasing the trap (which is better for the trap) by putting it face down on the ground, holding it with your knee, and releasing it gradually by holding the cord with one hand while releasing the trigger bar with the other hand. Fingers must be kept clear of the front opening at all times. The trap must be secured to the ground (with steel pegs) or to a tree to work safely — if it gets toppled, the kill bar can be accessed through a much larger opening, putting non-target animals or people at risk.

The DOC200 is the most powerful trap that MIRO uses, so treat it with respect. After opening the lid of the box, make the trap safe by putting the safety clip in place, making sure it passes under the kill bar handle (as otherwise it's easy to knock the clip off). Then trigger the trap with a stick so that the safety clip holds the pressure of the kill bar. Better still, instead of using the safety clip, push your square drive screwdriver through the kill bar handle and then down the gap between the DOC200 mechanism and the box. You can then clean the trap (especially around the seer and the trigger arm) and replace the lure. If the DOC200 has caught something, first reset the trap and secure it with the screwdriver or safety clip as explained above. Then, with gloved hands, remove the carcass, clean the trap and replace the lure (taking the inside baffle out with the carcass can make things easier). The DOC200 has a strong spring, so you may need to use the setting tool to reset the trap. Work within your capabilities — ask for help if you need it. Some setting tools do not work as well as they should — if you cannot fully set the trap with the tool, ask the MIRO Trap Repairer for a replacement that works. Finally, remove the safety clip (or screwdriver) before securing the wooden lid of the box with the screw. If the lid cannot be fastened securely, the trap must be left unset. The following video is a great introduction to using the DOC200: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kABskKb1NzE&index=2&list=PLFVxEmJHAaHpmjDSEI4vETSla2CFeKgT>

## **Working in an exposed coastal environment**

Wellington's south coast is exposed to strong, cold winds, especially from the south, which can make working at the Lakes unpleasant. These conditions are often accompanied by large ocean swells that are potentially dangerous if you are travelling or working close to the sea and, in extreme conditions, the road will become impassable. For these reasons you should look at a weather forecast (e.g. MetService marine forecast at <http://www.metservice.com/marine-surf/recreational-marine/wellington>) for windspeed, temperature, rain and swell height before departing and postpone your trip if conditions are likely to be too unfavourable — trap lines can always be done at a later time.

Remember that conditions can change for the worse very quickly and forecasts are not always accurate. Given that cold, wet and windy conditions greatly increase the risk of hypothermia, you must take appropriate warm clothing that is both wind and rain proof (e.g. warm hat, trousers, merino top, polar fleece jacket, and raincoat). If cold conditions are likely (e.g. in winter), consider also taking over-trousers and gloves (Appendix 3 contains a fairly exhaustive gear list to select from). Servicing Lakes Block trap lines can also mean spending long periods in the sun, so take a sunhat (if you're not cycling) and use sunscreen to protect exposed skin.

## **Travelling on the coast road in vehicles**

The road from Eastbourne to the south coast is gravelled, but is usually in good condition, although this will not be the case after storm events, when the road can be rutted, eroded and covered in debris. In these conditions, it is advisable to postpone your trip until the road has been cleared.

Because of the gravel surface and the number of other road users, especially cyclists and walkers, the speed limit is relatively low and must be observed at all times. On some of the tighter corners you will need to slow down further so that you can always stop in the length of clear road you can see in front of you. Given the bad fall-off on the seaward side of the road, exercise a high level of care and concentration while driving.

As the road is little more than single lane, you will need to slow down for other road users, especially cyclists (who may prefer to dismount) and walkers wearing earphones who may not hear you approach.

Once you are past Pencarrow Head, the south coast can at times be surprisingly isolated, so you need to be well-prepared. Make sure your vehicle is well-serviced, has sufficient fuel and the spare tyre is fully inflated. Always carry a mobile phone and keep a phone charger in your vehicle.

### **Travelling on the coast road by bike**

The road from Eastbourne to the south coast is gravelled, but is usually in good condition, although this will not be the case after storm events, when the road can be rutted, eroded and covered in debris. In these conditions, you may need to dismount in places, especially where there is deep, soft sand, which makes pedalling hard and steering difficult.

Given the bad fall-off on the seaward side of the road, exercise a high level of care and concentration while cycling, especially if it is windy and always wear a cycle helmet. A Hi Viz top is also recommended—these are available from the MenzShed (see Useful Contacts).

As the road is little more than single lane, it is often best to stop to let vehicles past — this makes it much easier for drivers. Take care passing walkers, especially those wearing earphones who may not hear you approach. Goats and sheep on the roadway also present a hazard as they may cross in front of you unexpectedly.

Once you are past Pencarrow Head, the south coast can at times be surprisingly isolated, so you need to be well-prepared. Make sure you have a spare tube or puncture repair kit and a tyre pump. Watch out for gorse—if you get a puncture be sure to check the inside of your tyre (especially the sidewall) for prickles before putting the tube back in.

### **Travelling on the Lakes Block tracks by mountain bike**

The lakes block tracks are classified as Intermediate in terms of difficulty but, in general, they are quite straightforward as they are usually wide with quite grassy surfaces. Parts of the tracks are on clay, so can be very slippery when wet. The track from the saddle below the upper lighthouse to the coast road is steep, has a steep falloff, and very loose gravel, so ride within your abilities. If in doubt—wheel your bike—it will only take a few minutes!

### **Avoiding rockfalls**

Many parts of the coastal road are adjacent to steep coastal cliffs that are prone to rockfall. While many parts of the road are quite safe, some parts are close-in beside the cliffs, especially past Pencarrow Head. Rockfalls are much more frequent during and after heavy rain, so avoid those times, but rocks can still fall at any time. Areas particularly prone to rockfall often have debris at the base (although this may have been cleared from the road), so never spend time working there and always try to minimise your time crossing such a zone. If you see or hear rocks falling, stay well clear until things settle down.

### **Working in an isolated area**

The Lakes Block Trapping Coordinator tries to ensure a good match of the physical ability and outdoor skills of the volunteer with the Lakes trap lines. If you are finding your line too challenging, please ask to be reassigned to something more manageable.

Route finding should not be a problem at the Lakes as it is open country and you will have been introduced to the trap line. However, all MIRO trap sites are now geo-referenced, so we can supply files to upload the locations of your traps to your GPS or we can supply .pdf maps of your (and nearby) lines (send requests to the MIRO geolocation database custodian on contact list).

A fully charged mobile phone should be carried and will usually have reception. Ideally, a Personal Locator Beacon (PLB) would also be carried, as this greatly increases the speed of rescue and thus your chances of surviving. One MIRO PLB is available to be booked out from Parker Jones and another from Reg Cotter (see Useful Contacts below).

You are advised to take some First Aid supplies such as painkillers and bandages to help with minor lacerations and bruises. If you are taking any medications (e.g. asthma inhaler), make sure you have them with you. It also pays to have some emergency food (e.g. muesli bars or OSMs) and drinking water in case you are delayed.

It is essential that trappers travelling alone leave intentions with someone, clearly stating the route, equipment carried and time due out. If you are overdue, your contact person should phone 111 and ask for POLICE. Don't forget to tell your contact person when you are out!

In the advent of a more severe medical emergency, phone 111 and ask for AMBULANCE. If you do not have mobile phone reception, walk to a higher point until reception is found. The 111 medical controller will want to know:

- Where you are (making it clear you are in an inaccessible area)?
- What has happened?
- Who is involved (especially the number affected)?

In emergency situations, it is common to feel panicked. Taking some slow deep breaths will help, as will taking a minute to write down the answers to the Where, What and Who questions before you make the call.

## **Reporting Accidents**

All notifiable incidents (when the person affected required professional medical attention i.e. beyond 1<sup>st</sup> Aid), must be communicated to the East Harbour Park Ranger (See contacts) as soon as possible, as Greater Wellington Regional Council is required to communicate these events to Worksafe NZ. All minor accidents including near misses should be reported promptly to the MIRO Health & Safety Coordinator (see Useful Contacts below). Reporting near misses will help us learn from the event and, if necessary, change the way we work to lessen the chance of future accidents.

## **Trap Maintenance**

Traps must be maintained in good condition to remain effective and safe to handle. You will be able to carry out some field repairs, but often replacement is necessary. Appendix 1 lists the supplies that are contained in the Bunker at the Menzshed in Day's Bay and the supplies that need to be requested from the Menzshed Contact. If you are not confident with field repairs, bring the trap in for servicing — leave it in the bunker with a note saying what is wrong.

The Timms trap can sometimes become overly sensitive. This can usually be corrected by slightly bending the trigger bar. If this doesn't work, bring the trap in for repair. The nylon cord used to set the trap by pulling up the kill bar eventually becomes worn. New ones are

available from the Menzshed and are easily replaced in the field. The most common problem with Timms traps are rusted out springs (and sometimes other parts). If one spring is broken, please remove the trap for repair — a single spring (or stretched springs) does not give enough force for a humane kill.

For the DOC200, cleaning the trap is the most important thing, especially around and underneath the treadle and by the sear. Make sure you always move the trigger arm so that it doesn't become stuck in the set position. The trap sensitivity adjustment will be checked separately every year or two — this is not straightforward, so if you are unhappy with how the DOC200 mechanism is working the simplest thing is to trigger the trap, unscrew the mechanism and return it to the Miro trap repairer who will give you a replacement. A common fault with the stainless steel version of the DOC200 is for the treadle not to pop up sufficiently when you are setting the trap, due to the spring being too weak. This adds to the risk in working with the trap, so if cleaning around the treadle does not fix the problem, the mechanism should be brought in for adjustment.

### **Tips About Lures**

For the possum traps, the Menzshed maintain stocks of cereal-based lures in the bunker. These have different hole sizes for the Possum Master (large) and Timms trap (small). Some Timms traps have an especially thin trigger bar, so hold the lure in place with a piece of rubber or vegetation. When rats are plentiful, the cereal lure can be wrapped in fine wire mesh and secured with thin lacing wire. This will be stocked by the Menzshed when needed. Apple is a good alternative to the cereal bait — trappers are encouraged to experiment, but you will need to supply these yourself. Containers of scented flour are kept in the bunker — the flour should be sprinkled liberally to make a white blaze on the tree or ground close to the trap — possums are inquisitive, so will be attracted both by sight and smell. You can also place a stone or log on a ground-based Timms trap to add interest for possums!

For the DOC200s, dried rabbit is kept frozen in the Menzshed, so needs to be ordered in advance or picked up on a Tuesday or Thursday morning. If you have some left over, keep it in your freezer for next time. Fresh eggs can also be used, with some trappers preferring to put a small hole in them so that the scent can get out, but this means they go bad more quickly. We don't try to stock eggs, so you will need to supply these yourself. There is some evidence that golf balls are as effective, with some trappers using these with dried rabbit. Baits should be fresh, so you can use a freshly caught rat or stoat if you wish — cut in half it can be used to bait two traps. You can also experiment with other attractants such as dribbling Chinese fish sauce near to the trap entrance. Finally, some people believe that disguising (or 'hazing') the traps helps attract stoats, although the evidence for this is mixed. One approach is to put wood or other forest floor detritus each side of the trap entrance and then scrape in between with your hand or boot so as to make a clear path to the front door. The rationale is that stoats like to hunt down burrows, so a burrow-like entrance will attract them. Some "diggings" (i.e. exposing fresh earth) are also recommended, perhaps making the stoat believe rabbits are present.

### **Servicing Your Line and Reporting Your Catch**

The current recommendation is for the lines to be serviced monthly. If you would like to change to a different line, either easier or harder, or would like some extra help, then email the Lakes Block Trapping Coordinator. Also, please say if you have spare time and are able to help fill in for others when required. We realise that, over time, people's other

commitments change, so if you feel a need to take a break from doing your line don't hesitate to discuss it with the coordinator.

Please email a site-by-site report of your catch to the Lakes Block Trapping Coordinator after each servicing trip on the standard spreadsheet and codes that will be provided. As we develop new spatial information systems, knowing things such as pest animal catch and possum lure consumption will help us respond better in terms of improving the trap network, altering the servicing frequency and making more robust lures available.

If you find a catch in someone else's trap, it is a good idea to remove the carcass and reset the trap. If you come across a trap which no longer has a lure, add another lure. Please report any such catches to the coordinator so that we have a complete picture of what is being trapped. Please also report any pests, such as sheep or goats in the Lakes area by sending an email to the East Harbour Regional Park ranger.

### **Useful Contacts**

Jo Greenman (GW) M: 021 873060 [Jo.Greenman@gw.govt.nz](mailto:Jo.Greenman@gw.govt.nz)  
East Harbour Regional Park Ranger

Darren Lees (GW) [Darren.Lees@gw.govt.nz](mailto:Darren.Lees@gw.govt.nz)  
GW Lakes Block trapper

Rob Masters (GW) W: 830 4123 M: 021 919 402 [Rob.Masters@gw.govt.nz](mailto:Rob.Masters@gw.govt.nz)  
Senior Biodiversity Officer, Greater Wellington Regional Council

Manas Chakraborty M: 021 133 7264 [manas209@gmail.com](mailto:manas209@gmail.com)  
MIRO Health & Safety Coordinator  
MIRO Committee Member

Mike Parker [mikeandcarolynparker@gmail.com](mailto:mikeandcarolynparker@gmail.com)  
Menzshed Contact for regular bait and trap supplies

Parker Jones H: 562 7607 M: 021 979 839 [parker\\_jones@xtra.co.nz](mailto:parker_jones@xtra.co.nz)  
Lakes Block Trapping Coordinator  
MIRO Menzshed liaison for special requests to Menzshed  
Holder of loan PLB

Terry Webb H: 562 0236 M: 021 962 156 [Terry.Webb454@gmail.com](mailto:Terry.Webb454@gmail.com)  
MIRO Trap Repairer  
MIRO Geolocation Database Custodian  
MIRO Chair

Reg Cotter H: 568 6960 [regpetone@gmail.com](mailto:regpetone@gmail.com)  
Alternative bait supplier and holder of second loan PLB



## Acknowledgements

MIRO is committed to ensuring the health and safety of its members. To help achieve this, the 2015/16 MIRO Committee developed health and safety guidelines for trappers that are contained in the first part of this Handbook, while other parts draw on earlier MIRO material. This version incorporates valuable feedback on earlier versions from a number of MIRO trappers and the current MIRO Committee, for which we are very grateful.

## Appendix 1. Bait and Trap Supplies at the Menzshed



The Menzshed is located at Williams Park by the Duckpond near Kereru Rd. They operate on a Tuesday and Thursday morning from 9.00 a.m. to 12 noon, so all email orders need to be placed by Monday or Wednesday evening or you can call in personally during these times.

Your order will be prepared and placed in the small concrete bunker on the south side of the Menzshed with your name on it. There is a combination lock on the door (see Appendix 2 for access details).

Remember to specify the number of:

- Timms cereal lures (you need to be specific regarding the trap type);
- Stoat lures (dried rabbit meat — these are refrigerated and so not stored in the bunker except as part of your order); and
- Bottles of flour lure.

However, you can go to the Bunker and source Timms trap lures, scented flour, protective gloves and High Viz vests at any time if you prefer, but please email a list of what you have taken to the MenzShed Contact (see Useful Contacts list).

You have to pre-order the following items by sending an email to the Menzshed Contact as they are not stored in the bunker:

- Dried rabbit baits for mustelids, used in the DOC200 traps, which are kept frozen until needed;
- Replacement Timms traps;
- Replacement Timms nylon cords; and
- DOC200 setting tool, square driver screwdriver and safety staples.

Bait can also be ordered from Reg Cotter at 1 Bolton St, Petone (just off the Esplanade). Reg leaves bait orders on his veranda for collection and other supplies ordered from him (see Useful Contacts list).

## **Appendix 2. Opening the Bait Bunker**

The locking system for the Bunker at the Menzshed uses a 'key safe' fastened to the door of the Bunker which contains the key to the padlock on the door. Detailed below is the procedure to follow to open the door.

1. Enter the code by pressing the buttons on the key safe in that order; you will hear a click when each button has been pressed fully.
2. Slide the top button down, the front part of the safe will open from the top and attached to this is the key; use this to open the bunker padlock. Do not detach the key from the metal safe front.
3. If the safe does not open you may have incorrectly entered the code, in this case slide down the lower button marked 'clear' and try again.
4. When you have taken your order from the bunker lock the padlock.
5. Re-enter the code as in (1) above.
6. Replace the key and front of safe into the body of the safe, bottom first and slide the top button down.
7. The front of the safe will now go into the body, if not, clear the code as in (3) and try again. Please check that it is secure.

Any problems please call the Menzshed Contact.

This sounds a bit complicated, but when you have done it a couple of times it becomes easy. Should you wish to have a practice come to the shed on a Tuesday morning and we will guide you through (if you get to the shed at about 10 a.m. we will also offer you a cup of tea).

### Appendix 3. Gear List

This is a fairly exhaustive list of what can be useful on your trap line. What you need will vary according to factors such as the time of year, weather, remoteness, types of traps, etc., so use this list as a prompt for what to take on your line. If anything useful is missing, please let us know!

- Cereal possum lure for Timms traps
- Scented flour
- Protective gloves
- Stoat lure (dried rabbit or eggs)
- Square drive screwdriver or hex nut spanner for opening DOC200s, depending
- Safety staple for DOC200s
- DOC200 setting tool
- Cleaning brush
- Hardcover notebook and pencil
- Spare nylon cord for Timms traps
- Spare 40 mm stainless steel screws
- Boots, warm socks and puttees
- Warm clothing (warm hat, merino top, polar fleece top, raincoat, leggings/trousers, over-trousers, gloves)
- Food (lunch, OSMs)
- Water
- Headlight
- Personal medications
- 1st Aid
- Toilet paper
- Whistle around neck
- Candle and matches for emergency fire lighting (not in drought conditions!)
- Swiss Army knife
- Charged mobile phone
- GPS with spare batteries or map and compass
- Hi Viz vest
- Personal Locator Beacon (PLB; a MIRO PLB can be booked out from the Parker Jones or Reg Cotter)