



NIGHT SHOOTING SOP

- Night shooting is an effective control and monitoring tool at medium to low densities and where the terrain is open and accessible.
- Always keep a log of the following: TOTAL POSSUMS SEEN, TOTAL POSSUMS SHOT and THE ACTUAL HUNTING TIMES (e.g. 2030 to 2215; 2230 to 2340; 0000 to 0030). [These data, when combined provide a valuable catch rate and population monitoring tool over time and space.]
- Record the route covered on a map, and weather/moon conditions.
- Notes about where animals were seen are also useful.
- A note regarding any hazards or issues relevant to that area (please mark on map).

THIS DOCUMENT MUST BE READ IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE OPBG HEALTH & SAFETY PLAN FOR (VOLUNTEERS OR CONTRACTORS) UNDERTAKING POSSUM SHOOTING BEFORE CARRYING OUT NIGHT SHOOTING.

PROCEDURES

1. Use appropriate firearm: Centrefire rifles (.222, .223, .204) have less chance of ricochet and more range and power. The .17 HMR has similar qualities. Can use .22 or .22 magnum rifle for medium range shooting, or a shotgun for close range targets. Good optics are essential (all calibres). Consider use of subsonic ammunition and silencer. Ensure you have a strong-beamed, reliable spotlight and wear a good headlight. High visibility clothing with reflective strips is essential.
2. Firearms users must hold a Firearms Licence and be experienced shooters. OPBG will seek Police vetting of shooters prior to work.
3. OPBG must seek or confirm written permission from relevant landowner(s), and advise them of the intended hunting route(s) and times.
4. OPBG must inform NZ Police (Aaron Smith, Portobello Police Station), 24 hours in advance, of where and when night shooting is to occur. OPBG will advise names, location and cell phone numbers of the shooting team. The team must advise Aaron Smith that the operation has ended, at the earliest opportunity.
5. A shooting team can comprise up to two people.

6. All people that are likely to be nearby (e.g. neighbours) must be alerted to the planned activity by OPBG.
7. Warning signs indicating the date that shooting is to occur must be erected at least 24 hours **before** the activity, at all points of access to the area.
8. Volunteers must initially be accompanied by an experienced OPBG shooter.
9. Firearms must be in good condition and sighted-in correctly.
10. Prepare and log (with Operations Manager) a hunting plan prior to night shooting. Identify location of nearest residences, buildings, roads, parking areas and tracks. No shooting can take place within 200 metres of these features. Firearms must be aimed in a safe direction.
11. Know the area. View the hunting area in daylight and do a 'dry run', noting locations of possum play trees, feed trees, den habitat, pad runs, grazing areas and **especially** hazards/no go areas (e.g. walking tracks, buildings, soft sand, cliffs, under runners and wildlife hang-outs etc.).
12. If using vehicle such as 4WD or quad bike ensure it is equipped to handle the terrain (i.e. lights, tyres, brakes), and carry a shovel, first aid kit and extra clothes. Wear helmet(s). Ensure operator knows the route well.
13. No drugs or alcohol to be consumed in the 12 hours prior to hunting. Each team member to carry a well-charged mobile phone for emergency use, a personal locator beacon (PLB).
14. Legally, even on private property, you must carry a firearm unloaded (unable to fire) while in transit. Technically, you may spotlight, but you must get out of your vehicle, load your firearm, shoot and unload (make safe) again before re-alighting. This applies to any vehicle.
15. Unload the firearm whenever there is a person in front of a shooter e.g. opening gates, retrieving kills.
16. Shoot only where you can see a suitable background e.g. bank, tree trunk, cliff face or unstocked face of a nearby hill. Distances are much harder to judge at night. Close shots are always preferable but don't close-in too near. Shoot within your effective range.
17. Take note of areas with seasonal possum food/refuge; e.g. gorse flower (autumn, spring), macrocarpa (winter), pines (autumn, late winter, February), willow (spring), mahoe, tree fuchsia (summer), pasture (all year round).
18. Vary the route and times of visit for multiple night shooting sessions in one location.

19. Possum eye-shine is red – don't shoot the livestock [yellow (deer, rabbits), green (cats), greenish-yellow (sheep) and blue (horses)]!
20. Consider wearing ear plugs. Only wear "Thinsulate" shooting gloves if gloves need to be worn.
21. Try to work with a full moon at your back. Possums are more likely to be moving on the ground with the extra light, though may not 'hold' as well as they do on a dark night. Warm, calm nights are good.
22. Leaving dead possums to cool on the ground while you hunt further afield will sometimes attract other possums to them, especially during the mating season (March to May). Return to these possums before completing shooting session to check if other possums have been drawn in.
23. Dogs must only be used with landowner permission and should be fitted with a fluorescent collar or hi viz.
24. A GPS (with fresh batteries) must be used to record hunting routes and waypoints of kills so that a map record or GPX file can be produced. Also, remember to log sightings, actual hunting times, weather and habitat use (see record card template).

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