

Effective supervision of a wild dog trapping program

Squeezing the most from your trap program

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Wild dog trapping – the reality !!!

- Lack of understanding of how trapping works – what is involved
 - Often seen as reactive rather than proactive control option
 - Implemented when all other methods have failed ‘last resort’
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- Looks simple “doesn’t look that hard to set a trap”
 - Experienced trapper called after everyone else has “had a go”
 - problem dog – trap shy dog – educated dog = expensive dog



Why do I need a trapper – What am I paying for?



1. Trapping
2. Training
3. Trapping demonstration
4. Monitoring



Trapping is not a spectator sport.

- Work experience student



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Why trapping is not a spectator sport



All photos taken at the same site (M-44 trials Guy Fawkes River NP April 2005)





Trap program time frame – how long?

- problem dog (reactive) or strategic (proactive)
- how many interactions – trap visits
- fox activity at trap sites
- wild dog circuit 10/14 days – up to 3 weeks
 - 2 week program OK
 - 3 week program – better
 - 4 week program – best





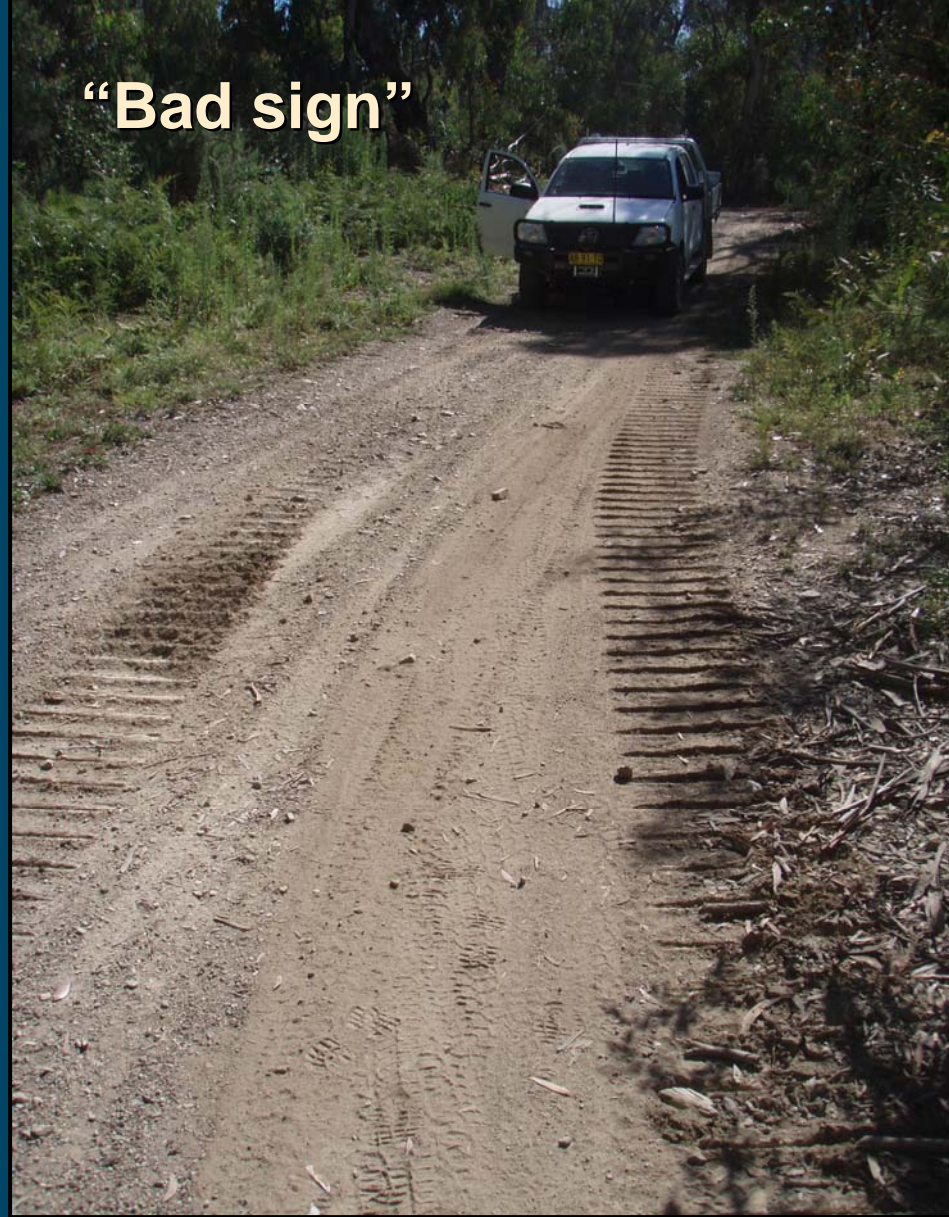
The 'set up'

- looking for 'sign'
- looking for suitable 'sets'
- level of concentration - distractions
- time frame always underestimated
- could be several days to a week
- a good trap line changes over time
- respond to wild dog behaviour
- rushed 'set up' compromises program

“Good sign”



“Bad sign”



Before the trapper arrives

Value for money – trapper trapping

- Trail works – dozers & traps don't mix
- Trail clearing – trapper/chainsaw operator
- Reporting structure – who calls the shots
- Peak visitor times – school holidays
- Time of year – autumn / spring - pups
- Contractors – weed sprayers



Training



Big commitment over the long term

- trainee trapper
- employer (even when no kills)
- landholders (good times & bad)

Contractors as trappers

- can't afford to train their competition
- can't afford to share skills
- must produce results (dead dogs)

Permanent pest control specialists

- share skills (*most skills*)
- judged on wild dog activity (stock loss)

Getting the mix right contract vs employee





Baiting & trapping

Pest animal controller (traps & baits)

- when – rain since baiting?

- where – bait stations

trail baits

aerial baits

- type – fresh meat

dried meat

commercial baits

Trap before baiting

- setting for ghosts

- pick up wary dogs





Trapping – the basics

- realistic expectations
 - empty tray-back syndrome
 - wild dog activity – stock loss long term
- open communication
 - briefing before program
 - debrief after the program



The top ten (how to make a trapper cry)

1. You should only need 1 day to “set up”.
2. I think there were a few baits put out on that trail, not sure when or where?
3. A few of the locals tried to trap him but didn't do any good.
4. I've organised a few people to jump in with you each day hope that's OK.
5. No-one has driven that trail for a while, hope you're good on the chainsaw.
6. No that's not the one, the one I saw was bigger than that.
7. Oh yeh I forgot, the dozer and grader are due through tomorrow. Is that bad for your traps?
8. I saw that dog on the other trail so I pulled up your traps and moved them for you hope that's OK.
9. Old Ted would have caught that dog by now. *(Old Ted died over 30 years ago)*
10. The last trapper we had got 8 dogs in a week. *(I bet his name was Ted)*



The real reason wild dogs howl !!!!



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