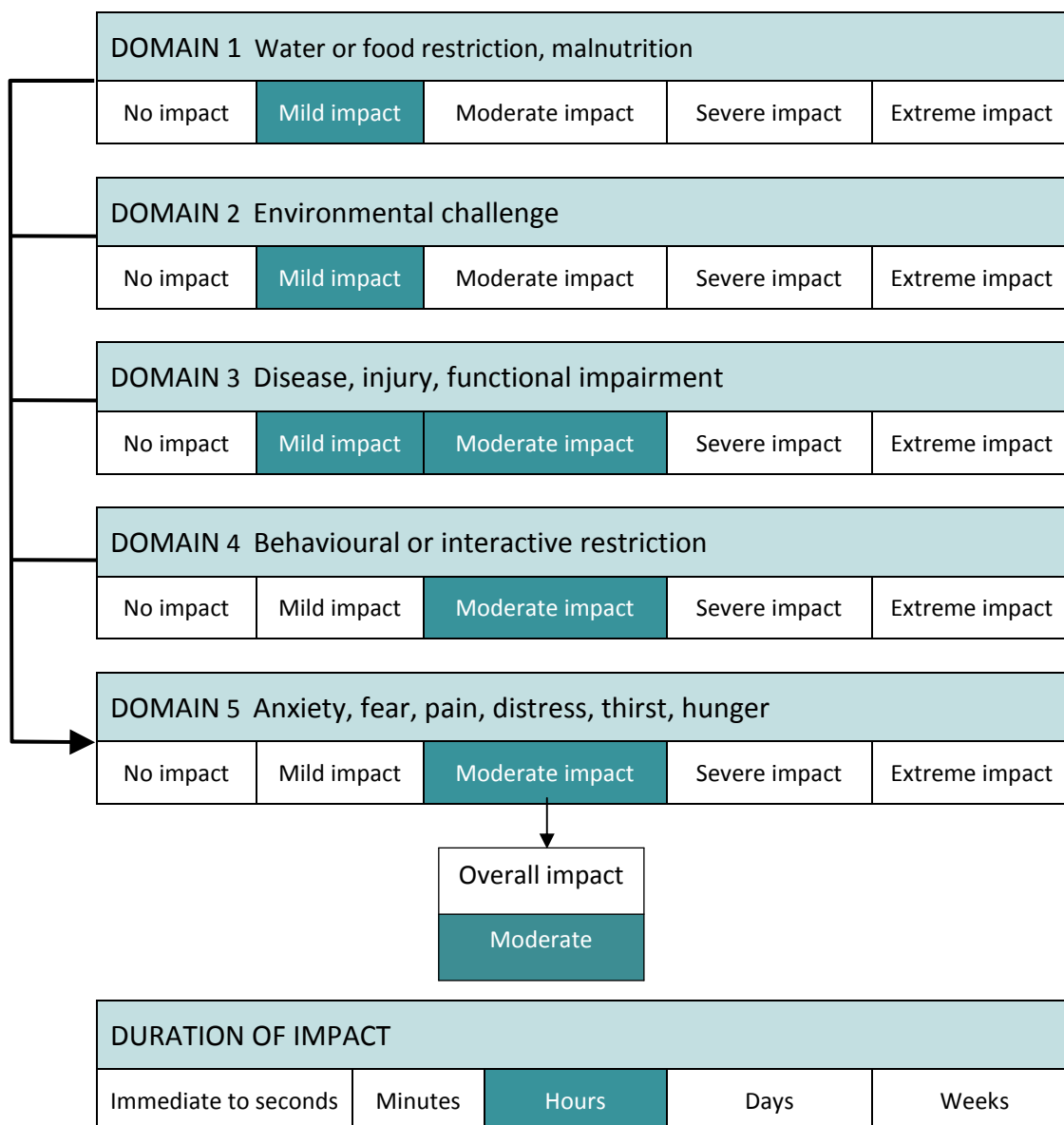


Control method: Trapping of foxes using padded-jaw traps followed by killing

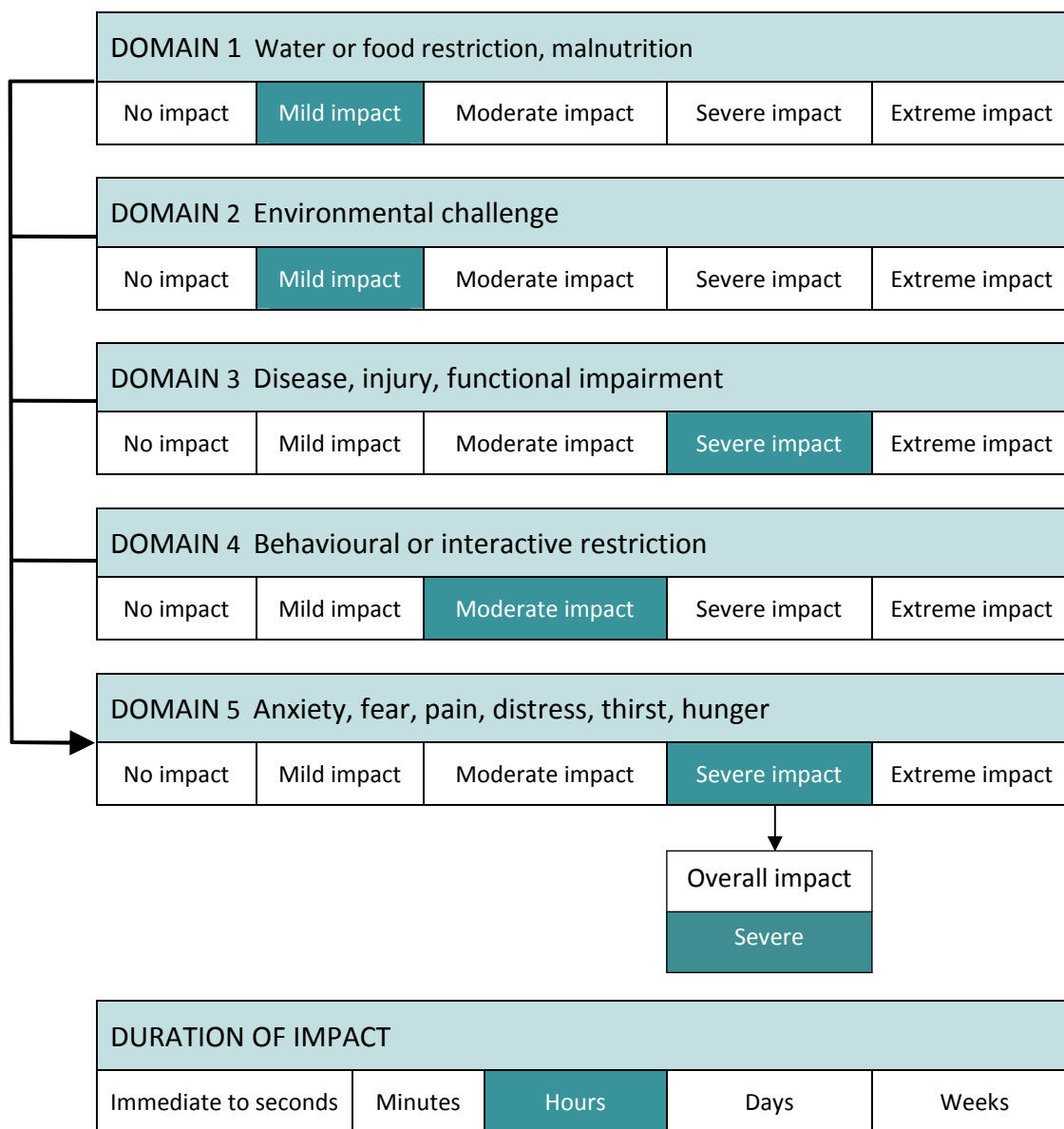
| | |
|---------------------|---|
| <p>Assumptions:</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Best practice is followed in accordance with the standard operating procedure FOX005. Assumes that traps are checked every 24 hours. Best practice states that traps are set in the evening and checked in the morning – but if the trap is empty they will often be left set and checked the next morning. This assessment is very specific to the standard of traps considered. The recommended fox-specific trap is the Victor Soft-Catch (VSC) trap no. 1½, but the VSC trap no. 3 is the trap most often set for dogs/foxes and so this is the VSC size trap that is assessed here. Note that the effect on dependant young is not taken into consideration with this assessment, only the impact on the target animal. Assumes effort made to locate and kill any cubs if lactating vixen is caught. |
|---------------------|---|

PART A: assessment of overall welfare impact – padded foothold traps (e.g. Victor Soft Catch #3)



| SCORE FOR PART A: | Padded foothold traps (e.g. Victor Soft Catch #3) 5 |
|----------------------|---|
| Summary of evidence: | |
| Domain 1 | Trapped foxes will be without food/water for a period up to 24 hours. |
| Domain 2 | Assumes that traps are not set in bad weather and are placed in shaded areas. |
| Domain 3 | The majority of injuries are likely to be minor skin lacerations. Self-mutilation is more likely with increasing entrapment but is generally uncommon. Leg fractures are not usually seen with these types of traps but dislocations can occur. Tooth and mouth injuries may also occur ^{1, 2, 3} . |
| Domain 4 | Physiological studies indicate that restraint by foot/leg-hold traps causes more stress than other capture techniques ⁴ . In foxes, cortisol levels were highest in animals trapped in leg-hold traps compared with cage traps and untrapped animals ^{5, 6} . There will also be periods of physical exertion from struggling against the trap especially during the first 1-2 hours after capture ⁷ . Long entrapment periods could result in disruption of natural behaviour and motivational systems ⁸ . |
| Domain 5 | The combination of psychological stress (anxiety, fear, frustration) from being restrained, pain from any injuries and exertion from struggling against the trap will have a significant impact on overall welfare ⁴ . |

PART A: assessment of overall welfare impact – padded leg-hold traps ('off-the-shelf' Padded Lanes Dingo trap)



| | |
|--------------------------|---|
| SCORE FOR PART A: | Padded leghold traps ('off-the-shelf' Padded Lanes Dingo trap) 5-6 |
| Summary of evidence: | |
| Domain 1 | Trapped foxes will be without food/water for a period up to 24 hours. |
| Domain 2 | Assumes that traps are not set in bad weather and are placed in shaded areas. |

| | |
|----------|---|
| Domain 3 | Although these traps are padded, they are substantially heavier and have a larger jaw spread than many of the contemporary foot-hold traps. Their weight and the tendency to catch animals higher on the leg have been implicated in increased incidence of fractures and amputations ⁹ . Tooth and mouth injuries also occur. |
| Domain 4 | Physiological studies indicate that restraint by foot/leg-hold traps causes more stress than other capture techniques ⁴ . In foxes, cortisol levels were highest in animals trapped in leg-hold traps compared with cage traps and untrapped animals ^{5, 6} . There will also be periods of physical exertion from struggling against the trap especially during the first 1-2 hours after capture ⁷ . Long entrapment periods could result in disruption of natural behaviour and motivational systems ⁸ . |
| Domain 5 | The combination of psychological stress (anxiety, fear, frustration) from being restrained, pain from injuries and exertion from struggling against the trap will have a significant impact on overall welfare ⁴ . Since these larger, heavier traps cause more significant injuries, the impact in this domain is higher than for the smaller foot-hold traps. |

PART B: assessment of mode of death –shooting (head shot)

| Time to insensibility (minus any lag time) | | | | |
|---|----------------|--------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Very rapid | Minutes | Hours | Days | Weeks |
| Level of suffering (after application of the method that causes death but before insensibility) | | | | |
| No suffering | Mild suffering | Moderate suffering | Severe suffering | Extreme suffering |

| | |
|--------------------------|---|
| SCORE FOR PART B: | B |
| Summary of evidence: | |
| Duration – | With head shots, a properly placed shot will result in immediate insensibility ^{10,11,12} |
| Suffering – | The approach of a human to trapped fox will cause some distress ¹³ . A well-placed head shot which causes immediate insensibility should not cause any additional suffering. |

Summary

| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| CONTROL METHOD: | Trapping of foxes using padded-jaw traps followed by killing |
| OVERALL HUMANENESS SCORE: | Padded foot-hold trap with shooting – 5B Padded leg-hold trap with shooting – 6B |

Comments

Although most trap-related injuries occur during the first one to two hours of capture, the degree of injury from self-mutilation and stress sustained during restraint increases as the time held increases; therefore trap inspection periods should be at least once per day to conform to a minimum accepted standard.

Note that an Australian trap standard is urgently required that includes specifications for trap size and jaw spread, trap weight, closure speed, impact force, clamping force, jaw offset distances, padding material (type, thickness) and pan tension⁹.

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