

Code of Practice for the humane destruction of flocking birds by trapping and carbon dioxide narcosis in South Australia

A permit to destroy wildlife issued under Section 53(1)(c) of the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1972* is required and compliance with this Code of Practice is a condition of permit.

Background

This Code of Practice sets a standard of humane conduct for persons involved in the destruction of birds by trapping and carbon dioxide narcosis. All persons involved should be aware of the legislative requirements, including animal welfare, for this activity.

The use of carbon dioxide is a humane manner to destroy birds, causing carbon dioxide narcosis, working quickly on the brain, inducing unconsciousness and death. When destroying trapped birds the principal objective must be to achieve rapid loss of consciousness and death of the bird with minimum distress.

Trapping and carbon dioxide narcosis of flocking birds alone will not overcome detrimental social, environmental and economic impacts. The Department for Environment and Heritage (DEH) recommends the development of an integrated management approach including elements of hygiene management, scaring and shooting.

This Code was developed by the Department for Environment and Heritage and has been endorsed for the listed species by the South Australian Wildlife Ethics Committee.

This Code should be read in conjunction with the National Standard for *Trapping of Pest Birds* (BIR002) prepared by Trudy Sharp and Glen Saunders, 2004. <http://www.deh.gov.au/biodiversity/invasive/publications/humane-control/bir002-trapping-of-pest-birds.pdf>

Scope

The Code is limited to Little Corellas (*Cacatua sanguinea*), Long-billed Corellas (*Cacatua tenuirostris*) and Galahs (*Cacatua roseicapilla*). Permission to use this technique for destruction of additional species will be considered on a case by case basis by authorised DEH officers.

Legislation

Native birds are protected under the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1972* (NPW Act) unless listed on Schedule 10.

A destruction permit (pursuant to Section 53(1)(c) (NPW Act)) is required to cull protected birds, by either shooting or gassing, and may be issued when birds are causing economic, social and/or environmental damage.

To cull un-protected birds (listed on Schedule 10 of NPW Act) by means other than a firearm, the NPW Act Hunting Regulations (1996) require a destruction permit to be issued (pursuant to Section 53(1)(c) (NPW Act)).

No permits are required to take birds by shooting which are listed on Schedule 10 of the NPW Act.

Written permission of the landowner is required in cases where the shooter/trapper is neither the landowner nor his/her agent. Permission is valid for a period up to six months.

Planning a trapping program

Understanding bird behaviour

A key element to undertaking a successful trapping program is understanding the daily/seasonal movements of the flocks causing detrimental impacts. This includes knowledge of feeding habits, flock structure (including the presence of off-target species), number of flocks, roosting locations and flight paths. Such information must be gained prior to requesting a permit from DEH.

Community consultation

Where a trapping program is being considered to alleviate damage or impacts being sustained on a community-wide scale, community consultation should be undertaken to ensure the use of this technique has the broad support of the community. This consultation should include the development of a communication/media strategy and should include the formation of a local abundant bird action group.

Permit application process

A destruction permit must be obtained from DEH prior to any free feeding or trapping work commencing. The destruction permit must cover all species that are the targets of the trapping program, and any likely off-target species that may be destroyed. Application forms are available from regional DEH offices or the DEH web site (http://www.parks.sa.gov.au/fauna_permits). Applicants will be required to provide details of bird behaviour, impacts, sites to be used and nominate a permit holder who will be responsible for all actions undertaken when carrying out the trapping program. Two accredited people (see below) will be required to be present on each day that trapping is to occur.

Accreditation

Accreditation to undertake trapping of birds is necessary to ensure sufficient knowledge of bird behaviour, planning/reporting requirements, trap mechanics and consideration of occupational health and safety to ensure that animal welfare requirements are met.

To gain accreditation, people are required to attend a DEH half-day training session. DEH staff will attend the first two trapping sessions of each newly accredited trapper to ensure compliance with this Code of Practice.

Human health issues

The transmission of avian diseases to humans is possible from the inhalation of avian feather dust. Persons handling live or dead birds should wear appropriate protective clothing including gloves and facemasks. The National Standard for *Trapping of Pest Birds* provides further details on occupational health and safety issues.

Equipment specifications

Trap

Single or double leaf booknet traps are permitted for use. Netting hole size must be 20-25mm squares. It is suggested that 50% bunting (slack) is incorporated into traps when being built. Traps, when fired, should cover an area of between 30-60m², taking less than 0.5 seconds from firing to trap all birds in the trap zone.

Tarpaulin

A dark coloured PVC tarpaulin (400-700gsm weight), which is impermeable to gas, must be used to cover the trap area once fired and birds have been herded (see below). The tarpaulin needs to be large enough to cover 100% of the trap area and have no holes in it (other than eyelets around the edges).

Gas

Carbon Dioxide (CO₂) is the only gas permitted for use. At least two G-size bottles and two regulators must be available and accessible for use on each day trapping is planned. The second (full) bottle and regulator is required on site, and easily accessible, in the event of a failure of the primary regulator and/or bottle.

A regulator is required to dispense the gas from the bottle. T-pieces at either the regulator or in the hose are required to enable multiple points of gas flow. Two points of gas flow are required for traps 30-40m² and four points of gas flow are required for traps 40-60m². Care must be taken to ensure the regulator does not freeze up and block.

Relevant Occupational Health and Safety standards must be adhered to for the transportation and use of compressed gases.

Chains or weights

Heavy chains must be placed on the tarpaulin, around the group of birds trapped, to slow the rate of loss of CO₂ from under the tarpaulin (26-46 metres of chain). On very flat ground, lengths of heavy timber may also be appropriate for use.

Holding drum

Once killed, all birds must be placed in plastic or metal holding drums ready for disposal.

Summary

Trap size (m ²)	Tarpaulin size (m ²)	Gas points	Maximum birds targeted
30	30	2	90
40	40	2	120
50	50	4	150
60	60	4	180

Undertaking a trapping session

Off-target species

If the fired net contains an off-target species that has not been approved on a permit the following rules apply:

- If the individual can be removed easily from the net (eg. located at the edge of the net) with minimal stress to the individual, and within the timelines identified for tarpaulin placement, the individual should be removed and released;
- If there are multiple individuals, or individuals that cannot be removed quickly or easily from the net with minimal stress to the birds involved, all birds must be released from the net.

Approval of the destruction of off-target species on a permit will be limited in both species and number to reduce the likelihood that species not involved in causing the impacts are not targeted through the poor design and implementation of a non species specific program.

Maximum number to be targeted

The maximum number of birds that can be targeted in any one trapping session must not exceed 3 birds per m² of trap area (e.g. maximum of 90, 120, 150 and 180 birds for 30, 40, 50 and 60 m² tarpaulin respectively). A hide is required to screen personnel from birds and must be close enough to ensure a clear view of the number and species of birds within the trapping site. From the hide, birds should be counted as they arrive on the trap site to prevent over-trapping.

Herding of birds

To reduce the volume of space under the tarpaulin, birds are permitted to be herded to one area of the trap. This area will vary from 10-40% of total trap area depending on the number of birds trapped.

Timeframes for efficiency

Organisation is of paramount importance to humanely and efficiently undertake a trapping session. Everybody involved must know their role in the trapping process. The tarpaulin and gas bottle should be stored either near the trap or on a vehicle, which can be driven to the trap site.

From the time of trap firing:

- all people must be at the trap site within 30 seconds,
- herding and removal of off-target species must be complete within 2 minutes of trap firing,
- tarpaulin, gas lines and chains must be in place within 3 minutes.

Introduction of CO₂ gas

Gas should be introduced as soon as the tarpaulin, gas lines and chains are in place. Gas flow rates must be set at the maximum for the regulator. After 3-5 minutes, level of consciousness or life should be checked by gently touching the birds through the tarpaulin and feeling for breathing. Gas must be allowed to continue to flow at the maximum rate for 2 minutes after the last bird has stopped breathing. The gas flow rate should then be reduced and allowed to flow for a further 10 minutes.

If the regulator to be used is not internally heated, water will be required to pour over the regulator to prevent it freezing up and/or becoming blocked.

Disposal of culled birds

Culled birds must be gathered immediately and stored out of sight in a plastic or metal holding drum for later disposal (within 2 hours). Dead birds must be disposed of in a manner approved by local Council and cannot be used for a secondary purpose, sold, swapped or traded.

Onlookers

Trapping should be undertaken out of general public view to reduce risk to those not directly involved. Onlookers should be discouraged wherever possible.

Reporting

The daily trapping reporting form (provided with permits) must be completed on the day of trapping and include all of the details requested. These daily forms are to be attached to the permit return form, which must be returned to DEH on or before the day stipulated on the permit.

Disclaimer

Code of Practice for the Humane Destruction of Birds by Trapping and Carbon Dioxide Narcosis in South Australia Dated: February 2007

This Code is based on the knowledge and technology available at the time of publication and may need to be varied in the future in light of new knowledge.

While reasonable efforts have been made to ensure the contents of this publication are factually correct, the Department for Environment and Heritage makes no representations and accepts no responsibility for the accuracy, completeness or fitness for any particular purpose of the contents, and shall not be liable for any loss or damage that may be occasioned directly or indirectly through the use of, or reliance on, the contents of this publication.

Reference to any company, product or service in this publication should not be taken as a departmental endorsement of the company, product or service.

Further Information

Contact your nearest Department for Environment and Heritage Office

www.environment.sa.gov.au

FIS 2828.07 6/07



**Government
of South Australia**

Department for
Environment and Heritage