

# Easy Reference Sheet

## Use of Humane Brush Turkey Traps

October 2021

### Introduction

In rescue situations where a sick or injured Brush Turkey cannot be captured manually, a humane trap may be suitable.

The first thing to consider when being called to a brush turkey rescue is, does it genuinely need to be rescued, there and then? A turkey that is fully flighted, but with perhaps non-critical trauma to the leg (e.g. soft tissue damage) can typically heal well without intervention. Brush Turkey's suffer tremendously from stress once trapped and may sustain more injury from the trapping, than the original injury itself.

Brush turkeys also stress easily during rehabilitation and therefore consideration should be given as to whether or not it could cope in the wild with their injury. Often times, members of the public can be asked to monitor the turkey with non-critical injuries over a period of >5 days and relay information back to the rescuer. Brush turkeys with wing injuries, which render them unable to fly, must be rescued as they will not be able to escape predation.

Consideration should also be given to whether the turkey is attending to a mound (nest) on their own. If a turkey has previously lost their partner, the turkey may be solely responsible for the nest and removing it may impact the viability of the eggs. Turkeys are very attentive to the requirements of the eggs; removing and adding leaves/mulch to maintain temperatures for incubation.

Brush Turkeys are generally easy to trap as they are motivated by food and are highly territorial; We use these animal behaviours to our advantage when trapping.

When using food for a turkey trap, generally speaking, household food scraps are appropriate. As a guide, whatever you would feed a chicken, would be suitable for a turkey. In terms of being highly territorial, we can use a mirror and place it at the back of a trap. This will instinctively cause a territorial turkey to charge into the trap when they see their reflection.

Brush turkeys are strictly diurnal; Therefore, the trap should only be set during day light hours. At dusk, the trap should be triggered/dis-engaged, and food scraps removed, to ensure non-target nocturnal species enter the trap.

The humane turkey trap outlined in these instructions are ones that Wildcare endorses for use. Whilst there may be slight variations in design between manufacturers, the basic elements of the traps should be the same.

Wildcare does not support the use of any other trap design or method of trapping including leg-hold or body-grip, traps or snares. All animals must be handled in accordance with the **Animal Care and Protection Act 2001**, which, if breached, could constitute an offence carrying significant monetary penalty. If ever in doubt, please contact Liz Miller on 0401 888 716 to discuss.

Turkey traps must only be used for the humane capture of **sick** and **injured** birds. The capture of turkeys for any other purposes (including relocation) is strictly prohibited and are outside the scope of a rescue and rehabilitation permit.

## Positioning the trap and how the trap works

The turkey trap will be most effective if it can be set in an area where the turkey frequently visits. It must be set on flat ground to prevent injury to the bird.

Food scraps should be placed at the rear of the trap, past the foot paddle. A mirror, which is supplied with the trap, should already be securely affixed to the back wall of the trap.

Once the turkey sees its reflection in the mirror and/or sees the food in the trap, it should enter and when it stands on the foot paddle at the rear of the cage, it should be triggered so the door quickly closes behind them. The door has a locking mechanism which prevents escape.

## Checking the trap

Turkey traps are notorious for attracting non-target species e.g. water dragons, lace monitors, bandicoots. If any non-target animals are trapped during the day, they must be checked for trap related injuries (e.g. water dragons rub their nose on the wire and lace monitors have been known to injure their tails when the trap door closes). If injuries are present then these animals require vet attention.

Traps must only be set where a member of the public has committed to checking the trap regularly (i.e. at least every 2 hours). Once the turkey is trapped, the member of public should be instructed to call the rescuer immediately. It is advisable that an experienced rescuer is to attend, as best transport options include the turkey being removed from the trap and placed in a suitable transport container (e.g. a large plastic pet carrier or soft crate).

