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Use of a restraining board for safe and humane processing of wild dogs, red foxes and feral cats without sedation

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For many people, sedatives are an obvious solution to problems inherent in handling wild animals. However, in capture-and-release programs associated with animal research and management, sedation often has significant limitations, including inherent risks to animal welfare.

Whilst we recognise an ongoing need to use sedatives in many research and management programs, since 2007 we have processed hundreds

of wild dogs, red foxes and feral cats without sedation, using a purpose built restraining board. In this paper, we draw on our practical experience to outline the pros and cons of this equipment and demonstrate how it can be safely used. We note key differences in behaviour between its use for dogs, foxes and cat, outlining how we have addressed these to achieve safe handling of animals, without sedation, under field conditions.



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