

## Ramps for DOC and BT Traps

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For an animal to get caught in a DOC type trap in a Best Practice Box it must climb up onto the internal mesh and into the trap.

During trap testing 15% of ship rats were not caught, reasons like they touched the Treadle Plate and changed their mind or were not far enough over the Treadle Plate when the trap went off so were quick enough not to be caught. I have never been able to get the test results for Stoats or Ferrets.

Anything we can do to smooth the transition from Box floor to Trap has to be a help.

There has been a trend lately for people to build up the floor with a couple of bits of ply to treadle plate level. Another method I like is to recess the Trap into the Floor. I will share a cheap and easy method that we have been using for about five years to make wooden Ramps up to the Trap, and are used on both 200 and 250's.

Using the timber offcuts from making trap boxes is a no cost way to make Ramps. If you only have a few to make then you can get out a handsaw and go for it, or possibly use a circular saw, but if you want to make a heap of them then using a Table saw is the way to go, which is what I will cover here. If you are not competent with power tools get someone else to make them. Plenty of old blokes around with a heap of gear and experience and generally happy to help.

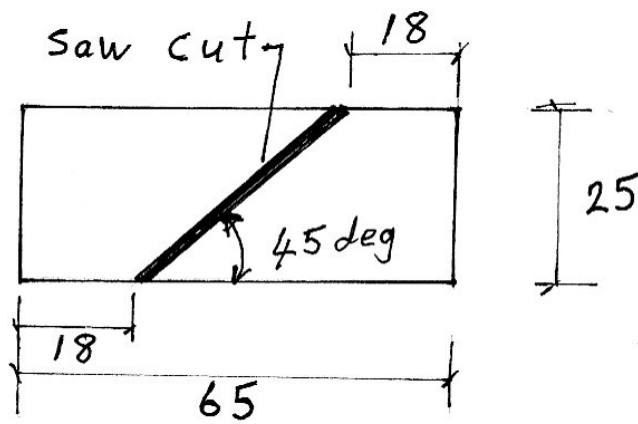
Use 25mm thick H4 timber, making two Ramps at a time is easier than making one. On the Table saw first cut your timber lengthways to 65mm wide strips, then angle the blade on the Table saw to 45 deg and set the Fence/Guide 18mm from the blade. Cut a short test piece and check that both Ramps are the same width, adjust the Fence/Guide if required.

Then using a handsaw cut your lengths of timber to 125mm long, this suits both 200 and 250 traps. See Drawing below for details.

Drill a 4mm hole through the Ramp, 12mm from each end on the flat and countersink with a 10mm drill bit so that the screws will sit slightly below the timber surface.

To fix the Ramps in place, I find 8 gauge 45mm long exterior grade wood screws are ideal as they don't poke through the bottom of the Box.

Place the Ramp close to the internal mesh as per photo and screw in place, making sure that you do not push the mesh onto the trap or interfere with the removal of internal mesh.



Use Timber Offcuts from making Trap Boxes

Cut lengths of timber to 65mm width, then cut through the centre at 45 deg to give two Ramps

Cut lengths at 125 mm to make a Ramp



Ramp Fitted to a 200 Box



Ramp ready to install

You do not want any of the lower opening in the mesh protruding above the ramp

Also check that the Treadle Plate on the trap is level, just slightly up is ok on 200's. Another info sheet covers how to correct angled treadle plates.

Also check that the opening in the internal mesh is correct, the vertical opening is best checked in relation to the Treadle Plate when the trap is set, on a 200 you want a vertical opening of 60mm. Use a safety clip when checking.

There is a growing body of evidence that animals could possibly be put off when moving from a natural surface to Steel, especially when it's cold. If you want to try something different you can put something like Duct Tape on the Treadle Plate (partly covered treadle in photo) it's only 5 grams so it won't affect Trip Weight. DON'T fold the tape under the Treadle as it might interfere with Treadle operation. Adding something like the Duct Tape also gets away from the bright shiny surface to something more natural.

Checking animals reactions to steel surfaces like Treadle Plates would be an easy Pen trial for Landcare or Lincoln to carry out. If they Worked together with others to find solutions it could make a real difference for conservation efforts, and we need all the help we can get.

Happy trapping