

# GENERIC RISK ASSESSMENT FOR VOLUNTEERS

TASK ASSESSED <b>Mink Trapping &amp; Monitoring by Volunteer Trappers</b>	ASSESSMENT DATE	ASSESSED BY
TASK LOCATION <b>Waterside habitat</b>		APPROVED BY

TASK HAZARD potential for harm to persons or property	Who's at risk?	PRECAUTIONS to reduce the risk level	Risk level	Who will do them?	When ? Before During
<b>Risks associated with working at the water's edge:</b>					
Risk of personal injury through falling on the bank – ranging from scratches and bruises to broken limbs and head injury.	Trapper	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ be aware of the area's topography</li> <li>▪ wear appropriate stout footwear</li> <li>▪ carry a first aid kit</li> </ul>	M	Trapper	Before/ during
Risk of drowning from falling into the water.	Trapper	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ be aware of the bank's topography</li> <li>▪ be particularly cautious in areas where there is a strong current or deep water</li> <li>▪ test depth of water with pole/stick</li> <li>▪ keep clear of deep water if you cannot swim</li> <li>▪ do not lean to the point of toppling when checking rafts</li> <li>▪ use appropriate local support e.g. tree or raft pole when checking raft</li> <li>▪ if a raft is not easily accessible or the bank is high, drag raft to bank before checking</li> <li>▪ plan escape routes out of the water</li> </ul>	L	Trapper	Before/ during
Risk of hypothermia after falling into the water.	Trapper	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ as per "Risk of drowning..." plus</li> <li>▪ carry a change of clothes with you when trapping in cold weather.</li> </ul>	L	Trapper	Before
Risk of contracting Weils Disease (leptospirosis) after contact with contaminated water and droppings.	Trapper	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ cover any cuts to the hands with plasters or waterproof gloves</li> <li>▪ if handling soil, water or faeces during the activity, clean hands and forearms with antiseptic gel or antibacterial soap before eating, drinking or smoking and wash hands at end of activity.</li> <li>▪ Be aware of the symptoms of Weil's disease<sup>1</sup>.</li> </ul>	L	Trapper	Before/ during/ after
Risk of personal injury and unable to summon assistance.	Trapper	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Inform a responsible person of your whereabouts and expected time of return, and ensure they know what to do if you do not return at that time.</li> <li>▪ Carry a fully charged mobile phone, preferably in a waterproof case.</li> </ul>	L	Trapper	Before
Risk of falling over, hypothermia, drowning while working in waders	Trapper	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Do not enter water if water is deeper than 75% wader height.</li> </ul>	M	Trapper	Before
<b>Risks associated with controlling mink:</b>					
Risk of mink bites while checking traps	Trapper	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Wear thick gloves while handling traps with captures</li> <li>▪ Approach traps with caution</li> <li>▪ Do not poke fingers through the bars of the trap.</li> <li>▪ Do not release a mink before dispatch</li> <li>▪ Carry traps only using the external handle.</li> <li>▪ Leave traps <i>in situ</i> until ready to dispatch the mink</li> <li>▪ Carry antiseptic</li> </ul>	H	Trapper	During
Risk of bites while releasing non-target species	Trapper	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Wear thick gloves when handling traps with captures</li> <li>▪ Do not poke fingers through the bars of the trap.</li> <li>▪ Carry antiseptic</li> <li>▪ Release capture using a metal or wooden bar to lever up retaining bar and to open door</li> </ul>	H	Trapper	During
Risk of mammal bite becoming infected.	Trapper	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Clean any bites immediately with an antiseptic wash.</li> <li>▪ Go to a GP or to casualty to have the bite cleaned and dressed properly as soon as possible.</li> </ul>	L	Trapper	During/ after

Risk of injury through inappropriate use of dispatch weapons.	Trapper/ public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use least powerful weapon available to humanely dispatch mink (Preference: Air &gt; .410 &gt; 12 gauge). We strongly recommend the use of a powerful (non FAC) air rifle of 8-11 ft/lbs.</li> <li>Dispatch weapon to be used only by experienced person following the BASC safe code of practice<sup>2</sup>.</li> <li>Dispatch weapons to be used away from areas of public access and when other parties are at a safe distance.</li> <li>Ground under trap to be checked before dispatch for surface stones which could cause ricochets.</li> <li>Use safety specs when dispatching with air weapon.</li> <li>Dispatch weapon to be carried uncocked and unloaded.</li> <li>Do not use a rim-fire or centre-fire rifle as a dispatch weapon.</li> <li>Shotgun to be used only at a safe distance appropriate to that bore (see GCWT guidelines<sup>3</sup>)</li> </ul>	L	Trapper	During
<b>Risks associated with handling dead mink</b>					
Risk of a wild mink in GB being infected with Covid-19 or other transmissible disease is extremely low.	Trapper	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Good hand hygiene as for Weils disease (see above) should be adopted to minimise the risk from any disease.</li> </ul>	L	Trapper	Before/ During/ After
Risk of infection when taking a DNA tissue sample.	Trapper	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use disposable gloves if available and adopt good hand hygiene measures as for Weils disease above.</li> </ul>	L	Trapper	Before/ During/ After
<b>Other risks associated with advice visits &amp; working outside:</b>					
Risk of contracting tetanus following cuts to the skin.	Trapper	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure tetanus vaccination is up-to-date.</li> </ul>	L	Trapper	Before
Risk of contracting Lyme disease following a tick bite.	Trapper	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduce the risk of tick bites by wearing suitable clothing and gloves if handling mink with ticks.</li> <li>Remove any attached tick quickly and correctly.</li> <li>Be aware of the symptoms of Lyme disease and seek medical attention immediately if you are concerned (see government guidance<sup>4</sup>).</li> </ul>	M	Trapper	Before/ During/ After
Risk of exposure to extreme weather conditions, including sunburn, sunstroke, dehydration, hypothermia.	Trapper	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Carry enough drinking water to last for the activity.</li> <li>Wear a high factor sun cream and a broad rimmed sun hat when sunny.</li> <li>Wear appropriate outdoor clothing with a waterproof layer when the weather is cold.</li> </ul>	L-M	Trapper	Before
Risk of bee and wasp stings, triggering allergic reactions.	Trapper	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Be aware of personal allergies to bites and stings and carry appropriate medication.</li> </ul>	L	Trapper	Before
Risk of personal injury from dogs.	Trapper	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Treat all dogs with caution until sure they are friendly, do not provoke aggressive behaviour.</li> </ul>	L	Trapper	During
Risk to personal safety through meeting people in isolated places. Loan of traps and advice.	Trapper	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Carry a fully charged, switched on, mobile phone.</li> <li>Inform a responsible person of your whereabouts and expected time of return, and ensure they know what to do if you do not return at that time.</li> <li>Do not challenge the behaviour of aggressive and confrontational people.</li> <li>Call the police if behaviour becomes criminal activity.</li> </ul>	L	Trapper	Before/ during
Risk of vehicle driven off-road causing death, injury or damage through loss of control.	Public / trapper	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Drive at slow speed on tracks or trails.</li> <li>Plan route through potentially hazardous sections.</li> <li>Do not drive or park close to bank edges.</li> <li>Ensure driver and passengers wear seat belt.</li> <li>Ensure a seat belt cutter is to hand.</li> <li>Use extreme caution when reversing near bank edges, preferably engage a banksman.</li> <li>Drive on mud, ice or other slippery surfaces only with extreme caution.</li> </ul>	M	Trapper	Before

<sup>1</sup>The HSE leaflet on Weil's Disease (Leptospirosis) is available at: <https://www.hse.gov.uk/agriculture/zoonoses-data-sheets/leptospirosis.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> The BASC safe code of practise for use of your air weapon is available at <https://basc.org.uk/codes-of-practice/air-rifles-code-of-practice/>

<sup>2</sup> The BASC safe code of practise for use of your shotgun is available at: <http://basc.org.uk/cop/shotgun-safety-code-of-practice/>

<sup>3</sup>The Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust Guidance on using and building mink rafts is available at: <http://www.gwct.org.uk/wildlife/research/mammals/american-mink/the-gwct-mink-raft/>.

<sup>4</sup>The government guidance on Lyme disease is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/lyme-disease-guidance-data-and-analysis>

#### Personal protective equipment needed by trapper / monitor:

- Thick gloves. Appropriate footwear. Waterproof clothing (in potentially wet weather).
- Change of clothes (in cold weather). Drinking water, sun cream, sun hat (in sunny weather).
- Antiseptic wipes and waterproof plasters. Mobile phone in waterproof case.