

Control method: Rabbit warren destruction by ripping

Assumptions:

- Best practice is followed in accordance with the standard operating procedure RAB006.
- Ripping is used primarily as a method of harbour destruction rather than for killing rabbits. It is best practice to perform ripping when rabbit numbers are at their lowest e.g. after a disease incursion or after a control method such as fumigation or poisoning has been applied. The intention is that a more humane control technique is used (or natural population reduction) to reduce rabbit numbers prior to destruction of the warren.

PART A: assessment of overall welfare impact

DOMAIN 1 Water or food restriction, malnutrition					
No impact	Mild impact	Moderate impact	Severe impact	Extreme impact	
DOMAIN 2 Environmental challenge					
No impact	Mild impact	Moderate impact	Severe impact	Extreme impact	
DOMAIN 3 Disease, injury, functional impairment					
No impact	Mild impact	Moderate impact	Severe impact	Extreme impact	
DOMAIN 4 Behavioural or interactive restriction					
No impact	Mild impact	Moderate impact	Severe impact	Extreme impact	
DOMAIN 5 Anxiety, fear, pain, distress, thirst, hunger					
No impact	Mild impact	Moderate impact	Severe impact	Extreme impact	
↓					
Overall impact					
Mild					
DURATION OF IMPACT					
Immediate to seconds	Minutes	Hours	Days	Weeks	

SCORE FOR PART A:	3
Summary of evidence:	
Domain 1	Time spent underground prior to ripping (less than 6-7 hours) is unlikely to impose significant food/water restriction.
Domain 2	Ripping would affect any rabbits that are not inside the warren at the time by depriving them of shelter from extreme temperatures.
Domain 3	No impact in this domain.
Domain 4	Prior to ripping, rabbits are driven underground into the warren by making loud noises (e.g. riding motorbikes) and using dogs. These disturbances are likely to cause "flight or fight" stress responses that are similar to those seen when prey escape a predator. These endocrine responses are short lived and stress hormone levels quickly return to normal ¹ . Some subordinate rabbits may be attacked by dominant rabbits.
Domain 5	

PART B: assessment of mode of death -crushing

Time to insensibility (minus any lag time)				
Immediate to seconds	Minutes	Hours	Days	Weeks
Level of suffering (after application of the method that causes death but before insensibility)				
No suffering	Mild suffering	Moderate suffering	Severe suffering	Extreme suffering

PART B: assessment of mode of death -asphyxiation

Time to insensibility (minus any lag time)				
Immediate to seconds	Minutes	Hours	Days	Weeks
Level of suffering (after application of the method that causes death but before insensibility)				
No suffering	Mild suffering	Moderate suffering	Severe suffering	Extreme suffering

SCORE FOR PART B:	F
Summary of evidence:	
Duration –	Note that the modes of death are separated out here for clarity – the mode of death could be either or a combination of both. Time will vary because rabbits will die in different ways (see below). Crushing likely to take only a few minutes but asphyxiation may take hours.
Suffering –	Rabbits will die by crushing or asphyxiation or a combination of both. Direct mechanical wounding (from the ripping tines) can occur but is not common. Asphyxiation is likely to be the most common means of death. (No research so these comments are drawn from experience with ripping)

Summary

CONTROL METHOD:	Rabbit warren destruction by ripping
OVERALL HUMANENESS SCORE:	3F
Comments	

Bibliography