

Griffith University
Animal Ethics Manual – Wildlife

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

SOP No: W-1

SUBJECT: Netting and Trapping Freshwater Fish

POLICY: To ensure minimal disturbance of wild fish.

To minimise the time fish are in air by removing them from traps or nets and returning them to habitats quickly.

To minimise impacts on non-target species ¹.

PRECAUTIONS: (Operator safety).

EQUIPMENT: Seine nets, fyke traps, cast nets gill nets, bait-fish traps and opera-house traps (and any other similar type nets and traps).

PROCEDURE:

1. Passive traps (e.g. fyke nets, opera house traps) must provide access to air for air breathing by-catch (either a float or a breathing tube – e.g turtles, reptiles, water rats, platypus) (Arthington et al. 2005²) and be emptied or observed frequently to prevent accidental drowning.*
2. For active netting (e.g. seine nets), if multiple tows are conducted removed fish should be held appropriately until measurement. This would be within appropriate (to fish size and number) aerated (and shaded) containers.*
3. Gill nets must be checked or collected regularly (determined by the biology of the species expected to be caught) and fish removed quickly to prevent fish drowning (* see recommendations below).

NOTE: The Griffith University AEC considers Gill netting to be a non-preferred sampling method. As such it will only be considered on a case to case basis where researcher can provide compelling reasoning based on the likely species that will be captured and their likely survival due to limited net-soak times (that account for the species biology).

4. Processing of fish (e.g counting, measuring and weighing) should be done as quick as possible to return fish to point of capture.*
5. If fish need to be held for any time for processing (measurement) or procedure (e.g fin-clipping, tagging) they should be held appropriately (e.g in aerated tubs – relevant to number of fish and body size of fish) *


6. If conducted rapidly, minor procedures (e.g. weighing or measuring) should not require anaesthesia.*
7. Fish should be released at the point of capture, or disposed of as required by fishing permit conditions (e.g. noxious fish)³.

RECOMMENDATIONS: * Specify frequency or timing (and justification in relation to target and non-target species biology) in the AEC application.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

APPROVED: 2021

TO BE REVISED: 2023

| APPROVED DOCUMENT ON INTRANET ONLY – UNCONTROLLED DOCUMENT WHEN PRINTED. | | | | | | |
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| V02 | Netting and Trapping Freshwater Fish | Animal Ethics Committee | | #56618 | 2016 | 2018 |
| V03 | Netting and Trapping Freshwater Fish | Animal Ethics Committee |  | #56618 | 2021 | 2023 |

REFERENCES

1. NHMRC (2004) *Australian code of practice for the care and use of animals for scientific purposes (7th edition)*. Australian Government.
2. Arthington, A.H., Balcombe, S.R., Wilson, G.G. and Thoms M.C. (2005) Spatial and temporal variation in fish assemblage structure within isolated waterholes during the 2001 dry season of an arid-zone floodplain river, Cooper Creek, Australia. *Marine and Freshwater Research* **56**, 25-35.
3. Department of Agriculture and Fisheries. (<https://www.daf.qld.gov.au/business-priorities/fisheries>)