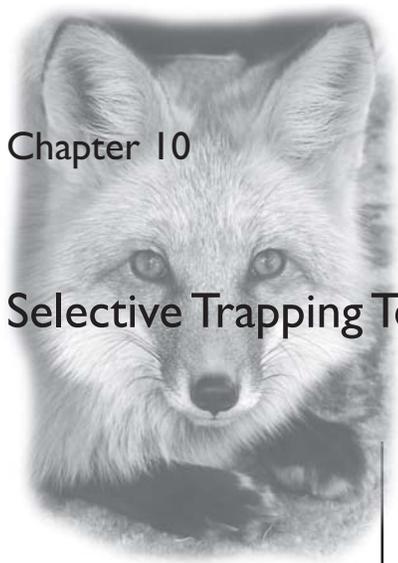


Chapter 10

Selective Trapping Techniques



Content Standard - *Students demonstrate an understanding of trapping principles and techniques that increase selectivity of sets*

Introduction

Trapping is a challenging activity. Each time you set a trap, make the set to catch a specific furbearer. You should also take steps to prevent catching pets or other non-target animals. This is known as selective trapping.

Information in this chapter will give you an introduction to selective trapping techniques in preparation for further understanding the chapters on making sets.



Use knowledge of furbearers and their habits to select the best locations and make selective sets

Trap location is the first consideration for selective trapping. Each species of furbearer lives in a certain kind of habitat, eats certain kinds of food, and follows certain habits. Use this knowledge to find the best places to set your traps.



Describe the use of sticks, rocks, or other material to guide target animals to a trap or divert non-target animals away from traps

Sticks and rocks can help you make selective sets. Examples include:

- If you make a muskrat set at the edge of a stream you can avoid ducks and other water birds by sticking branches out of the stream bank above the trap. Muskrats can pass below the branches;
- You can make a rock cubby for raccoons that will keep most dogs from approaching the trap;



FWS Photo

FWS employees use selective techniques for research.



Ohio DOW Photo

Rock cubby.



- A few small stones can be used as foot guides at land sets to help make the animal put its foot on the trap.



Describe the use of baits and lures that attract a target species and avoid non-target animals

The use of bait, lure, and urine is a key factor in selective trapping. Each furbearing animal will respond to certain food smells. Glandular lures can appeal to a specific animal's mating urges. Never use pet food for bait. Avoid other baits that might attract dogs or cats. For example, fish might attract cats if you are trapping near homes that have pets.



Explain that properly tuned BMP traps have been tested for selectivity and efficiency

Selecting the proper trap is made easier by studying the BMPs for each species. The size of the jaw spread and strength of the spring can help catch and hold a specific furbearer. Pan tension is an important consideration as well. Try one pound of pan tension for gray fox, two pounds for red fox or bobcats, and four pounds for coyotes.

Use BMP recommended traps and tune them for the specific species of furbearer you want to catch. BMP traps have been tested extensively for selectivity and efficiency.



Describe the importance of avoiding trails and other areas used by livestock, domestic animals, non-target wildlife, and humans

Although furbearers may use trails that are shared by people, pets, and livestock, these are not good places to set traps. Look for more remote places to make your sets. Avoid trapping a property when you know that hunters and dogs will be out for pheasant, quail, grouse, raccoon, or other species commonly hunted with dogs.

See the "Traps" chapter for information on tuning traps and setting pan tension.



Ohio DOW Photo

Avoid trails used by people and domestic animals.

Avoid trapping in any area where people regularly exercise pets.



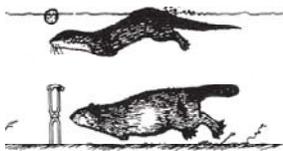
Ohio DOW Photo

Make friends with other people who use the property where you trap.



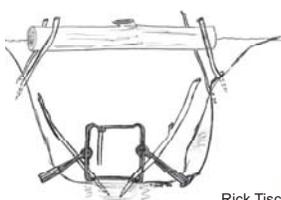
Ohio DOW Photo

Trap placement is an important selectivity consideration.



Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

Setting bodygrip traps deep under water may allow an otter to go over the top of the trap, while most beavers will dive to the bottom and get caught.



Rick Tischaefter



Explain the importance of discussions with landowners and people who regularly use private lands where you intend to trap

Responsible trappers make an effort to learn all they can about property they trap and who might be using the property for other activities. Find out who else has permission to be on the property and when they will be there. This will help you avoid problems and you may make some new friends in the process.



Explain the importance of planning when, where, and how to trap on public land to avoid catching hunting dogs

Public areas provide millions of acres of land and water where trapping is permitted. During times of heavy public use for hunting it is a good idea to focus on water trapping to avoid catching dogs. Because most furbearers are nocturnal you can make sets in the evening and pull them or trip them the next morning. Local managers, rangers, or wildlife officers can tell you about the most heavily used hunting areas so that you can avoid them when hunters are running dogs.



Explain how variations in trap placement at a dirt-hole set can increase selectivity

Trap placement in relation to lure, bait, or other attractors is another factor in selective trapping. At a dirt-hole set, for example, try placing the trap seven inches from the hole for fox, and 12 inches for larger coyotes.

These are just a few examples of the ways you can make your sets selective and avoid non-target catches. Study BMP documents for the species you trap to learn more.

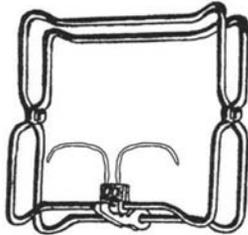


Explain how trigger adjustments on body-gripping traps can increase selectivity

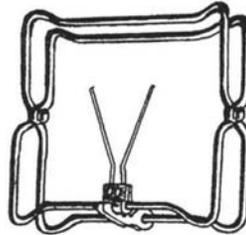
Trappers bend the triggers on body-gripping traps as needed to make them selective. Triggers can be shaped to allow “streamlined” otters to swim through large body-gripping traps and still catch beavers, which have bigger bodies. This method does not work all of the time. The following images show some common trigger shapes used by trappers.

Trigger Adjustments

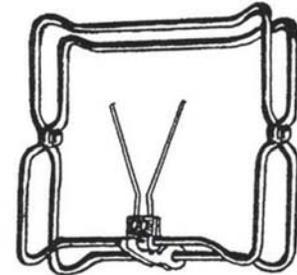
Note: Trappers often set body-gripping traps with triggers on the bottom to reduce pelt damage to the upper part of the pelt



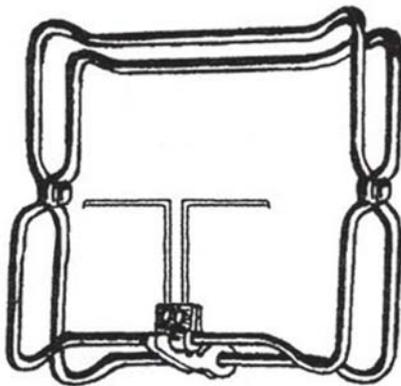
Small - for Mink



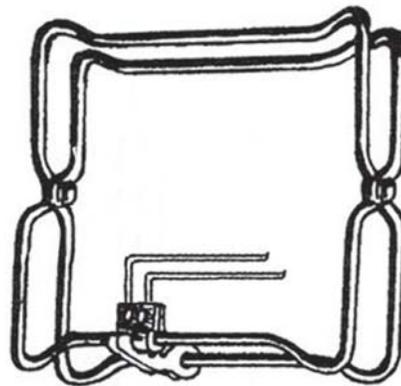
Small - for Muskrats



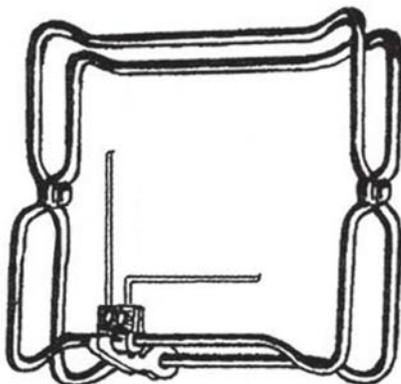
Medium - for Raccoon and Fisher



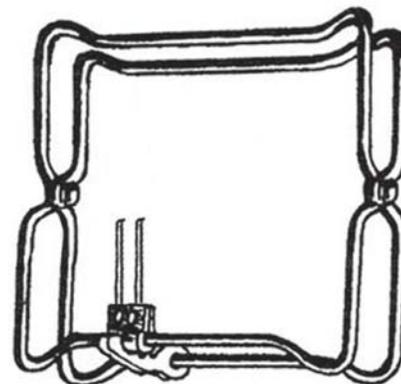
Large - Beaver and Otter



Large - Beaver, not Otter



Large - Beaver, not Otter



Large - Beaver, Not Otter
Note: triggers are cut short

Trigger Configurations Illustrations by Joe Goodman

Content Standard - Students demonstrate an understanding of trapping principles and techniques that increase selectivity of sets.

Use knowledge of furbearers and their habits to select the best locations and make selective sets (page 70).

- Select three furbearers common to your area, that you are likely to trap. Briefly describe their habitat, food, and habits that can help you make selective sets. Refer to the information in chapters 10 and 18 for this information.

Furbearer	Habitat	Food	Habits

Describe the use of sticks, rocks, or other material to guide target animals to a trap or divert non-target animals away from traps (pages 70-71).

- If you make a muskrat set at the edge of a stream you can avoid ducks and other water birds by _____ above the trap.

Describe the use of baits and lures that attract a target species and avoid non-target animals (page 71).

Explain that properly tuned BMP traps have been tested for selectivity and efficiency (page 71).

- Pan tension is one important consideration for tuning traps. The pan tension for red fox should be set at _____ pounds.

Describe the importance of avoiding trails and other areas used by livestock, domestic animals, nontarget wildlife, and humans (page 71).

Explain the importance of discussions with landowners and people who regularly use private lands where you intend to trap (page 72).

- Describe the area where you will trap (private farm, public hunting area, your own land, leased land, etc.). List the kinds of activities other people may be doing there during the trapping season (bowhunting, duck hunting, camping, etc.)

Type of area you will trap: _____

Other people's activities: _____

Explain the importance of planning when, where, and how to trap on public land to avoid catching hunting dogs (page 72).

- List the types of hunting in your area where hunters are likely to be using dogs (raccoon hunting, pheasant hunting, etc.) If you are not sure, ask your family, friends, or instructors to help.

- At a dirt-hole set, try placing the trap _____ inches from the hole for fox, and _____ inches for coyotes

Explain how variations in trap placement at a dirt-hole set can increase selectivity (page 72).