

Chapter 4

Important Terms

You should know the following terms:

Foothold trap
Bodygrip trap
Box trap
Live trap
Snare
Restrain
Longspring
Coilspring
Conibear trap
Lethal
Entanglement situation

Learning Objectives

You should be able to:

- Identify the four main types of traps: foothold, bodygrip, box, live trap, and snare
- Differentiate between longspring and coilspring foothold traps
- Understand that foothold traps are restraining traps and animals can be released alive from foothold traps
- Recognize some advantages of the foothold trap
- Identify the parts of a foothold trap
- Learn to set a foothold trap
- Understand that bodygrip traps grip the animal by the body
- Understand that bodygrip traps are killing traps and animals cannot be released from bodygrip traps
- Understand that only the smallest bodygrip traps may be used on land
- Understand that live traps are used to take animals alive
- Understand that live traps are not practical for general trapline use
- Recognize the advantage of live traps in removing wild animals from buildings
- Understand that snares work like a leash

- Understand that snares can be used as restraining devices
- Recognize that snares can be lethal in entanglement situations
- Understand that a snare can be used only once
- Understand that snares work best in trail sets

Chapter 4

Traps

The most important pieces of equipment for the trapper are the traps. Getting some traps is the first step in assembling your equipment. There are four basic kinds of traps or devices for catching animals: foothold traps, bodygrip traps, live traps, and snares.

Foothold Traps

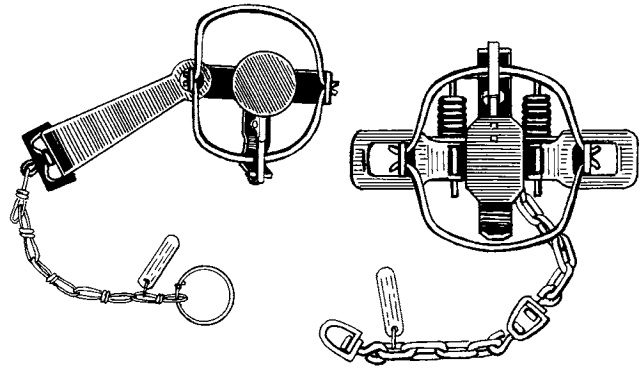
Foothold traps are designed to catch an animal by the foot. These traps are also called “leg-hold” traps. Foothold traps are used to restrain an animal. There are two types of foothold traps: coilspring traps and longspring traps.

An animal’s foot is very tough. It is made up of small bones, cartilage, and a heavy pad. There are very few nerve endings in the foot, and an animal experiences little discomfort if its foot is gripped in a trap. It is important to consider the size of the animal and select an appropriate size foothold trap to use for it. A trap that is too large could grip the animal too high on the leg and cause injury. Always use the smallest trap that will reliably hold the animal. Ohio law limits the size of foothold traps that may be used on land.

Foothold traps can be used on land or in the water. In land trapping, foothold traps offer an advantage because they restrain the animal but do not kill it. Non-target animals can be released alive from foothold traps that are set on land. This is an important factor where domestic animals are concerned. When foothold traps are used in the water, they can be fastened so the captured animal will drown.

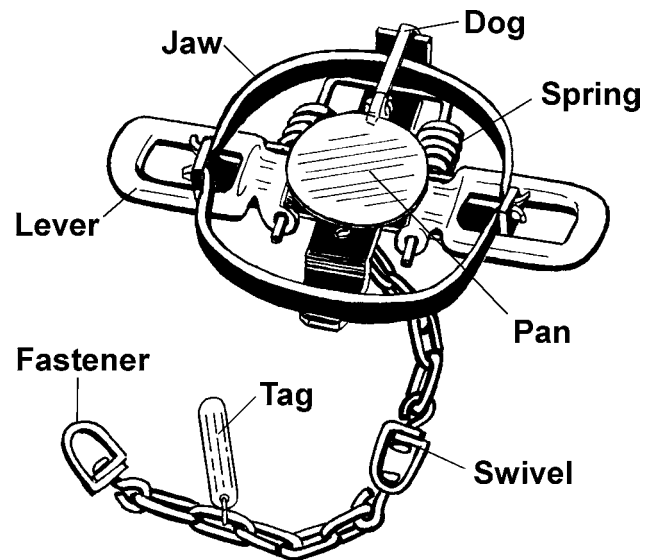
Foothold traps can be used for any type of animal on land or in the water. This is one of their advantages. They are also easy to conceal. This is another advantage. Some animals, like fox and coyote, are very wary. Foothold traps are a good choice for these animals.

Foothold Traps



These are two types of foothold traps. At the left is a longspring trap, at the right is a coilspring trap.

Parts of the Foothold Trap



Setting a Foothold Trap

The easiest way to set a coil-spring foothold trap is to stand on the levers with your feet. Then pull the jaws apart.



Once you have pried the jaws open and put the dog over the jaw, you can easily hold the trap set with your thumb.



Put the dog on top of the jaw, and push down on it with your thumb. Reach UNDER the loose jaw and raise the pan with your fingers.



Reach under the loose jaw, and raise the pan. By keeping your fingers UNDER the jaw, you will not get pinched if the trap accidentally fires.



If you are strong enough, you can depress the trap levers with your hands with the trap resting on your knee.



Bodygrip Traps

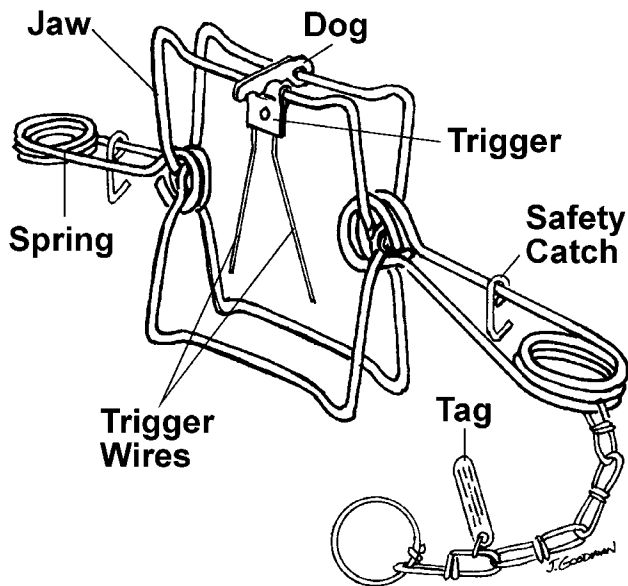
Bodygrip traps are sometimes called “killer” traps or “Conibear” traps. Bodygrip traps catch the animal around the body. These traps are designed to kill the animals they catch.

Bodygrip traps dispatch the catch, and animals rarely escape from them. This results in a quick, humane death for the animal. These are the advantages of a bodygrip trap, but there can also be disadvantages.

Animals cannot be released unharmed from bodygrip traps. For this reason, only the smaller size traps can be used on land. Ohio law limits the size of bodygrip traps that can be set on land.

The smaller size bodygrip traps are very effective for muskrats and mink. The medium size traps are good for raccoon, but they must be set in water. The largest size bodygrip traps are used for beaver and must be completely submerged under water.

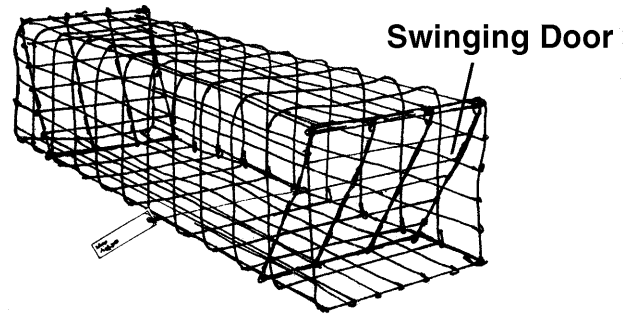
Bodygrip Trap



Box Traps

Several different kinds of box traps are popular for muskrat trapping. These box traps (also known as colony, cage, or basket traps) are constructed of wire mesh. Their size varies with a muskrat-sized opening on each end. The trap is placed under water in a runway and the muskrat and sometimes an occasional mink swim through the one-way swinging trap door. They cannot get out back through the door opening and they soon drown. Several muskrats can be captured in a box trap at one time.

Box Trap



Live Traps

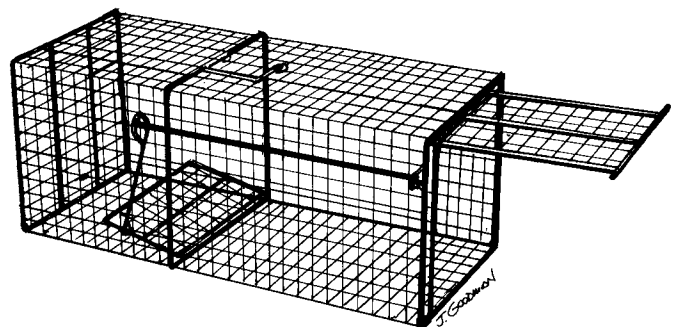
Live traps are sometimes called box traps or cage traps. They are used to take animals alive. The trap is in the shape of a box. The animal enters the box and a door closes behind it.

The advantage of live traps is they do not grip the animal. A captured animal can be released easily. Live traps can be effective where the likelihood of capturing a domestic animal is high. These traps can be used safely around houses, barns, or other dwellings.

Live traps are expensive. They are also bulky and hard to transport. Because of this, they are not practical for everyday trapline use. Some animals, like fox and coyotes, will not readily enter a live trap.

One good use for live traps is removing raccoons, opossums, and skunks from buildings. Performing this service can help establish good trapper-landowner relationships.

Live Trap



Snares

Snares are considered to be traps, but they function differently than most other trapping devices. Snares are made of multi-strand steel cable. To use a snare, you form the cable into a loop and suspend the loop over a trail the animal is using. The animal enters the loop and tightens the snare down on itself. The snare is designed to capture the animal by the neck or body and restrain it like a dog on a leash.

Snares have the advantage of being lightweight and fairly inexpensive. They are good for making trail sets. Snares can be used like foothold traps to capture animals alive. However, snares can also be lethal and dispatch an animal like a bodygrip trap. This happens if an animal gets tangled up at the set and cannot get its feet back on the ground. A situation like this is called an entanglement situation. You must be careful to avoid entanglement situations, especially when it is possible you might catch a domestic animal in the set.

While other traps can be used over and over again, a snare can be used only once. After a snare has captured an animal, it must be replaced with a new snare. Snares work best in trail sets where an animal is moving along. They do not work effectively at baited or lured sets.

Snares are most effective for the larger furbearers, especially coyote, fox, and beaver. Raccoon can also be taken effectively in snares.

Chapter 4 Study Guide

Review Questions

- Describe the differences among the three major kinds of traps:
 - Foothold _____,
 - Body gripping _____,
 - Box _____.
- The two basic types of foothold traps are the _____ spring and the _____ spring.
- Several muskrats can be captured in a box trap. True or False.
- _____ traps are used to remove wild animals from buildings.
- Snares _____ an animal similar to a leash on a dog.

Snare

