

Tips, Tactics and Technics for Trappers

Plus tales and plain old good advice for anyone who ever thought about trapping for survival, sustenance or money.

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Buckshot, the author of the following articles and [Buckshot's Modern Trapper's Guide to Xtreme Trapping for Safety, Survival, Profit, Pleasure,](#) has been trapping for 25 years in 5 different states. He has caught minks, raccoons, opossums, skunks,



red foxes, gray foxes, coyotes, bobcats, muskrats, fishers, otters, beavers, ground hogs, snapping turtles, weasels, badgers and other game animals. He has built a log cabin and lived off the land. He says "I love the woods and being a free trapper in God's great outdoors."

Why is trapping important for survivalists? "The most important reason I think everyone who plans to survive should know how to trap," says Buckshot, "is that during the Great Depression the game animals were hunted down to nothing, but the trapper *always fed his family.*" You can contact Buckshot via [e-mail](#) with questions or comments.

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Check back next month, because more articles are in the works.

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The Store has Moved



Only One Trap

Asking a trapper what is the one trap he would take into a survival camp is kind of like asking a gun nut what is the only gun to take. I thought long and hard on the subject before coming to the conclusion that for someone who didn't know a lot about trapping that the conibear trap is the best. Beginners have the best success with this trap and I have some small ones I have used for over 20 years and their still catching animals. First off, I will explain what the trap does and the different sizes and their use.

The conibear was developed by a Canadian fur trapper Frank Conibear. He wanted a trap that would kill the animal so that he could run more traps with only checking each set every 2 or 3 days. With a leghold trap you should check every day to be humane to the caught animals. Well, his trap took off and is now a household name in the trapper world. There are currently 6 different sizes ranging to cover all the popular fur animals but for this article we will stick with the 3 basic ones to avoid confusion.

The first trap is a #110 conibear, this trap is 4 1/2 by 4 1/2 " with a single spring. This trap is very popular among muskrat trappers because they're easy to use and reliable quick kills. This trap can also be used for mink, rabbit, squirrel, and some of the bigger weasel. The traps are relatively inexpensive ranging from \$50 a dozen new to \$30 a dozen used.

The second trap is a #220 conibear, this trap is 7 by 7" with double springs and requires a setting tool to compress the springs. This trap is popular among the raccoon trappers. Care must be used with this trap because if a dog or house-cat sticks his head in there, they will die quickly just like a raccoon. Some states have regulated this trap. If set on land they have to be in dog proof boxes or at least 4 feet off the ground. This trap has been used to catch raccoons, otters, muskrats, minks, squirrels, rabbits, and ground hogs (woodchucks). They run about \$90 a dozen new and around \$75 used. Four #220 will



keep you in coons for a long time.

The third trap is a #330 conibear, this trap is 10 x 10" square with double springs, this is the most powerful and is NO kids toy. The same setting tool that can be used for the #220 will work for the #330. **THE SAME CARE MUST BE USED WITH THIS TRAP BECAUSE NO DOG WILL LIVE THROUGH AN ENCOUNTER IN THIS TRAP!** What a wonderful beaver trap. I have trapped 100's of beaver with this trap. The trap was designed for beaver but can also be used for otters, raccoons, and snapping turtles. They run around \$200 a dozen new and used are about \$150 a dozen. I've had some for over 10 years and their still catching beaver every year.

"What the heck is he talking about, I thought this article was suppose to be about one trap not three." Well, just like the one perfect gun, it all depends on where you are in the country. What animal has the highest population in your area? A great survival set-up would be 6-#110 for the smaller animals, 4-#220 for medium size animals and 2-#330 for beaver size animals. This batch of only 12 traps should keep you in meat and fur just about anywhere in America.

The one trap I personally would have is the #330 because of the amount of beaver in my area. For other parts of the country I would take the #220 because of the high raccoons, ground hogs, possums, and muskrats. With the #110 traps so cheap, every one should have a couple at their camp. This is really hard trying to predict what your area has the most of. You are the best judge of that. What is the top road kill animals in your area? This is a good reliable indicator of the animal population in any given area. Just use you head. If you see 2 beaver lodges and 4 dams there are can be from 4 to 12 beaver but after you trap them out then what's left to trap? You see, it all depends on your area. I am trying to provide you, a beginner with the tools that beginners have their most success with.

Preparing New Traps

If you go out and buy new traps, don't go out and set them for animals, you have to first prepare the traps. If you use new traps they are all bright and shiny, you will have limited success because the trap doesn't look natural. A quick and easy way to prepare the traps is to boil them in water to remove the factory grease for about 5 minutes, pour the water off and stick them outside under some leaves or mowed grass. Leave the traps there for a week or so until a light coating of rust appears. Then bring the traps in, use a wire brush to take off the rust, lightly, just to take off the bigger spots. (**A LOT OF NEW PEOPLE CAN'T UNDERSTAND THE RUSTING PART BECAUSE IT GOES AGAINST THE GRAIN OF METAL PROTECTION.**) The reason you let them rust is to prepare the metal for excepting dye, paint, or quick dip. This is a quick way to preserve the traps after the rusting, you can spray paint the trap flat black. The reason for the rust is after you catch an animal the paint or dye can wear off. You don't want a shiny metal piece to scare other animals away from the trap. The rust looks more of a natural brown and the traps will keep catching animals. Make sure after painting that you hang the traps in a tree for a couple of weeks to get rid of the paint smell.

This is just some of the basic's to start. Next article we will look at the # 110 conibear trap and how to catch muskrats, rabbits, and squirrels. Until then, [reply](#) with what you would like to see. Good luck and take care.

Note: Buckshot received a question about baiting traps. here is his answer:

The conibears are design to use in trail sets, den entrance sets, and baited sets. The bait all depends on what you are trapping. #110 in a box set baited with garden veggie's, will take rabbits. Squirrels really like corn on the cob, or peanut butter. A #220 in a bucket baited with fish heads will take raccoons, possums, skunks and, once in a while, a dumb fox, or coyote. The #330 under the ice can have aspen branches wired to the trigger. Aspen branches placed beyond the trap usually works the best in open water.

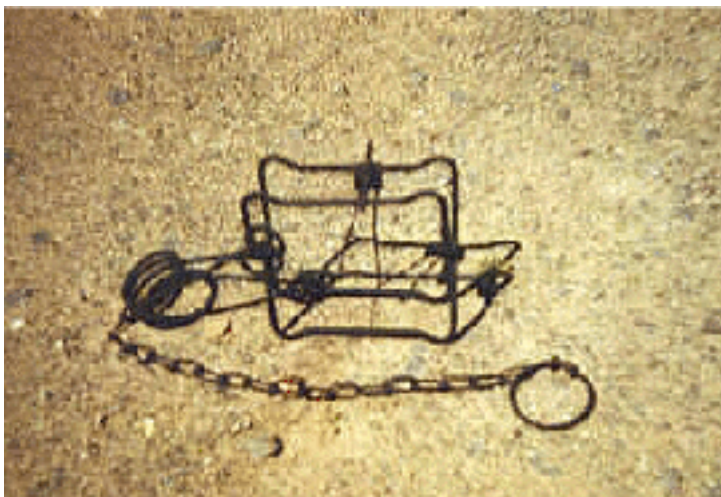
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The #110 Conibear

The #110 conibear is a wonderful little trap. I caught my first muskrat with one back in 1975. The trap is 4 1/2" by 4 1/2" with a single spring. To set the trap you squeeze the spring down and open the jaws bringing them together. The trigger is made out of two thin pieces of wire connected to a folded piece of metal on the top jaw. There is a slot in the middle of this piece of metal where the second piece of the trigger hooks on. There are three settings and I generally used the middle one. You flip the top trigger and hook on the middle setting, now before you release pressure from the spring make sure your hand is clear.

The easiest way is to set it down on the ground upright and hold your finger on the top trigger and release the pressure from your other hand. Now the trap is set. Just play around with it for a while until you get use to setting them. Take a stick about 18 inches long hold one end and with the opposite end push on the trigger. The trap may fire or it might fall over. Try it both ways holding the trap spring to keep the trap from



falling over and unsupported. The reason I wanted you to do this, is so you could see first hand why the trap **HAS TO BE STABILIZED**. This is very, very, important on conibear style traps. I don't care what size, you have to stabilize them. What this means is the trap is designed for the animal to stick his head in. Well, the trap has to be supported or it will fall over and spring off without catching the animal. Now, you just educated that animal to be scared and trap-shy of traps and he will be much harder to capture.

One way to make a great stabilizer for the #110 conibear is either buy lath boards, or if you know of someone remodeling an old house and their ripping out the old lath board, so they can put up drywall, they will probably give you all the lath board for the asking. I cut mine 12-18" long (it is not critical), sharpen one end to a point, let them weather if they are new, you now have an easy-to-use stabilizer. Remember , this is for stabilizing the trap and not to be confused with a stake.

Take the lath board and at about a 45 degree angle, push the stake into the ground between the compressed spring and the open part of the two jaws. You want a downward pressure on the trap to keep it from being knocked over. Now, try pushing the 18" long stick on the trigger. The trap should fire, closing on the stick. Remember to keep your hands back -- these little trap hurt if they whack you one.

Of course, there are several ways to stabilize these traps, you can use two sticks and form a X over the top of the trap, you can weld a 6" long piece of 1/4" stock to the rivet, or if setting in boxes you can notch the box, etc.

Where to set the #110

The #110 can be used three different ways: den entrance, trail set, and bait set.

Den entrances for cottontail rabbits. The best way to learn how to trap, is wait until first snow and track the rabbit to it's den hole. Then place the #110 over the hole at whatever the angle of the hole is. You may have to make a small stabilizing stick on the spot. Place two 2-3" long approximately 1" diameter sticks on the bottom jaw this will keep the trapping from freezing to the ground. Take the chain off to one side, out of the way and wire it to a tree or handy branch. The next time a rabbit comes out or in the hole, he is caught.

Heavy brush piles will have a beaten path in the snow where the rabbits run and hide. Pick the spot with the most tracks and find a spot that is just about the size of the trap, all narrowed down with a top stick to keep the rabbits from jumping over. Place the trap there, if you have to you can add a couple of side sticks to help narrow it down and a top stick. Set the trap upright, so if the rabbit wants to get in the brush pile his only choice is through the trap. Stabilize, freeze sticks, wire it off, it is that simple.

The third way to get rabbits -- and this will work on all rabbits -- is with an old stove pipe 6" in diameter. Take a piece 12" to 24" long and cut a notch in the side for the spring to slide in, about 3" long, then bend the pipe down a little smaller, then the trap on both ends. Now, you slide the trap in making sure it fits snug, two traps, one on each end. Test to make sure there is enough room for the trigger to fire. Always test your pipe with a trap in it first. You may have to take a stick or two to close off the end opposite the spring, just make sure that the only way to get in the pipe is through the trap.

This stove pipe trap will work on squirrels , muskrats, ducks, rabbits, anything that can fit in the pipe and your bait attracts. Now wire the chain off to something solid. Place near berry bushes in the woods for rabbits and game birds. Around marshes, lakes, river, streams, etc. for muskrats, ducks, etc. All you do is take bait such as corn and make a trail going in each end to a pile of corn in the middle of the pipe. Of course, remove the trap before you place the corn in!! Pheasants, grouse, quail, etc. will go in for the corn, so will coons , so make sure you wire it off to something solid or the coon will run off with the trap. A big coon will just power his head out but smaller coons will be alive and in a bad mood when you arrive. I don't think the trap would kill a pheasant, but I know it will flatten the smaller game birds. Check the trap

once a day. Mice will steal the bait so don't get upset, just re-bait or move the trap.

Now I have to place my disclaimer. You are responsible for checking your state's game laws and complying with them. In most, if not all states, game birds, rabbits, squirrels, ducks, and geese are protected from trapping. So I don't want to hear about your fines if you go out and try this. Most hunters and game wardens don't have a sense of humor when they see a pair of quails, grouse, etc. whacked in a trap. If you get hurt setting the traps that is also your risk, I have been whacked by the #330 on the hands and I will tell you in the cold water during winter it hurts bad. It didn't break the hand but it swelled up pretty good. I TAKE NO RESPONSIBILITY FOR YOUR ACTIONS. (And neither does Captain Dave.)

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Trapping muskrats

People have a problem thinking of the muskrat in a good light. Because of the rat name and the rat tail, most people can't think about eating them. Muskrats live anywhere there is water, including ditches, ponds, lakes, rivers, etc. Their diet is cattail roots, sweet flag, bulrush, apples, etc. They eat good food and are delicious to eat, but I think they have one of the best furs, silky soft and smooth. In Louisiana they sell the muskrat at the meat store under the name "marsh rabbit," and when you stop and think about it they are correct. The muskrat eats good food from the wild just like a wild rabbit does.

Anyways, muskrats are legal to trap and are great for beginners to start on. Most farmers with a pond are more than happy to let you trap them.

If you are trapping a pond, or ditch muskrats, dig holes starting underwater angling up toward land. Walk in the water at the edge looking for their round holes, around 4" diameter. If the water is clear, they are easy to spot by looking for the pile of mud and trail leading to it. Now, look up on land. If there is a cave in, skip that hole because the muskrats have abandoned it. That is why you walk in the water, to prevent you from causing the cave in. Just set the #110 over the hole stabilizing and wired off to a stake that you pushed down in the mud (a long stick will work). Then go find the next one, set it and so on.

If there are muskrat houses built out of mud and cattails about 1 to 4 feet around, these will have den entrances too. Use your boot around the edge and you should feel a slight depression leading to the hole. Run your boot up to the hole and set the trap the same way. There can be up to 4 entrances on a large den, but one or two will be the most traveled. You can tell by the deep run leading to the den.

The last set to cover is the culvert set. If there is a 6 to 10" culvert pipe with water in it. Set the trap in front and narrow down the side with sticks, so the muskrat has to go through the trap to get in the pipe. I never, ever pass up a culvert set, they are the closest thing to a guaranteed catch as they come. I have narrowed down 3 feet wide culverts with a trap on each end and frequently took doubles. If the culvert connects one body of water to another, set one on each end. Make sure the trap is stabilized well because the muskrats come in to this pipe fast.

This will get you started, there are numerous other sets you can make. Just play around and try whatever you think will work. Just have fun. Remember, stabilize means the trap cannot be knocked over even if the animal hits the side. You don't

have to make it rock solid -- just make sure light hand pressure won't knock the trap over. Let me know how you do and any problems you may have. You can [e-mail me](#) with any questions.

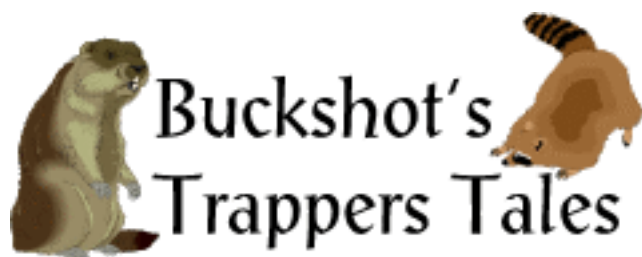
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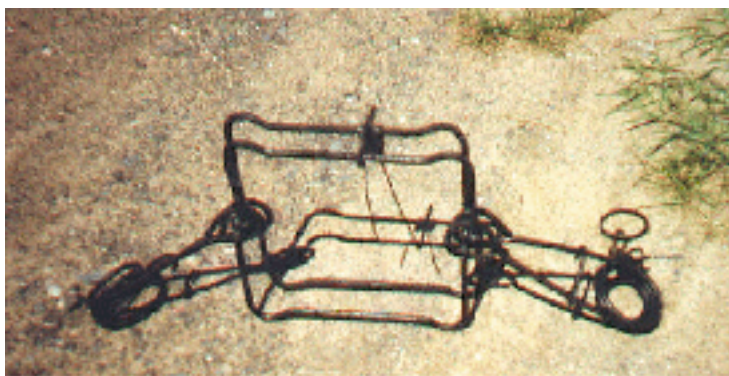
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The Conibear #220

The #220 conibear is a wonderful trap. I have talked to several beginner's who, after catching 10-12 coons in a week their first year, asked 'Why do I even used leg-holds?' This question will be answered in up coming articles. Like I said before, if you had 4 #220 conibears you would have plenty of coons to eat, especially, if you are in a high coon state like Iowa, or Nebraska. Most of the southern states also have high coon populations, and most of the northern states have good coon numbers. There are coons out west too, but not the high numbers you see elsewhere.



I will state again: You as a trapper have to be responsible. This trap kills dogs and cats, so make sure you are off the beaten trail before you set. Here in Michigan, we have to have the #220 in dog-proof boxes or 4 feet off the ground. If you are trapping a farm, explain to the farmer that you plan on using #220's on the ground and if it is ok with

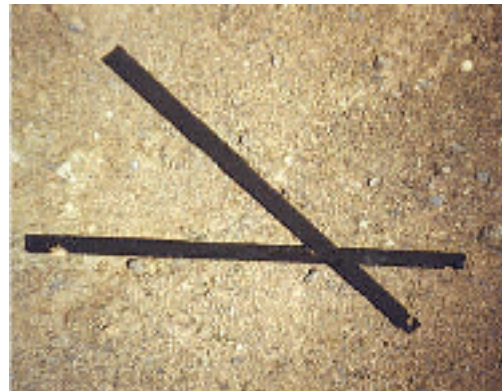
him, then ask where to set so no dog gets caught. I trap farms that want every coon gone and the farmer is responsible. They tie their pets up, and I don't set any #220's within 1/4 of a mile from a road or building.

There was a case last fall in New York that upset a bunch of people. A new trapper was setting dry 12" culverts at the ROAD'S EDGE. Someone was taking their dog for a walk and the dog stuck his head in the trap and was killed. The owner raised hell, and had a right to, because that's irresponsibility on the trapper's part and no one wants to lose a beloved pet. Please make sure you follow the 1/4 mile rule. I try my best to avoid catching pets. Enough on that. Just remember there is no letting the dog go alive in less it is a big dog.

Setting the #220

To set the #220, use the setting tool and compress the springs:

- Simply hook the tool into the eye of the spring and squeeze.
- Hold the tool with one hand, and with the other flip the safety catch on.
- Do the same to the other spring.
- The trap is not set yet, so place the trap on the ground spread open to the springs.
- Flip the two prong triggers out of the square, place your knee on the other end and push down. (This will open the trap.)
- Next, make sure the safety latches are still in place and slide them back toward the spring end.
- Then grab both sides of the trap, holding it set.
- Set just like the #110; flip the slotted part of the trigger to the slot in between the two prongs,



Now the trap is set. If you're setting in a 5 gal. bucket to make it dog proof, this is how you do it.

- Cut the plastic bucket with two 7-inch slots on each side -- one for each spring. The trap will slide back into the two slots. The slots only have to be just wider than the springs.
- Then cut a 6 inch round hole in the lid.
- Place the trap in, leaving the safety latches on, pop the lid and you have a dog proof box.
- Place the bucket in between two logs so it won't roll. Wire off to a small tree.
- First, place bait in the bucket, a dab of lure on the bait, trap, lid, sticks, and to insure the bucket won't move back place against a tree.
- Last thing after, everything else is done, take the safety latches off.

When you make up the buckets, test them with a long stick to insure the trap closes tight with the lid on. A friend of mine uses this set-up in barns with great results. He keeps changing the bait with the buckets until every coon is caught. The farmer loves him for it, new coons move in every year and it is an ongoing event. He had one coon that wouldn't come in for fish, or lure, or corn, so one morning he was cooking bacon saved the grease, poured in two drops of peppermint cooking oil, some peanut butter, and tried it. The coon was caught the next morning.

Setting Traps on Animal Trails

All animals have trails. When you find a small trail going through thick brush, you

will find a spot all narrowed down with brush over top. This is a perfect place for a trail set. On the farm I trap, I walk along the edge of the woods looking for coon trails. The coons drag the corn into the woods so the trail is easy to find. just follow the trail, and if you can't find a narrow spot, make one with sticks and wire. If you are in a high coon area, you can set 1 to 4 traps on one trail. If you only have 4 #220's, then find all the trails before season and narrow down 4 spots on each trail. There can be up to ten trails coming into a 40acre field. Set the traps, check them and move to the next trail every day. You can trap the cream of the crop from all the different coon families feeding in the field. In a top area you could get 2 coons a night for 10 nights that is 20 coons. With an average from \$8.00 down south to \$18.00 average on top northern coon. (Prices on fur vary every year so I'm quoting 1997's prices.) But even at \$8.00 each, 20 coons is \$160. Not bad for helping to pay for your equipment cost. Plus you have all the coons to eat.

If I was trapping with only four #220's this is how I would set: Two on the trail and two bucket sets. The best almost guaranteed set up is done by conditioning the coons. Two weeks before trapping season opens, set out 10 buckets without the traps, but baited with fish heads. The idea is to get the coons used to climbing into the bucket to get a free meal. Bait once a week. Then when the season opens set your four traps. The next day, when you move the traps, move the four to the next trail with the already baited buckets. Then take the 2 buckets and move to a new trail and pre-bait, get it? Just keep rotating. If you are lucky enough to find a farm with a pond then you can trap the muskrats in the pond at the same time. One farm with 4 coon traps, 6 muskrats traps and, if your real lucky, a couple of beaver will be there so you can set your #330's, then you have set all your traps. If one farm doesn't have all this, then trap on two farms. That all there is to it.



Get permission, of course, before trapping on farms. Talk to the farmer, and trap only where he wants you to. I carry a 22 rifle with me and add grouse and rabbits as I'm checking traps. Take the kids along. They love trapping and hunting and being with Dad. My one friend takes all his kids from the time they were 5 years old. His 10-year-old caught his first mink last year. Every year I take a friend and his son along the trapline with me. The kid has more fun then both of us and his Dad doesn't even trap.

The younger you start the kids, the better they learn to accept the cycles of life in the wilds, before the teachers and Disney can fill their heads with Thumper and cruelty. It will be better for the children to learn this lesson now before a survival situation where they might refuse to eat the meat or wear the fur, their health and maybe their survival depends on it.

Trapping Groundhogs

If a farmer has groundhog problems, sometimes you can make the following deal:

You'll trap the groundhogs for him now if he gives you permission to trap for fur during the season. Groundhogs are easy to trap. As a friend of mine used to say, "I wasn't sure what was using the hole, so a #220 solved that mystery."

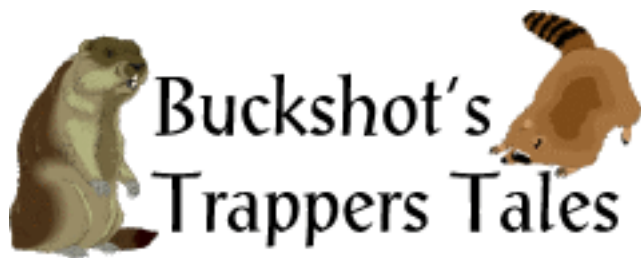


Place the #220 over the groundhog hole at the angle of the hole. Stabilize the trap and take the safety off. Don't forget to wire it off. If there is nothing to wire off to, then use a stake, a sharpened stick pounded in to the ground. Show the farmer the dead ones and skin and sell the hides to fishermen who use the fur for tying flies.

Another set for the #220 is the cubby set, which is used by bobcat trappers. I like making these next to beaver dams because the bobcat likes to hunt around the dams. All you do is make a small box against a tree (remember the wind) out of sticks. Cover the top with pine boughs and stabilize the #220 with sticks. Now, I'll tell you how to get the bobcats. Take a beaver tail and a head of a beaver for bait and use my beaver lure. The bobcat loves to eat beaver and beaver lure makes it smell like a fresh kill, so the bobcat goes in for a free meal and gets a free neck brace instead. Works like a champ.

One last thing. Make sure if you are using bait or lure that you are set up for the wind. The animal has to smell it to get caught. So the wind should come across the back of the bucket to the trail. I will talk wind, location and good equipment over and over again. Pay attention to wind so you can get paid. That's it for now. I love all and any questions, so please feel free to reply. Don't wait until fall because I'll be trapping and it might take me a while to get back to you.

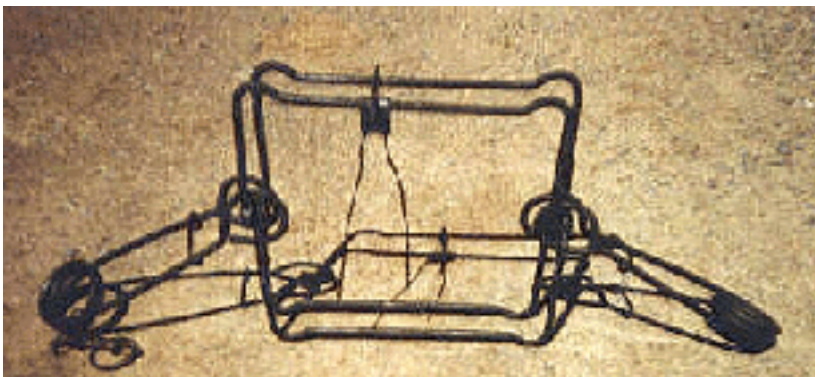
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Bagging Beaver with the Conibear #330

The #330 conibear is the best beaver trap ever made. I have taken people and taught them to trap. The following year after I taught one of them, and he was only using 6 traps, within his first week he caught 18 beaver. That is really good for a beginner. I had one friend that used to joke that we could trap bear with them. Of course, this is not possible; a full size bear would pull right out.

You can use the #330 for ground hogs. A recent e-mail I received said place the #330 over the ground hog hole and the next day the problem is solved. I know of one trapper that used them for culvert trapping in the country. He was trapping wilderness logging roads where dogs weren't a concern. His catch was impressive, raccoons, otter, and beaver.



The whole idea of using conibears is to give the animal a reason to stick his head in or try to go through the conibear, like in a culvert.

If you want to trap beaver, the best set is the dam cross over. Beaver will dam the creek or river in a spot with slow-moving water. They will have a path along the top of the dam that they use to cross over the dam. This path is easy to spot and sometimes it is so muddied up from the beaver sliding down, it is hard to mistake. The beaver even provide the stabilizing sticks. Make sure you use old sticks because if you grab green sticks with bark on them the beaver might try to grab the stick instead of going through the trap. Just go up to the crossover and place the trap in so that half is in the water. Take two sticks push them through the set springs at a 45 degree angle so the two sticks form an "X" over the trap. This prevents the beaver from knocking over the trap. Take about 6 feet of wire or more and wire it to something solid. Then take your next trap and set the bottom side.

On the bottom side if there is a fallen old log or branch the beaver are swimming

under, make sure you set there. I have had beaver walk around my top set and then swim into the bottom set, because it was fully under water. The reason for the long wire is to give the beaver enough room that as he is fighting the trap he pulls out into deep water and sinks. This hides your catch and it doesn't spook the other beaver. When I first start taking large numbers of beaver, I didn't do this and after the first beaver was caught on the pond sometime the rest of them would refuse to swim near any traps. Or worse, one would come up and slap the trap with his tail until it fired. This would leave you with a sprung empty trap. Wire is cheap, so use it to give the beaver plenty of room to reach deep water and sink out of sight.

The next best set for beaver is where the beaver have dug a channel about 18 inches wide up to quarter of a mile long. This will have anywhere from 2 feet of water at the beginning down to just mud at the other end. Find a spot all narrowed down along this path and set the conibear there. After you set the trap, take grass, leaves and small sticks to help camo the trap. Remember to blend the trap in. The only problem I have had with this set is predators eating the dead beaver. I have had black bear run off with my traps and I find it hundreds of yards away with a half-eaten beaver. Bobcat have pulled the beaver out, eaten and clawing it up. Remember the predators, so if you can, set near the main water edge and give the beaver plenty of wire to reach deep water. If it is too deep of water then you can place what is called a dive stick over the trap. Say you have 18 inches of water and the trap is set on the bottom with 6 inches of water over top. Just take 3 or 4- 1 inch in diameter sticks shove in just above the trap, and then place a larger 4- to 6-inch diameter stick on the very top. This will cause the beaver to dive under the sticks right into the trap.

Beaver are a wonderful animal, and I trap the Canadian way of two beaver per den. This way, every year you can go back and take two beaver. This is of course a general rule because I have trapped two beaver and that was it. But with good line management you can keep the beaver there year after year. I call it money in the bank.



If you are trapping a wilderness area where dogs aren't a problem, you can build large boxes out of sticks and branches 18 to 36 inches long all narrowed down to just the size of a #330 at the front and bait in the back. One thing with conibears you always must remember: If you are trapping on dry land you will have to deal with freezing conditions. The trap can freeze to the ground and it will not fire. To prevent this, place small sticks under the trap jaws just enough to get the trap off the ground. Some wilderness trappers have this style of sets all over and they catch, bobcat, fisher, raccoons, some fox and coyotes. Always remember the wind when making this type of set. The trap has to be in the right direction for the wind. If the

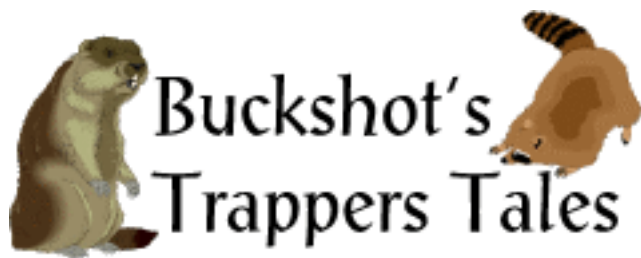
animal is coming into the sides or back of the box, then you have the door facing the wrong way for the wind. . The wind should always come from behind the box, so that the smell of the bait is coming out the front. The wind is a gamble all you can do is play the percentage of time. For example, the wind in November in my area typically comes from the, so that is how I set up.

Don't Catch Dogs

If you have any doubt in your mind never, ever set a #220 or #330 on the ground if you think you may catch a dog. I look back over all my years trapping and the number one problem is people and their dogs. I'm legally trapping and the owner is irresponsible and allows his or her dog to roam free and the dogs get caught in the traps. Whose fault is it? I have caught dogs 8 miles away from the nearest house. This is a sore subject with me. Because people tend to stretch the true story, like one guy I met that was yelling at me when he found out I was a trapper. Here is his story. "You damn trappers, my dog was caught in a trap for 9 days before I found him. I fixed that trapper I busted his trap all up." Here in Michigan, it is illegal to allow your dog to roam free. Nobody checks their traps once every nine days, the law states every 24 hours. But because of all the negative press on trappers, people just love to join in stating trapping is cruel, mean and heartless. Later I heard from someone else that the loud mouth I ran into was walking his dog when it got caught. The dog was released UN-harmed from the leg-hold but of course the story got bigger with each telling until the guy actually believes that is what happened to his poor dog.

That's all for now, of course, please feel free to [e-mail with any questions](#), I'm enjoying answering them and I hope I cover all your questions satisfactory. God bless.

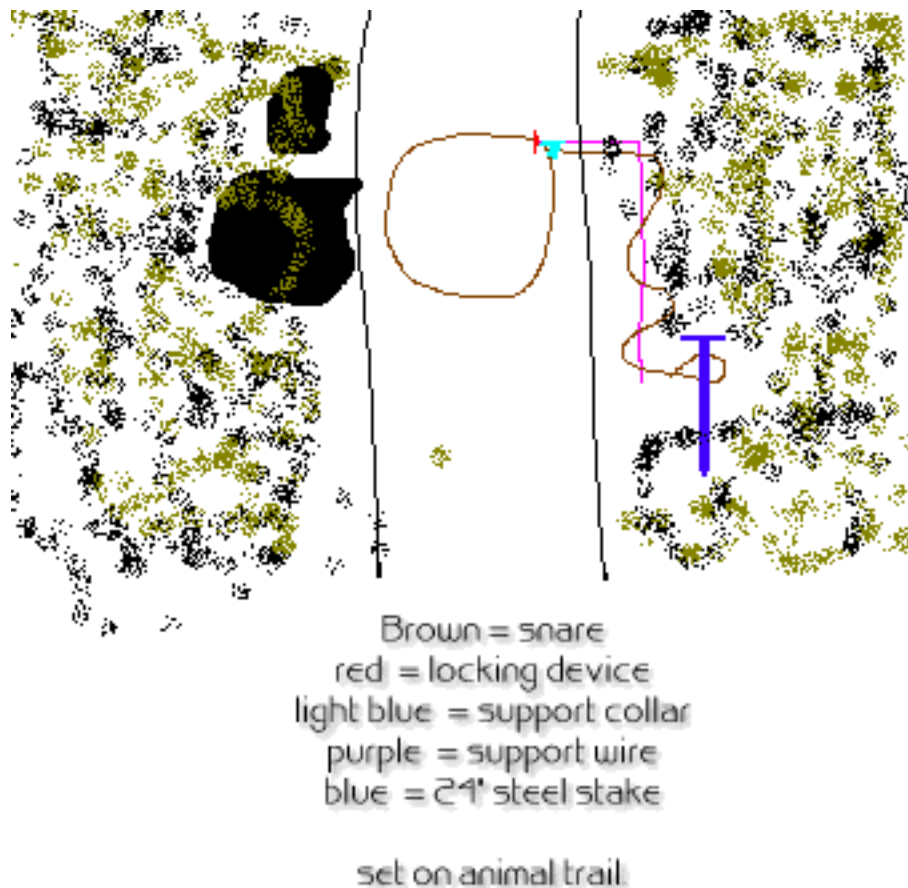
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Snaring

Snaring has been around for centuries. The older styles used light wire and required a straining device. Something to put pressure on the snare to keep it tight. This is most familiar in the movies where you see the rabbit run into the snare and then the bent over tree springs up pulling the animal off the ground. The reason for the spring action is to make sure the rabbit can't wiggle out of the snare. The old trappers used light wire for small animals 16- or 18-gauge wire but soon learned that this was not very effective on medium size animals and up. Once caught, the larger animal simply fought the wire until he broke free. So then the trapper started weaving the wire together like rope to increase the strength. This works, but it is a large loop that some animals will shy away from.

The modern snare is made out of different thickness of aircraft cable with a self-locking device. This is designed to only go one way and tighten on the animal neck. The harder the animal fights the snare the tighter it becomes. This eliminates the need for a spring pole and frees the trapper up to place snares where the animals are and not have to worry about finding a spring pole. Because of this, the trapper can set more snares in a day. In fact once you get used to snaring you can easily set 100 or more a day. The biggest problem with snares is remembering where you placed them. The snares blend in so well that you can walk right by them. The other problem is people.



Here in Michigan, we are very restricted with snares, and only underwater snares can be used. The reason the elitist thinks that every trapper is a poacher and that soon as we get snares we will go crazy snaring deer. In Michigan, deer hunters rule, and if they cried about it, then snares would stay outlawed. Snares have been outlawed here for 50 years or more. Modern snares have what is called deer stops and this allows a deer to break free of the snare unharmed, so the whole argument is a joke. This is a very sore subject with me. The Michigan DNR is basing the whole trapping regulations on keeping the deer hunter happy. This is totally ridiculous. If the so-called experts would get off their butts and do some research they would find that trapping is the most important tool used today to control predators.

With trapping, the predator numbers stay at the carrying capacity of the land and more game animals flourish, including deer. One study done in Pennsylvania found that 67% of the coyote's diet is deer. Coyotes are easier to snare than trap in deep winter snow. I know I'm stretching a bit here but come on, less coyotes equals more deer. Another study done out west found that a single coyote kills and eats 100 rabbits a year. You do the math. The Delta duck study hired a trapper to protect the nesting ducks in North Dakota. Where the trapper was, the nesting ducks had 90 to 100 % of all their eggs hatched and the new ducks flew south. Where the trapper wasn't trapping the predators, the ducks that nested had a 0-30% egg hatch that flew south. Do you see the importance of trapping in the big picture? I'll get off the soapbox now and back to snaring.

Snares come in different sizes and lengths and I will give a few basic ones to get you

started. The first is the small game snare made out of 1/16 aircraft cable. This is for small game like rabbits, squirrels, and ground hogs. The snare comes in 4-foot lengths. You can set them in trails, dens, and for squirrels on branches going between two trees. They are about \$99 for 10 dozen. Once again before you fill my e-mail up, snares are only good for a few catches before the animals have kinked up the wire so bad you can't re-use them. That is why I recommend the conibears because 20 years from now they will still be catching fur.

The next snare is versatile and can be used for several different animals. Sure lock, support collar, #9 swivel that takes a standard 1/2-inch rebar stake, 3/32" cable and if needed deer stops can be add at no extra price. This snare is used for fox, coon, coyote, and beaver, they come in a standard 5-foot length. Their price is \$109 for 10 dozen and \$14 a dozen. This is a good all around snare to use and have on hand.

Pigtail supports are made to support your snare at the desire height off the ground. Or you can use number 11-gauge wire to support the snare. I have used 14-gauge wire for the support, but it takes a little monkeying around to get it at the correct height. When using wire for the support you form a "W" in the wire and stick it in the ground. Then you wrap the snare through the "W" with the collar just touching the "W" and set it to the desired height. Once you get used to it you will love how quick they are to use. Make sure you use a good 24-inch rebar stake to hold the animal after being caught.

Snares are set for different heights off the ground for different animals. A coon loop is 6-inch wide, 8 inches off the ground at the top and around 2 to 3 inches off the ground at the bottom. This is rough of course because different parts of the country have different size coons. If you come up and the loop closed with no animal your loop is too big.

Coyote snares are made with an 8-inch loop, 8 inches from the ground and 16 inches at the top. You will have to experiment a little this is just general of course. If you are just after fox then you would lower the snare so it is 4 inches off the ground and 12 inches at the top with a 8-inch loop.

If you are in real windy areas, some trappers use a brown thread and a stick opposite the support side and tie off the snare to keep the snare positioned correctly on the path. The snared animal will quickly break the thread and the snare will tighten up. As in all trapping, you have to get out and do this before you have to depend on it. Little lessons learned are the key to successful trapping.

If you are going to big time nail coyotes, there is a new staking device called earth anchors. They are made out of 1/2 pipe about 4 inches long with 18 inches of cable attached. You have to buy the driving tool to use them, but are they slick. You drive the anchor down 16 or 17 inches, remove the driver and pull up on the anchor at an angle. This forces the anchor from straight down to an angle, setting the anchor in the ground. Let me tell you, when this baby is set, nothing is pulling them out. You wire the two cable ends together with two loops of 14-gauge wire or one of 11-gauge wire. You can use this stake with leghold traps also.

The advantage of this stake system is they are light in weight, easy to use, and no coyote can pull them out. The disadvantage of this system is that sometimes the driver gets packed with dirt, holding it to the anchor. If this happens use your hammer to whack the handle back and forth to loosen the dirt and work the driver out. The anchor has to be dug out or left for next year after you are done trapping. Don't ever leave these in farmers field as they will tear up their plowing machines and you just cost the farmer a lot of money.

Snares take a little practice using them to get the hang of it, but are one more useful tool to have on hand.

Beaver are probably the easiest animal to start snaring on. The beavers have trails everywhere that anyone can understand. Place your snares up on land. Find a good trail that is narrowed down away from water. Once snared the beaver become docile in the snare and just sit and wait for you still alive. Just shoot them in the head with a 22 short. Make an 8-inch loop 10 inches off the ground at the top and the bottom 2 inches off the ground. You can make the loop larger to keep the small beaver from being caught. Snares are truly selective when you are chasing beaver. Just snare the larger beaver off and leave the smaller ones for next year. Food and fur on the long term plan.

To prepare snares, boil them in water and place outside to weather. The snares don't really rust, but will become dull after 45 to 60 days. You don't want to use shiny snares for animals.

Remember snares are hard to find so make darn sure you are keeping track of them. Some trappers use surveyor tape to mark the snare locations, some use sticks against nearby trees. Whatever you do, make sure you know where and how many you set. This is especially important in a survival situation where you can't buy more snares.

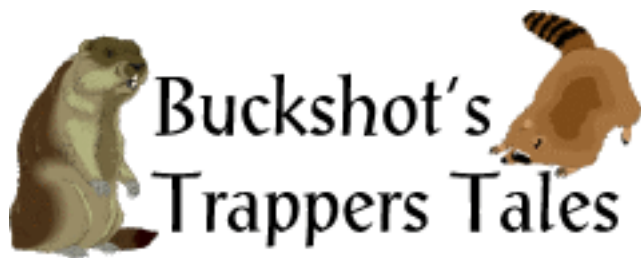
Dogs once again will come up. Generally, dogs will not be harmed when caught in snares. Dogs once caught in a snare, stop fighting the snare and think their master just stake them out there instead of at home. Most dogs will sit and patiently await your arrival to release them. This is in general because there is always one dog that will fight the snare and die. Remember what I said in the dog article about the rabid dog I caught. All nice and friendly until the animal thought I was in his strike range and then changed in an instant, trying to attack me.

When checking any type of snare or trap, be careful! I have grabbed live muskrats in foothold traps that I was sure had drowned and were dead, only to have that dead animal come alive and attack my hands. This is a very enlightening experience on fight or flight. The muskrat knew he was going to bite me 200 times a minute, and I didn't know how a drowned muskrat could move so fast. Needless to say, I choose to fight and became very wet in the process. I somehow managed not to get bit and humanly dispatch the muskrat. How long can a muskrat hold its breath? I don't know, but it seemed like we were under water for at least 10 minutes.

That is all for now. Please feel free to [e-mail me with any questions](#). For the woman

who e-mailed me about her cat, snares are close to cat-proof as you can get, but like I said before, the only safe way to trap near cats is with live cage traps. If anyone else is interested in the homemade live traps, I have plans for sale. If no orders come in for June on the plans, I'm going to drop them and concentrate on other projects.

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Why Leghold Traps?

The leg-hold trap has been around for centuries. In the past 40 years, great improvements have been made in the name of animal comfort. Coil spring traps that close tight were all tested. The results will surprise most hunters. The animals were attached with sensors and their breathing and heart rate was monitored. The facts were; the animals only fought the trap for about 15 minutes. Then the animal started to calm down. At about 1 hour after being in the trap, the heartbeat and breathing returned to near normal levels. So, you see, it is a myth that the animal is sitting there in pain being tortured the whole time. You can't argue with scientific facts.

At just before daylight, the animal would again fight the trap because this is the normal time for the animal to go to its bedding area and sleep for the day. After that the animal normally curls up and goes to sleep. So, an animal in a trap that is checked everyday is not in any great pain. In fact, the study proved that some forms of hunting with dogs was MORE stressful for the animals than the trap. So, all you hunters out there have told me over the years that you could never trap and cause that much pain to an animal, are living in a dream world.

Man, as a meat or fur harvester, needs to respect the animal enough to do what you can to prevent injuries. So you can modify your traps to be even more humane, by doing the following. Weld number 9 wire to the top jaws of your traps. This increases the jaw spread and does not pinch the animal foot as bad. Off set the jaw, by welding a 1/4 lug on the inside top of the jaws. This will give you an offset jaw of 1/4-inch allowing blood to flow to the paw. Add 2 swivels to the trap and an inline shock absorber spring. This is one of the best most humane traps in the world.

Some animals will still become injured, but the percentage is down to 1 in 100 animals. Check your traps everyday. If you don't have the time to tend your traps properly, then you shouldn't be trapping. Some hobby trappers only trap on weekends. They set the traps on Friday, check Saturday and pull their traps on Sunday. Whatever you do, just make sure you are out checking traps everyday.

I have talked to many people over the years and have met the arm chair experts who caught a few animals. They talk to one or two trappers and think they have the big picture. I talked to one guy who was the typical know-it-all. He was from down south and met a professional water trapper years ago. I told him back in the fur days there was professional fox and coyote trappers. He said in a loud voice that was, BS, no one could trap enough fox to make a living at it. He didn't know I was trapping for all

these years. I have met the pros and was trained by one that is still making his living today trapping predators. His name is Craig O'Gorman out of Montana.

You wouldn't ask a movie star to fix your car, so don't listen to hunters about trapping. It is totally different. Please don't get me wrong, I'm not bashing hunters. I have hunted for more years than I have trapped. I just want to bring the facts out. Talk is cheap, results show the truth. Like O'Gorman told me, you can't skin excuses. Trapping is about having a good knowledge base and working hard. I thought I would get this out in the open, before we discuss the sets for legholds.

The best all around set for most predators is the dirt hole set. I have trapped coons, possum, skunks, red fox, gray fox, coyotes, bobcats, and mink using the dirt hole set. It is one of the best all time fur producers. To make the set you need a 1-1/2 coilspring or larger trap. Up to a #3 coilspring for coyotes. A stake swivel and a stake of 1/2 inch rebar with a washer welded on top. The washer has to be welded on top so the stake swivel can spin all the way around the trap. The rebar stake should be 18 to 36 inches long. I mostly use a 24-inch stake.

You need a trowel for digging the hole, a sifter for the dirt, to keep rocks out of the trap area, a hammer, bait and lure, and a pan cover. I use a steel metal screen. This can all be seen on my video. The video helps to show all the little things and how to make the set, so there is no doubt in your mind.

You dig the hole at a 45-degree angle, 10 to 12 inches deep. Put the dirt from the hole into the sifter. Dig a trap bed in front of the hole, stake the trap, place your pan cover on and bed the trap. Sift dirt over until all is level. The pan's center should be 8 inches from the hole, dead center. So as you look at the hole straight back, at 8 inches is the pan center. Add bait and lure inside the hole and cover with grass.

Now after a catch, this is very important, shoot the animal in the head with a .22 short, immediately remove the animal and move 30 feet away. So it bleeds over there away from the trap area. Clean the blood up with your trowel and toss away. Scrub the trap down with a tuft of grass to remove any blood or hair. Re-make the set. But, this time use all the torn up grass, weeds, and form a "V" with the beginning of the "V" at the hole, widening out to the back. This will help guide the next animal in over the trap. The area is all scented up and any fox in the area will come over to see why all the smell is there. Animals are lazy, is why this set works. Why go hunt and kill an animal to eat, when there is all ready some food to be had?

For fox, location of the set is important. Set where a dirt road enters a field, where two different crops change or where a drainage ditch runs along a field. Remember the wind. The back of the hole should be facing the wind. So the wind blows the scent over the trap. Most animals approach a trap set from the downwind side. That is why it is vital for you to pay attention to the wind.

Legholds can also be used on trail sets. Where you see trails entering the field from the woods is a good place. Follow the trail for a short distance. You are looking for a narrowed down spot. A small tree, a branch they are stepping over, a bush they duck

under. Something that narrows the path down. Dig a trap bed and set the trap, then stake it. Sift dirt over and make the area look like it did before you placed the trap in the ground. Place a stepping stick on both sides of the trap. A one-inch diameter stick will work the best. The animal will step over the stick into the trap. This is a good set for smart coons.

Trapping for a smart beaver, the Leghold is good. You need a #3 or larger trap. Use a drowner, two stakes and wire. Stake out in deep water. Now, a beaver swims with his front paws tucked up against his body. When his chest hits the bank then he sticks out his foot to walk. So, to catch him you need a poke and sticks. Find a spot where the beaver are coming out of the water. On the bank dig a trap bed. Stake one stake in deep water and run wire up to the top stake. Place the drowner on the wire. Make sure it only goes down and not up. Set the trap and wiggle it in the mud so that it is solid. Place a small poke stick out from the trap, about 2 to 3 inches sticking out. Place the lure 18 inches back, off center from the trap pan, 8 inches. Beavers have a wide body. The beaver will smell the lure and swim over to see what is going on. They will hit the poke sticks and place their foot out into the trap to climb up. The trap will fire and the beaver will be caught by the front leg. The beaver will dive for deep water and the drowner will hold him on the bottom. In 6 to 12 minutes the beaver will drown.

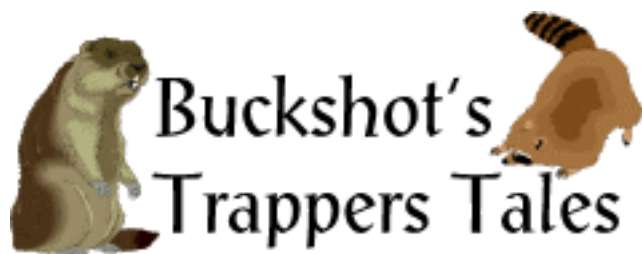
This set works real well where the beaver are trap shy of the #330 conibear. When you are water trapping any type of animal, set up the trap on a drowner. If you get some swivels, cut off the trap ring on your leg-holds and add the swivel. The swivel is made to take a 1/2-rebar stake. If you are water trapping you now have a built in drowner. This helps a lot, now you can keep your traps working for you all the time.

If you are having trouble with theft in the area, you can trap on the edge of a field and use two stakes. Run enough wire so the animal can get in cover. That way you can make a set out in the open and let the animal hide itself. You can also use drags. The only problem with drags is, if the farmers dog gets caught he will wander home on the road. If someone see him they will take the trap off and 9 of 10 times will keep the trap.

I support hunters and I believe hunters should always support trappers. It is a proving fact that trappers protect game animals. So, if you want more game to hunt, then you need trappers to keep the predators in check.

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Wild Dogs Pose Post-TEOTWAWKI Danger

I was in a chat room tonight and we were discussing dogs. I said "If TEOTWAWKI (the end of the world as we know it) happens, then 100 millions dog will be a major problem." Then we got to talking about the Great Depression and how the land was almost hunted dry.

First, before we accept that as fact, here was the argument. One person stated that when the great depression happened there was half the population, then there is now. So, if a great world collapse was to happen today, his premise was there wouldn't be anything left in the forest. I have to disagree. My biggest point was during the G.D., 40 percent of the population came from farms, most knew how to hunt and a fair percentage knew how to trap. Then it makes senses that the game would disappear. But even then, there were a percentage of trappers all over this country that fed their families and saved their farms with the fur money. See the value of trapping?

My premise is we have 90 percent of the U.S. population in the cities. Most are soft and would rather steal what you have then work at hunting or trapping. I believe most will never get out of the cities and will die in a hail of gunfire, rioting and fires. When all this is going on, they will let their pets go free, thinking at least they can survive on their own. This is why at 4:00 am I'm writing this article. I could not sleep. I know city people will do this and we will have 100 million dogs and 80 million cats released to go wild.

Now what I have to say next is not for the weak hearted, if for any reason you have a weak stomach or can't handle a cold hard reality check, then [go back to my home page](#) and choose another article.

OK, for those that are still with me, these animals will be a major problem and must be dealt with. Period. This isn't Disney, where you can talk to the poor dog and cat and the world is all fuzzy and warm. This is reality. If you own animals never, ever, EVER, release them to go wild. If you don't have the stomach for putting them down, have someone else do it. If you have to put dog food away at your camp, cache, whatever, great. I think a dog is invaluable then. A cat in the wild in this crisis is your greatest enemy. One study in Wisconsin found that the best predator against small game was the house cat. The common house cat killed more small game than all other predators in the study.



Now the reason I'm up this late and can't sleep is the dogs. I understand pack mentality and a pack of dogs scares me more than a pack of wolves. I have been studying the woods and wildlife my whole life. This is how the dogs will form packs, an alpha male will take control of the pack with a beta male as second in command, the packs will range from 6 to 100 dogs depending on the food supply.

This scenario, I read years ago of a pack like this had 45 dogs and this was how they attacked people. The alpha picked a friendly looking female like a collie. This is the decoy dog. As you are walking in the woods, the collie approaches and draws your attention, as the packs circle you for the kill. When the pack sneaks up to striking distance, they will attack and so will the decoy. I'm talking lightning fast 45 dogs coming at you. How many rounds does your clip have?

You see when the riots and the death in the city is happening the dogs will learn to feed on the bodies then in turn will acquire the taste for humans. Now you have a pack of wild dogs who consider you and your loved ones as food. They have no fear of man and will kill you to insure their own survival. Now, I'm not trying to scare you and sell fear. I am telling you that this will happen if the chaos of TEOTWAWKI occurs. You'll have to learn to kill dogs and cats on sight. Period. This is not an option.

If you want to insure your own survival, then listen to me. This is no game. If you think I'm just stating this to sell you trapping equipment then click off this article and go take a poll of the people you know, ask the following question, "What would you do with your dog and cat if you lost your job and could not afford to feed them?" I have lived in the country most of my life and I have had to deal with these animals that people let go on their own.

I have talked to the people who have told me that they still believe their Ralphy boy is probably still out there hunting with the best of the coyotes. Dreamy like and with pride in there voice! Or I know my cat is still alive because he was the best hunter in the neighborhood, he killed more birds than any other cat!



I'm not selling anything but reality! I'll tell you another dog story that happened to me. I was trapping on this farm years ago and I caught a black mangy, scaly looking black lab mixed mongrel. I have caught lots of dogs over the years and I can let most go without a problem, unharmed. Anyway, I approached this dog and started talking to him and slowly moving closer. The dog stood up, wagged his tail and appeared happy to see me. When this happens, 99% percent of the time I can release the dog and place him in my truck to take to the farmhouse and explain what happened. Most dogs are fine and have a sore foot for a couple of days, then they're back to normal. Not this dog he lured me in with his friendly attitude until he thought I was in striking distance, then turned into attack mode. Lucky, I was prepared for the reaction and quickly jumped back. I never will forget that lighting fast change and the snarling teeth just missing my hand. The dog misjudged his strike range, if I had been a little closer this would be a different story.

So I walk back to truck truck, found the farmer and told him I caught his dog. The farmer says I don't own a dog and what color is it, because some black mongrel attacked his wife yesterday. To make long story short, the dog was turned over to the humane department and tested positive for rabies. Now this was back in the early eighties when a lot of people were getting laid-off. People were letting their dogs go in the farmers' fields and without proper care, and the dogs picked up all kinds of diseases. Someone has to deal with these dogs. There is no such thing as a dog or cat that is better off let go to fend for themselves. I have seen them all and most of the time you would never recognize them after 6 months on there own.

If a TEOTWAWKI does happen then someone in your group preferably everyone should trap, hunt and kill every dog and cat that has gone wild in your area. Period! I'm writing this early in the morning because I couldn't sleep at the thought of that many wild dogs and cats free in America.

The best defense to protect your garden and livestock or game animals would be snares. I would have 10 dozens coyote grade snares and enough heavy wire to set all of them at once.

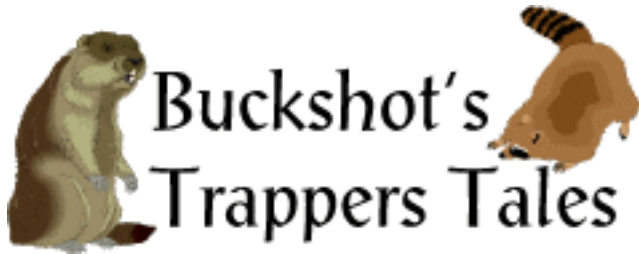
Here is another theory: Starving people will kill the dogs for food. I say sure some will become food, but the average household that has guns has less then 50 rounds, although most survivalists will have much more. So, I think after the first week most people will be out of ammo. Then the packs will rule.

Let me know what you think, am I way off base? I just keep thinking of all the people in the cities and their "My dogs are my children" attitude. Dog and cat food is a huge business. I mean, they have pet psychiatrist for Christ sakes. Think about all the movies and shows like 911 where people risk their lives to save animals. I'm not saying that this is wrong, all I'm pointing out is people's attitude toward pets, and I

guarantee they will let them go to fend for themselves when the food runs out. Make sure you are ready to face this threat.

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More on Dogs and Predators

I was just thinking that I didn't fully explain the dog issue. Especially the Alpha male, the Beta male and how the pecking order works. The meanest, toughest, and most willing to draw blood will be the Alpha. He more or less runs the pack through fear and intimidation. The Beta male is the second strongest. He may challenge the Alpha male, but as soon as he starts to lose he will back off. The Beta is just as dangerous as the Alpha and his whole purpose in life is waiting for the day he can run the pack. So the Alpha has a Judas in his mist, if in a fight with a new dog that tries to take the pack over, the Beta will watch this fight intently. Even if the Alpha drives off or wins the fight if he is serious hurt the Beta may try to finish him off for control of the pack. Why is this important? This is one piece of vital information I forgot to tell you. If wild dogs attack you, the two most important dogs to kill are the Alpha and the Beta.

You see, the Beta is waiting for his turn to run the pack. So if you shoot the Alpha, the Beta might just call off the attack just so he can run the pack. That doesn't mean you are out of trouble. All that means is there is a new leader and next time they will try something different. If TEOTWAWKI does happen, then the dog packs will find you, I guarantee it. This is how I will try to explain this. The best place to trap coyotes is a running full time farm. The largest farm in the area is always the best place to trap. Now stop and think about why? Okay, let me rephrase the question. The best place to trap coyotes in any county is the largest livestock farm. Why? If you all thought about it you would come up with the smell of food.

You see all dogs are from the wild, in their past they are all cousins to fox, coyotes, and wolves. They mostly hunt with their nose. So the farm with the most livestock that has calves, cows, chickens, sheep, whatever the farmer is raising. Some die off during the year, the farmer takes the carcasses to the back 40 and lets the predators clean up. The predators were out there the whole time coming by checking out the place looking for an easy meal. Do you see my point?

That is why the dogs will find you. Maybe not at first, but they will find you. They will smell your camp, cooking, cleaning game, livestock, etc. They will come. I have studied predators. I have tracked them for miles in the snow just to learn how they

cross the country, how they hunt, how they think, how they react to man, etc. This has taught me a great deal. In the winter, we have a great deal of snow and this is hard for the predators. When a deer dies off, predators from miles away come to feast on him. After the body gets torn up, the predator birds will be there and every predator will get its share. I have come up on these sites. Which way do the predators first approach the kill, do you think.? The down wind side. There is an advanced predator trapping lesson here, if you are paying attention.

This also shows on any trapping where you are using lures, the importance of the wind. If you are trapping a river and the wind is blowing across into your face, then you are setting on the wrong side. Any animal that you hope to lure to your set must first smell it. This sounds so obvious, but it takes a mental note in your head to keep this in mind. Now, do you start to see how the packs will find you?

This is how I plan on dealing with this problem, 100 snares will guard my place. 100 snares sounds like a great deal of work, but it really isn't, this could be done in one day. Even a novice can do it in three days, tops. Everyone with me that carries a weapon will kill every dog on sight. This problem has me upset, it is something I should have thought of years ago. I understand nature and why a pack of hungry wolves doesn't scare me like a pack of wild dogs, is quite simply that the wolves are taught to fear man.

I will try to explain this in detail, but the best way is through actual events. Here in Michigan back in the 50's, they outlawed bear hunting, and a few years after the bears where not hunted, this took place:

A family is living in the woods. Dad goes off to work on a nice spring day, so mom has her baby on the front porch while she is inside cleaning. The baby was around 18 months old and was just enjoying the sun, when a black bear come up and grabbed the child. The baby started screaming. The mother's instinct took over and she did one of the bravest things I have ever heard off! Armed with a broom, the mother started beating on the bear to make it drop the child. The bear was annoyed and simply ran off into the woods with the child. Mom was immediately on the phone, and before long, the whole town was out there to search for the child.

Luckily there was a pack of trained bear hounds in the area and soon the trail was found. It wasn't long before they found what was left of the child and the bear was ran down and shot. This whole incident happened because the Department of Natural Resources didn't understand nature. The rule is quite simple; you are either a predator or prey. Which do you want to be?

You need more examples? OK.

Out in the western states the animal rights groups would pour all their resources into one state at a time, until several states outlawed mountain lion hunting. Now, remember the rule, predator or prey! I can't remember the exact numbers, but every state that outlawed mountain lion hunting has had the highest mountain lion attack's ever recorded. The mountain lion has no reason to fear man, so we become prey.

Especially small children! You see, the animal rights people would rather see your child attacked and mauled than allow hunting. This cheapens human life.

One more example: Arizona recently outlawed trapping. When this happened, I wrote the rule (predator or prey) and stated that the coyotes would start attacking children within five years. I was wrong, it only took two years. In Phoenix last summer two children out playing were attacked and mauled by coyotes, luckily they survived the attack. The animal rights people have an agenda that is in goose step with the NWO. They are trying to ban all of us from hunting, trapping, fishing and, worst of all, even walking in the woods.

I got a little off track, but my whole point was to show how nature works. Dogs and man are part of nature, and the rule always applies. God forbid, if TEOTWAWKI does happen, then the rule will apply even more because dogs have no fear of man to begin with and man does not consider dogs as a threat. You will either establish that you are the top predator of your area, or you will be prey.

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Three True Tales of Wild Dogs

The following are 3 different true stories of dog attacks. The first is with an armed man who stopped the attack with a .45 pistol and a walking stick.

Gee Honey, lets allow them to roam!!! .

Six Dogs and a .45

"Take one chow, a mixed shepherd, some kind of hound cross, the meanest beagle you have ever seen and two labs. Mix in snarling and circling and it is a major pucker!

"It's 1985 in the mountains above the San Fernando valley in California. I'm out for a little hike, some foraging and just being out. I have hiked these trails since the 60s . I am very familiar with the area. Armed with 1911 .45 , and a knife and a hiking staff that I made years ago.

"Much faster than I can type, these dogs were all around me . The beagle rushed in first, biting at my feet. I kicked at him and yelled, jabbing at him with the staff. I dropped the staff, drew my weapon and fired one round into the dirt. The six dogs ran a short distance away and started circling again. I retrieved my walking staff and tried to watch my back. I was really afraid of this pack.

"The chow, one of the labs and the beagle ran right at me. I would say that they were 7 to 10 feet apart. I fired 2 or 3 rounds at the lab he went down but not out. The beagle was on me and I hit him with the staff. He bit the hell out of it. The chow cut to the left in the brush, the whole time I was yelling and swearing. Now I was more angry than afraid!

"The lab got up and walked away. The other dogs kind of milled around and faded away . The damn beagle came at me again, and I beat him with the staff . The teeth marks are still there! I found the lab dead a week later, about a mile from where the attack took place, but on the trail. He had not been dead very long.

"Let me say that I have hunted with dogs, have always had dogs and love them, but this was beyond anything I had ever had to deal with! All I can say is it happens so fast and is so unexpected , I was shaking , sweating and afraid to run! What would be a fast hike back to my house took me

an hour longer."

This is an perfect example of what I'm trying to say about dogs. All the dogs had collars and the owners had decided to allow the dogs to roam free. They form a pack. Even with warning shot the attack still happens. The lab took a .45 slug and still walked away! How many shots missed during the high stress? These were well fed dogs -- what would have happened if they were half starved?

I e-mail back with a couple of questions here is his response.

"The beagle, strange as it seems, was in charge, I think, and maybe the chow because when the chow veered away the others milled around. I think I fired 5 or 6 rounds -- I don't remember for sure. I had one in the chamber and was cocked locked. Maybe that's why I beat the beagle with the staff. The first round I fired into the dirt in front of the beagle, I think it just pissed him off. The lab was hit high in the left forward shoulder, looked to be mostly through the outer skin. The other round was in the middle of the chest, couldn't find an exit. I think these dogs were used to gun fire.

"As to shots going where ever, I know where at least two rounds went. I have had extensive training, I am a very good shot with a handgun. I am an ex-marine, have hunted most of my life. Like I said this was so fast -- the whole thing lasted about 40 seconds but I will never forget it. My friend thought he had seen the chow in the canyon where I live before.

"Does that make sense about beating the beagle with the staff ? I think I wasn't sure how many rounds I had left and wanted the option of shooting at the larger dogs if they came back at me! But the beagle was a handful!! So that's about it. I read the other dog stories, and a 22 ain't gonna cut it. Heck, jackrabbits won't go down sometimes. Walk softly.

My comments. I believe he made the correct move on the beagle. All dogs wild or domestic attack with the goal of getting you down off your feet. The larger dogs were the real threat. I'm in no way criticizing his decision. This was a high stress fight, and I will not sit here in my safe house judging others. This man is very well trained. I believe his training and firearm save his life. Can you or I shoot that accurate in the high stress? Let's hope so.

Don't worry the dogs won't bother me!

Not all dog attacks are what you imagine. Visions of slobbering wolf-like creatures might be what most envision, but reality can be a little stranger.....and more common. Here's a story Zog, a frequent contributor to [Captain Dave's Survival Talk bulletin board](#), submitted.

"Once, I was dating a lady, a real "Earth-Mother" type -- beautiful, quiet and wild -- who lived in a remote cabin in the Berkshires in Western Massachusetts. We would correspond by mail, and I would come and visit occasionally, on my travels. She had written me about some

troubles she was having with some dogs, and, I admit, at first I didn't take it as serious as I should have.

"It turned out, that the dogs in question had turned into quite a problem, for all the folks in the area.

"The next time I came to visit, she outlined the situation. It seems that the three dogs in question were owned by the lady who owned the land where her cabin was. These dogs were Pure bred Weimerainers, but they had been abandoned-turned loose by a drunk who bought them to impress her rich friends, and forgotten about.

"They had begun terrorizing the countryside around there, and my friend literally had to stay in her cabin if the dogs were around. She kept her car parked right next to her door, so she could dash to it and not get attacked.

"Well, I finally came down, and walked into her area, and up to her cabin. Didn't see the dogs then, but we stayed up late while she filled me in on all the "skinny". The rich lady had the local sheriff (the only law) pretty much paid off, the exact reason I'll won't go into, but the effect was that her dogs, even though wild, were left alone.

"The next day, I wanted to go explore. I had seen on the topo map a large area labeled a marsh by the symbols, and decided to go see it. I took my recurve bow, and some snorkeling equipment and cob-job underwater camera to get some pix.

"The way into the marsh was incredibly dense, and I wound up swimming in, in a large creek. The "marsh" turned out to be about a 20 acre beaver pond, and I had a good time swimming with the virtually tame beavers. Most likely, because of the impenetrability of the area, I guessed that no human had been back there for at least a generation. There was no way in other than the route I took, or a helicopter with pontoons--it was that rough.

"The day was getting late, and I started back out. I was about 1/2 way back, when I noticed a flash of dark gray, very close. I soon saw that it was a dog, and then I saw the others. They were circling around me, trying to get in close. Not trying to be friendly or anything -- it was obvious that this was business for them.

"Food. Me. All this went through my brain in a second, and I was SCARED. I could only face one at a time, and now they were growling -- I knew one or the other was going to make it's play. To this day, I don't know why, but I didn't want to kill them. I can't explain that feeling. But I knew I had to do SOMETHING. I unscrewed a broadhead off a shaft of one of my arrows, drew and took aim on what I thought was the most aggressive dog. By this time, they were only about 20 feet away and getting closer -- no fear on their part. Shot one right in the chest. The arrow didn't penetrate much, but must have done damage, because that dog rolled over and got up pretty hurt and shaking. The other dogs stayed a small distance away, but didn't leave --just kept snarling, no barking at all.



"I finished walking out, trying to always keep facing the dogs. They followed me all the way back out. Right at dusk I made it out to the dirt road. The dogs took off then, I don't know why, maybe they didn't like the road, or something.

"To say I was shook up was an understatement. My friend decided to move after that night. We couldn't get any help from the old sheriff. He didn't like 'our kind' anyway.

"I guess I'm lucky I took that bow, even though I wasn't hunting. Also, that the pack was that small. I don't go into the woods anymore without at least a heavy pistol now. And my friend changed her opinion on firearms and self protection, too. You have to be able to rely on yourself. Not to luck, and certainly not on the police, in most circumstances. In a lot of circumstances, there's no second chance. Today, I would shoot the dogs without hesitation. Even a minor bite could be fatal in a survival situation. Live and Learn."

Good thing Zog had a bow with him. This was obvious in the summer months. If it would have been in late fall or winter things could have been different. Remember this is with dogs that are just starting to go wild. Image a half starved pack of 20 to 30 dogs coming at you.

In both of these stories, the lead dog was target by the person. This is important! Always shot the most aggressive dog first. Remember the goal of the dogs is to get you down on the ground. Once on the ground, then the attack turns into a feeding frenzy until you're dead. Shoot the lead dog and stand your ground. If you run, you're dead unless there is a tree you can climb.

Don't worry, Mom I have my pellet gun.

The next story happened this summer in Texas. I have rewritten it to protect the young teenager's identity and with permission from his parents, here is his story.

"I now realize what you are talking about on the dogs. The other day I was walking to the bayou by my house and there were these two dogs. A dark one and a light one. I have seen them in the area before and even at the bayou. Every other time the black dog would spot me, stand up and howl and both of them would walk off. Well this time was different. The light one spotted me, looked down at the ground, growled and came for me.

"They would always be on the other side of the bayou. He ran straight across. I dropped all of my stuff and started running in the opposite direction. I ran about 50 feet away, and spun around with my knife gleaming out in front. The dog stopped at the lip of the bayou. He eventually went back across and while him and his friend were walking off, I shot a pellet across his backside and he ran off. I'll teach them to fear me. But man that was a rush."

A minor attack? Maybe or the beginning of the change from domestic back to wild dogs. When the young teenager stopped and turned to fight, the attack stopped. He was lucky, if there had been more than two dogs, I don't think the attack would have stopped so easily. That was quick thinking on his part and it took courage to stand his ground. But remember the first story, the numbers of the dogs caused the attack to go on even after warning shots.

Of all my articles posted here, I have received far and away the most comments from my dog articles. So here is more information to pass to help you and your love ones survive if TEOTWAWKI happens. The biggest reason I'm writing part three is I was on the chat again and the discussion was about the .22 caliber stinger round. These guys think a little .22 round could kill anything up to and including deer. The overall thinking was the .22 stinger could easily handle any dog. You see, I live my life based on facts and good hands-on practical experience. What I'm about to write is not something I'm proud of but it is something that happen to me concerning a dog.

Buckshot's Story

Years ago a friend of mine owned a Doberman pincher. I at first thought the dog was a lot of fun and when I was over would wrestle with the dog. When the dog reach around 18 months something happen to it. His behavior change and would sometime just flip out and attack people. One day I was over the friend house and was wrestling with the dog. The owner say I'm going to the store be right back. So I kept playing with the dog like I had for the pass 15 months, when the dog snaps. You could see it in his eyes -- something wasn't right and the dog pinned me in the corner, all teeth in my face. All I could do was wait for the owner to return.

When the owner returned the dog returned to normal. We both thought

maybe it was sort of protection behavior. I just stop wresting with the dog after that. Then the dog did it again, but this time the person just walked into the room. The dog attacked and cornered this guy and the owner was right there.

Then the dog attacked a 14 year old boy and the owner took it in to the vet. The vet said the skull hadn't grown properly and the brain was pushing against it, this was causing the abnormal behavior and that the dog would get worst as time goes by. The vet recommend the dog be put down. The guy couldn't afford it. So, the owner asked me to do it.

One night we took the dog for a ride and with a 22 rifle and 3 bullets, I took the dog for a walk, it was in March and there was some ice on the ponds and a few snow patches here and there. I didn't have a flashlight but I remember it was bright from the full moon. The owner stay in the car and I walk the dog out into the woods. I stuck the barrel in the ear and shot him. Then one of the scarier things in my life happen. The dog didn't fall over dead as expected. No, he went charging off into the woods. I could see blood coming out of his mouth, so I knew it hit him solid. The dog at first howled in pain then it change into a menacing snarled. The dog turn back toward me and charged. He was 150 yards away and I knew I could never run back to the car in time. I couldn't see him but I could hear the attack sounds.

The only choice I had was to stand and fight. Because of no flashlight I sat down on the ground and pointed the gun with my last two bullets at the on coming charge. The reason I sat down was to be at the same height as the dog and to ensure I would get the last two bullets in him before I had to resort to using the rifle as a club. The howling snarl of an enraged Doberman pincher is something I never want to hear again. This all happen in seconds but it seem like 20 minutes going by waiting for the attack. All my senses were on acute alert and time slowed down to nothing, dumb ideas flooded my head Why did I every agree to this to begin with, why did I only have a .22, why did I only have 3 bullets, all these thought and more flash though my head.

The dog was down to 50 yard away and moved over a little to be directly in line with him. When do you start shooting? Will I be able to see him in the moon lit night? I pick a tiny opening 20 feet in front of me. That is the spot to start shooting. The spot was next to a small pond and as I sat there, scared out of my mind, listening to the enraged snarling coming closer. I say a quick prayed, steady the gun on my knee and waited for the first glance of the black dog. He was running across the pond now and his snarling sound like pure hate, the kind of snarl growl that says "I'm going to ripped you up into little tiny pieces." I could heard the sloshing of the ice, 30 yds, 20 yds, 10 yds, then a big splash. The dog howl once and disappear under the ice. I ran to the edge, looking for him,

I was going to finish this. But the dog never came back to the surface. Thank God.

I stood on the shore shaking like a leaf, asking God to forgive me. I wait for 5 minutes to make sure it was truly over. I went back to car and the friend said I look white as a ghost. I told him I would never do that again. Never will I shoot someone dog for them. Some may criticized what I had done but the pass is over and all I can say is let us all learn from it.

The lesson I learn was a .22 will not stop a dog. I received e-mail from different people and some were posted on Captain Dave's. Rifles should be used to stop wild or feral dogs. One e-mail I received from a rancher out west told of a problem with dogs nowadays. They use high capacity clips and centerfire rifles. The rancher end the letter by saying "I dread the day when there numbers are overwhelming." The rancher also stated that snares and leg-hold are used to protect his livestock and the ranch from dogs. Next is answer from the rancher when I ask him what he thought about using a .22 on dogs. These are his words unchanged.

"I normally use a .223 as predator repellent around our place. I use 00 or 0 in 12 gauge when problems arise in our corrals. I used #4 Buck for along time, but many of the problem dogs around here are part pitbull. They are hard to stop and #4 Buck just doesn't seem to drop them as fast as the larger shot. I don't know about "Stingers" for dogs. They would work, but some dogs would undoubtedly run away before they dropped. I would not choose .22 rimfire if there was a pack involved. I would only use the .22 if I had to, and my .45 would be in my waistband."

My whole point is that there are 100 million dogs in America. I'm sure a high percentage of them won't make it but the ones that return to the pack instinct even if is only 10% that is 10 million dogs to deal with. Divide that number into 50 states and that's 200,000 dogs per state. I think the number will be higher, but anyway you look at it -- that is a lot of dogs. How much of your ammo are you willing to use up shooting dogs. It is a very distasteful thought to have to kill that many dogs. But it will come down to us versus them, and I can't follow the animal rights people thinking that the animal has more right to life then humans do. I just can't get the thoughts out of my mind of the packs.

One thought that comes to mind is for the people who haven't prepared. What level of jungle instinct will they fall to? Because I have studied animals my whole life, I understand them. I have watched hawks catch rabbits. The hawk has no remorse in his eyes. The rabbit is still alive as the hawk rips into it's body. There is no remorse, no "this is cruel," no humanity. Will man once again return to this Jungle instincts of no remorse? Will a percentage of the unprepared fall back into the wild inhuman stage of early man? Will killing you to take your food for his or her own survival overcome our civilized veneer? I don't know, but I do know one thing: I pray to God we never have to find out. I hope we are all just being eccentric and playing at survival, but deep in my gut I feel there is a lot more to Y2K and the coming collapse and we may all find out how low people will sink to preserve themselves.

This dog book I seem to be writing may be more on people as much as dogs. Remember, in more ways then one, you will have to be the top predator in your area. Is America safe? Will the Government somehow pull this off and save the day? I don't believe so, but only time will tell the true story.

Any one else who would like to [e-mail](#) me with your wild or domestic animal attack stories please do so. If it is wild animal please if you know tell me what the laws on hunting or trapping in your state are.

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Three More True Tales of Wild Dogs

Three more true attack stories. The first one makes me sick of people that feel they are above the law. No name is being used for the first one at the request of the author.

Story 1

Many years ago I lived in a small town, sort of a suburban setting and had a job where I got home about 2 a.m. I noticed a few dogs loose and wandering when I would get home. As the weeks passed, there were more and more dogs, and they would gather where people came and went, where there was garbage or food, or just travel together. These were all neighbors' pet dogs.

Due to circumstances, I had to park about 5 car lengths from our door. I began to get nervous about the situation and talked to the police, but the mayor's dog, as well as 2 councilman's dogs were involved and I was told there was nothing that could be done. I was also told to not even think of carrying or using a gun. I was very unhappy, but still had to go home at night.

One night I got out of my car and as I was headed towards the door with key ready for the lock, I heard a snarl and the pack of about 10 dogs were running for me. I ran for the door and got in just as a dog bit into the heel of my Western boot. When I looked at the boot later the heel had 2 teeth broken off in it. I complained loudly and was informed that if I fired a weapon, I would be arrested. Period. End of discussion. After that I would call home when I was about 10 min. away and someone would stand by the door to hold it open for me as I ran for it. Most times I just didn't go home until about 8-9 a.m.

This went on for a week or two, and then the pack got together during the day one time. There was a child, about 4 maybe, I never found out for sure if it was a boy or girl, playing outside in it's yard. I saw the dogs, about 6 of them, go for him/her. I was too far away to do anything, all I could do was scream for the kid to run, and they hit the kid. Some people were able to beat the dogs off, but she was mauled pretty badly. Mauled. Such a nice painless word. Puppy mauls its squeaky toy. What I saw was a child, still alive, screaming in agony with chunks of flesh and muscle ripped out of its arms, legs and body. Those dogs were eating that child

alive. The face and scalp were literally shredded, what little remained. The nose and lips were gone, it was almost just a skull. You could see the bones through the ripped muscles and blood was everywhere. The paramedics were good; they saved the child's life. Five years after the attack the kid is crippled from muscle damage, an arm had to be amputated, and the face -- after many surgeries, that face and head still looked like something out of a horror film, and if you were not prepared, you would become ill just seeing it.

If people wonder why I'm so against dogs and cats running loose, just think about what 6 dogs did. The scary thing? All those dogs were indoor family pets, all were breeds known for gentleness or considered harmless. All were less than 50 lbs. They were just allowed out at night to run. From when they first started to run together to the attack? About 3 to 4 months.

Story 2

This one happened in Indiana. Thank you Mingo for e-mailing it to me.

Lucky for me, this was a small pack. Dad and I were fishing in the strip pits of Green Co. IN. Nothing biting and I was getting tired of thrashing the water with my line and told Dad I was gonna take a walk over a couple hills. Sometimes you find real strange rocks the draglines dig up and put in huge piles called stripper hills.

These strip hills are barren soil and rock where the dragline digs out the pit for the coal and dumps the buckets and it forms hills from 40 to 80 ft. tall. I was probably 3/4 mile into them and alone, but armed as always. Suddenly I heard something I couldn't figure out. It sounded sort of like a bunch of brush swishing on the dirt or something like that. I don't know how long they had been watching me -- maybe all the way and just waiting for me to get far enough back in the hills. I turned to my right where the sound seemed to be coming from just in time to see fur and gnashing teeth come over the top of a small hill. On instinct, I drew my 1911 .45 and lined up on the leader. I don't remember really aiming, just lining up. When it was only about 25 feet from me I fired. It crumpled and slipped a few feet on down the hill. I don't know if it was the sight of their leader dropping to the ground or the sound of the .45 or just plain good luck, but as I recover from recoil and was going to line up again, all I could see was asses and tails going back over the top of the same hill.

The downed dog was only a few feet from me and not moving. I approached it cautiously, but it wasn't breathing. Upon examination, I learned that by luck I had hit it right through the neck, and the big .45 slug shattered the spine. I dragged it back with me all the while watching for the others which I never saw again.

To this day, I don't know if there were 5 or 6 of them but I was very lucky because they usually ran in packs of 15-20 size. On the way home, we stopped by a friend of mine who was a trapper and I ask him if he wanted it. Nope, those things aren't worth anything, but I wish you'd shoot every damn one of em. We did get most of them after they started really ravaging the young livestock around there and some of us got together to actually organize hunts. Set up sort of like snipers and then we would start using a Burnham Bros. mouth blown Fox call. It worked and I've still got that old call and lots of memories. Just thought I'd tell you of an experience of my own of what happens when people take these nice puppies that grow up out in the country and dump them.

Story 3

The last one is on why a .22 is not enough. I have said it before a .22 is a poor defense gun, now read why. To be fair I have also received other e-mails from people that have used a .22 and it drop the dog in its tracks.

I used to live in the country, and we all know how it is out there. A dog that kills livestock either winds up as someone's pet in the city, or he gets put down. I had adopted a retired Greyhound from the local shelter. Sweet dog, been abused all her life I guess, because she was pretty blown away just to be petted.

Anyway, after a few months, she took it in her head that she wanted to chase chickens. Chickens are quick little boogers, but they were no match for a dog that was just fresh off the racetrack. Needless to say, she decimated my flock.... and a few other people's flocks in a single day as well. I tried keeping her penned up after that, but she got out one day and decided she was in the mood for a veal steak.

Well, came time to pay the piper (and the owner of the calf). I took her out back, choking 'cause I liked the dog but couldn't find anyone to take a livestock killer, and placed the end of the .22 Marlin between her eyes. It was a .22 Stinger too, come to think of it. Pulled the trigger and said I was sorry. Be damned if she didn't just howl in pain and start running about in a circle. It took 4 more shots in the head, and finally one in the heart, to drop her. I've never seen anything like that in a horror movie, and I still have nightmares about it. 1 shot between the eyes, 1 shot in each eye, 1 in the ear, and one more behind her skull at the base, and she was still squalling and running in circles. I'll never shoot another dog with a .22 as long as I live, unless it's a matter of life and death and that sorry a** .22 is all I have left.

I also have some good wild animal attack stories coming up next. I hope and pray we never have to find out if the dog packs will rule. I received a pile of e-mails like the above 3 and one common comment is "Thank God it was a small pack." Please always remember shoot the lead dog first! The pack is following him or her and will

keep attacking until the Alpha is down or dead.

Even then like the first story when the attack is in frenzy mood on the child you would have to kill every one of the dogs -- without hitting the child. A friend of mine was a W.W.II sniper told me of an attack once by two German shepherds on a little girl. This guy was an expert shot. Dropped both dogs off the girl with 2 shots from a 30-06. Never attempt this. I would never shoot like that but the guy was a true firearm expert. Good thing it didn't happen now days the useless animal rights whackos would have had him arrested for animal cruelty. You see the child is not important in their eyes but saving the child mauling dogs are. What a mixed up country we have become.

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I Should Have Stayed Home

Back in early January of 1986, I was living in Northern Michigan. The sun was shining and it was turning into a beautiful warm day in the high 30's. The only thing on the work list was to fill up the back porch with firewood and chop some kindling. After lunch, with the chores done, I was becoming restless and decide to go try my hand at under-the-ice beaver trapping.

I packed up my only 2 beaver traps, 2 -#330 conibears, an ax, wire, a few aspen branches (poplar branches are beaver's favorite food) for bait, grabbed my trusty old single shot, Steven's 20 gauge for snowshoe rabbits, if I was lucky enough to see one. Strapped on my snowshoes and headed out. This turned out to be one of the most memorable days of my life.

It was a little before 1 p.m. when I left the house and started the 2-1/2 mile walk back to the beaver pond. The snow was three feet deep, with drifts to four feet. I hadn't been snowshoeing for years and was having a lot of fun trying to walk upright. I crossed the 3/4 mile of open field without too much trouble but once in the woods things changed. The snow was not packed in the woods so the snowshoes sank deeper and found every hidden snag causing me to fall down.

For those of you that have never had the pleasure of snowshoeing in deep un-traveled snow let me explain. After you fall down getting up is an exercise in itself. Your feet with the snowshoes want to stay on top of the snow and your body and arms are trying to sink. With my arms sinking out of sight, I was looking for something solid to push up with, and my mind was hoping no "Outdoor Life" snowshoeing expert was standing by taking pictures. This was quite frustrating after 3 or 4 times and it reminded me of the "Three Stooges" when their boat was sinking and they drilled more holes in the bottom to let the water out. After a break (really a face-first fall) I started slowing down and soon was getting the hang of it. Then my first critical mistake happened.

I had learned to walk in the more open areas to avoid the hidden snags in the thicker

swamp area. I was almost to the beaver ponds when I walked out into a small clearing. Around the middle of this easy walking clearing, the ice gave way. My snowshoes, ever so helpful, broke through tip first and the water was deep enough so that they slide in at almost a vertical angle, throwing me forward. There I was standing in water over my knees. I tried to pull out but the snowshoes worked like a spring bolt and would not come up through the hole no matter what angle I tried. The ice-cold, black swamp water was making my legs, from the knees down go numb and I knew I had to get out fast. I took the ax out and started chopping a bigger hole but all I accomplish was getting the rest of me wet. So I said the hell with this, sat down on my pack, removed my gloves and reached down in the icy water to unbuckle my snowshoes. Real quick, I had both snowshoes unbuckled and out of the water. Most people would have said the hell with it and headed home, but NO , not me. I have built a log cabin, I'm a modern Mountain Man. So I walked over to a fallen log, brushed off the snow and sat down, I removed my wet clothing, wrung them out quickly and was back dressed in a flash.

This works OK in temperature above freezing as long you get moving quickly. The blood will start flowing and start to warm up the wet areas. Besides, the beaver pond was only a few hundred yards ahead. I noticed a few clouds rolling in but overall it was still a nice day.

When I reached the beaver pond I learned my lesson and removed my snowshoes before walking on the ice. I cut a pole 10' long about 2" in diameter, sharpen one end, wired the bait to the trigger, set the trap to safety and slide the springs on the pole. With this all set up I chopped a hole in the ice between the beaver's feed pile and their lodge. I cleared most of the ice out of the hole, set the trap and lowered it into the hole. The hole was just a little too small but with a little force it should fit. You guessed it, the trap was about half way in when the trigger caught and fired the trap spraying me with water. This is just not my day, I thought. I reset the trap, chopped the hole bigger and somehow managed to get the trap set. Then I placed pine boughs over the open hole and buried it with snow. This prevents the water from freezing solid and makes it easier when you return to open the hole. I set the second trap over by the dam. This under the ice beaver trapping in January is work. At least, I felt happy that the traps were set and I could head home.

Before I left, I just had to go over and look over the feed pile to make sure my first set aligned with the den. So I was walking around the feed pile, when you guessed it, I found where the beaver had been going, by falling through their hole. You see, the beaver have a favorite place they go and they let out air, which forms air bubbles that weakens the ice. The things you learn falling through the ice. I was up to my waist and quickly exited the water. Same routine, wrung the wet clothes out and headed for home.



I was wet to my waist, my parka was wet on the bottom, and my gloves were wet. It was time to get my rear end home to the fire. It was now about 4:30 and the sky had filled with dark clouds. The temperature was dropping quickly. Just as I left the beaver pond the first light snow started falling. During this time of year it normally got dark about 5:30. An hour to get out, perfect I thought. As I walked out my wet clothes began to form ice. I knew the temperature had fallen below freezing and the wind was picking up. The light snow was turning heavier and thicker with each minute. I quickened my pace.

The wind was picking up speed and every spot on me that was wet quickly turned to heavy ice. The clouds rolled in heavy and dark. I had the feeling I was only a mere speck in the coming storm. By the time I reach the field, the storm was in its full fury, darkness was setting early. I was shivering uncontrollably. My strength was being used up trying to heat up my body. I stepped out into the field, 3/4 of a mile to go, I thought, no big deal. I took my bearing on a far off tree, just before the white out hit. Did I have a compass, oh no, not me, compasses are for city people, not me. Boy, did I eat them words.

The wind was howling at 30 knots, the temperature had dropped to around 10 above, the wind chill effect was minus 18 and I was dressed lightly and almost half of that was ice. Only 3/4 mile across the open field lay my house and safety. The snowshoes formed ice and the heavy wet lake effect snow quickly stuck to them with each step. This was slowing me down from the added weight. For the first time I thought I might be in serious trouble. In a white out you can't see more than 5 or 6 feet in front of you, all the familiar landmarks are gone. When I reached the tree I aligned myself with the house, not that I could see it, but from experience.

The second stage of hypothermia was setting in and I knew I was in serious trouble. It was unbelievable at how fast I was falling into the effects of hypothermia. The snowshoes felt like two lead weights on my feet, I couldn't feel my toes or finger tips. My mind was getting foggy. God, the never-ending pounding wind was hitting me full in the face. I now know it was the wind that kept robbing me of my body heat. In the full force of the wind, the snow stuck to every wet icy spot, weighting me down.

I stopped to catch my breath and looked at the time, 5:30, now full darkness added to white out condition. My God, I must have missed the house, I should have been there by now. All the stories I ever heard of lost people wandering around in white out conditions, being a few feet from safety, but never making it came rushing into my head. I was so tired and only if I could get out of this unmerciless wind, just for a few minutes to warm up was all I wanted. I thought about leaving my pack and shotgun behind, less weight, but realized the straps of the pack were almost frozen to my parka. I could leave the shotgun but then I thought, no, that was the first gun my dad had bought me and I wasn't leaving it.

I was almost to the panic stage, where the hell is the house? Most right handed people angle slightly to the right when they walk, so I should head left. God, I was tired. The never-ending wind and whiteout just kept beating me down. I remember falling and the wonderful feeling of being out of the wind when I sunk under the snow. The falling snow quickly covered my body and I was out of the wind. What a pleasant feeling, I closed my eyes. The next thing I knew I awoke with a start and realized if I didn't get moving I wasn't going to make it. I thought of my wife and sons looking out the kitchen window into the darkening blizzard wondering when I was coming home. I knew they would be worried.

When I stood up and the wind hit me, adrenaline surged through me, get moving, I thought. I struggled on, then out of the corner of my eye I saw something flicker. Please God, I thought, give me just one minute break to see which way to go. Just then off to my right, my prayer was answered, a brief let up on the storm and I saw our outside light only 100 yards away. Then just as quickly, the storm came back and the light was gone. Did I image it? It is a good thing the break came when it did because I was unconsciously veering to the left and would have missed the house only to wander around out in the field. No, I thought, that was the real thing and with new energy I quickly arrived at our back porch.

My wife was there in an instant. Every thing was frozen to me and I was unable to get out of anything. She quickly unbuckled my snowshoes and hurried me into the house. Standing next to the wood stove I started to thaw and she was able to get my gloves and coat off. Soon I was into dry clothes, drinking hot soup and coffee. No permanent frostbite had set in, but to this day my hands and feet get cold easily.

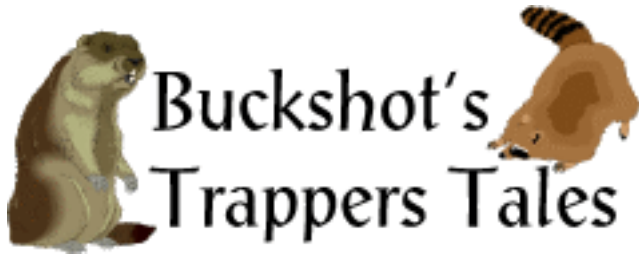
For those of you who don't know what lake effect snow is, when an approaching storm crosses one of the Great Lakes it picks up added moisture. The first land mass the storm hits, it dumps the moisture in the form of heavy wet snow. Up to 12" an hour, but it's usually about 3-6" an hour.

Two days later after checking the weather, I returned to pull my traps. The one trap by the feed pile was sprung and empty. Probably a muskrat set it off without getting caught. The second trap was still set untouched. I placed both traps in the pack and headed home. At the edge of the pond a snowshoe rabbit broke out and ran for cover. The trusty 20 ga. barked once. As I loaded the rabbit into the pack I thought at least I'm not going home empty handed. No more walks in the woods in January anymore.

Well, at least not if there is a storm coming and when I do you can bet I will have a compass. Hey, I can trap enough beaver in the fall and in the spring, why go though that? This is my new outlook.

What did I do wrong? Plenty, first off I was dressed lightly in blue jeans, no long johns, a T-shirt, a flannel shirt, and a light winter jacket, and NO waterproof gloves. No compass, I should have checked the weather, when I first got wet I should I have headed home. Even now, as I sit typing this, I think why was I so tired out. The effect of wet clothing in the minus 18-degree wind was robbing me of body heat and my body just couldn't keep up. I now own 5 pairs of wool pants and wool shirts. Why wool? Because wool will keep you warm even when wet. Lesson learned! Be careful and don't be bull-headed like me, who has learned this the hard way.

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A Michigan Bear Tale

A friend of mine named Craig talked me into applying for a bear permit one year. You see, in Michigan you have to apply for a bear hunting permit. This is a lottery and if you are lucky enough to be chosen, then you can go hunt the exclusive black bear. We both applied in June, and you have to wait until August to find out if you were picked on the lottery. August 1st Craig's permit came back stating he wasn't chosen. By August 15th I still hadn't heard on my permit. I called the local Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to find out what happened. I had been drawn for a permit and it was mailed August 1, but some PETA person working for the post office must have stolen it. The local DNR issued me my permit and the fun began.

We had decided to hunt bears with bait. There is a huge controversy over using bait. Here is my view: If you know much about black bears, you know they cover huge amounts of territory in their quest for food. One day they will be in wild black berries, the next day 20 miles away in a wild apple orchard and so on. So just like trapping, we pre-baited using 2 five-gallon buckets of fish heads, twice a week. Through our travels of chasing fur we knew where some bears were. To be safe we made 3 bait stations. Checked the bait when we re-baited. Let me explain how you make a bait station.

You haul 10 gallons of fish heads out in to the brush. The black bear prefers the thick swampy areas. After you pick a spot off the beaten trail, look for something next to a swamp or beaver pond. Thick brush so you can only see no more than 40 yards. You dump the fish heads out into a pile. Over the pile you place large logs 6 to 10 inches in diameter 10 to 15 feet long. Use something large that is heavy. This to keep the raccoons and scavenger birds out of the pile. Plus, only a bear will have the strength to move the logs. We chose three muddy low spots in different swamps. This way you can see tracks in the mud. I was looking for a bear with a 6 1/2-inch span across the front paw. This means the bear will weigh over 350 pounds.

The first two bait stations had nothing after a week. The last one paid off with the logs torn apart and thrown several feet. To understand the power of the bear, Craig and I could barely drag and lift up the logs to cover the bait. We were dragging the log a foot at a time, then resting, but the bear tossed it aside like it was a stick. There was 5 different bears feeding at this station in two weeks time. One bear at 5 1/2 inches across the paw and one at almost 7 inches, two cubs and a mother's tracks were also seen. When baiting you have to be careful when you approach the bait. Get out of

the truck and bang buckets, talk loud, and let the bears know you are there. Some bears have been known to chase you off your bait buckets when you are approaching the pile.

With all this in mind, you carefully approach the bait station. We dropped the other two bait stations and stuck with the last one. I can't do justice to the feeling of approaching a bait pile for bears. Your adrenaline is approaching record level and when you see the bait destroyed like a tank drove through it, your heart skips a beat. Needless to say, you don't waste a lot of time. All we would do is dump the new bait drag the logs back on top, look at the tracks and haul butt back to the truck.

You are not allowed to carry a firearm during this baiting time. No firearms until the season opens. Hey, that just helps you get the job done faster. You know, that one large log we could barely move at first became lighter and just before opening day we could throw it back on top of the pile in record time. We weren't getting stronger. You see, the log was an old water log, so every time the bears tore the pile up, more and more chunks of the log was missing.

The most interesting day was when we approached the pile after the large 7-inch track showed up. The pile was really destroyed and the tree we used as a backing was clawed from the 8-foot mark down to about the 4-foot mark. Definitely a keeper bear. For some odd reason, Craig was nervous and keeps looking around. His eyes were the size of half-dollars and he kept saying something about big bear, big bear, big bear. I suppose it didn't help when I snuck off in the woods out of sight and started yelling, "He's coming, run for your life." I have never seen Craig run so fast in my life. Poor Craig ran all the way to the truck and jumped in locking all the doors. GOOD thing I had the keys or the poor fellow would still be driving away from there. Me being the kind, sensitive, warm caring person, that I am, crawled all the way to the truck and snuck around to the back of the truck. My truck has 33-inch tires, so I crawled over to the back bumper. Then I placed both feet on the bumper and started rocking the truck all over and growling at the same time. Poor Craig freaked and started laying on the horn, screaming to me, "Don't come to the truck, the bears are waiting to get you."

I started to feel pretty guilty about it, so I stopped. I crawled back into the woods, then jumped up, starting running to the truck screaming, "Open the door he's right behind me!!!" Poor Craig, there he is shaking so bad he can't UN-lock the door. It took a supreme effort on my part not to laugh. Finally, the door was unlocked, and I jumped in, starting up the truck and hauled out of there like the devil himself was after us. I started laughing and asked Craig if he saw how big the bear was, must be 500 pounds I said. Craig said that the way he was shaking the truck, I thought he was at least 650 pounds. (One person has filmed a black bear in Michigan with the estimate live weight of 800 pounds and every year a couple of 500 pounders are shot.) I never told Craig it was me shaking the truck, so don't tell him if you ever meet him.

We built a blind for two, and Craig was going to video tape the hunt for me. Opening day finally came and we are sitting in the blind from 4 in the afternoon until around 8:30. Nothing comes in the first night. Opening day was on a workday, so I could

only hunt after work. The next afternoon would prove to be the most-hair raising day of both of our lives.

For those of you that are hunters you know most deer are shot within an hour of sundown. So thinking like a deer hunter, we expected the bears to be the same way. We piled in the blind around 4 p.m. and planned on reading hunting magazines while we were waiting for the bear to show up. Craig is armed with the video camera and I was armed with a 300 Savage, using 180-grain core lokts. I have my gun resting against a tree inside the blind, about a foot a way. Around a quarter to 5, we hear a stick snap behind us. I thought squirrel. Craig whips his head around to look (must be still nervous about the truck, I thought I will have to remind him to move his head slowly). Craig slowly turns back to me and whispers thatt there is a bear right behind us. Damn he figured out it was me shaking the truck and now he's trying to pay me back, I'm not falling for that ol' trick, so I whisper back, "Yea sure." Craig grabs my arm in a death grip, his eyes are as big as silver dollars and says, "I'm not kidding, get your #*&^*&^%! gun and kill him quick -- he is only 10 feet away."

I could not even begin to describe the flood of emotion that flashed through my body. There is my gun sitting a foot away. What if the bear thinks I'm some kind of dinner and attacks when he sees me moves?? What if the bear grabs Craig, how in the heck can I even think about shooting without endangering Craig? What the heck am I suppose to tell his wife? My heart was racing at 200 miles a minute, all of sudden my mouth was bone dry, my shaking hand slowly reached out to the gun, silent prayers were coming from both of us, sweat was dripping down my eyes, my ears tried to go into supersonic mode. Move a little, listen for the growl, listen for a snap at the back of the blind, all I could hear was Craig and my own quick short breaths, my hand wrapped around the barrel and I slowly lifted the gun up turning around to the left, Craig whispers, "No, turn the other way," but I ignore him. (The reason I ignored him was, I'm right handed, so I could jump up and swing the gun on the bear if I had to without the gun barrel crossing the place where Craig was sitting.)

Slowly, I turned until just barely out of the corner of my eye, I could see black. The bear was standing 5 feet behind Craig's head. My God, his head is even with Craig's head -- he must be 600 pounds. I could barely see all this, and I was straining as hard as I could. I have to turn back all the way around, point the gun up and swing by Craig and pray the beast doesn't attack. Slowly, I start turning back, thinking I should have listened to Craig to begin with. My nerves were settling down and I decided that I was going to shoot the bear point blank, dead center in the throat, breaking his spine and dropping him in his tracks. Craig, my best friend in the world, sat there patiently not moving, a lesser man would have panicked and ran, but not Craig. I finally was able to get the rifle pointed at the back and slowly finished turning around.

I can not tell you for sure what the feeling of coming face to face with a black bear, 5 feet away is like, especially when it turns out to be a cub sitting on a stump. The stump had tricked us both into thinking the bear was huge because we could only see it out of the corner of our eyes. My thoughts went from "Oh my God, a bear," to "Thank God, it is only a cub," and then to "Oh my God, where is the mommy bear?"

Just then, about 50 yards behind us a growl came up, short quick almost a grr-woof. The next thing we hear was two cubs running past the blind to the fish pile. Of course, the mommy bear was on the other side so I had to slowly turn back around to look for her.

When I was even with Craig's ear I whispered, "We are in deep trouble if those cubs come back when mommy bear hits our scent between her cubs and us". The wind was a light breeze crossing over the sides and the mommy bear was 50 yards from smelling it. I turned all the way around and lifted the gun up. Just then, another grrr-woof and mommy bear stood up to claw a pine tree. She looked huge in the scope. I estimated her standing height at well over 6 feet and weight around 300 pounds. No small bear. It is illegal to shoot sow bears that have cubs, not that I would unless I had to. I had the bear in the scope as she clawed the tree up and whispered to Craig, "Look for mommy bear this one is way to big to be a female."

Just then the bear stopped clawing the tree and looked straight at me. OH NO, she hears me. We are directly between her and her cubs. I thought, "This is it, she's gonna charge. I hope I can put her down in time." She got back down on all fours and took a couple steps toward us sniffing the air. The hair on her back was raised and she stood back up. My God, that bear filled the scope and looked like she had grown 2 feet taller. I was sweating in the chilled air. I was feeling detached from my body. I could hear my heart pounding, and hear my breathing, but it was as if it was coming from someone else. My whole mind and everything in me was focused on the bear. Time stood still, and I remembered thinking, "I hope I don't have to kill her. She is just trying to protect her cubs." Then I thought, "maybe a warning shot." I remembered my uncle saying that years ago he saw a bear running along the road, so they timed the bear to see how fast it was running, 40-mph. At that speed she could be on top of us, if the warning shot scared her into an attack. What to do? I decided to wait, and if she came any closer, then I would fire one warning shot.

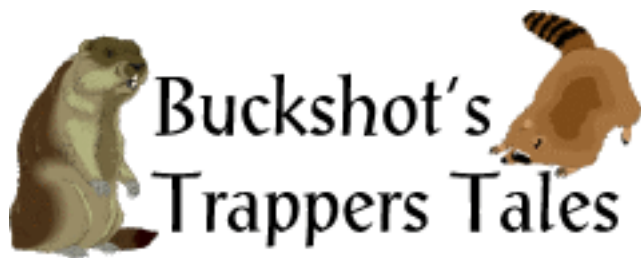
The cubs unaware of the danger, were having a ball crawling under the logs, pulling fish heads out. (By the way, Craig told me later, he was so scared of mommy bear none of this was taped for fear that any movement would cause an attack.) Mommy took two more steps toward us and then it happened, the wind shifted, so our scent was going right to her. Oh my God, I felt the breeze change and thought our luck just ran out. My mind closed off to everything else except waiting for the charge, I thought at best I could get two shots off with the old lever action before she was on us.

It is hard to describe the feeling you have when your best friend is sitting next to you UN-armed and waiting for the attack. I blamed myself for not letting him take a gun (have to follow the law, for having him come out and take video, what a stupid idea.) Mommy bear caught our scent and through the scope I watched first fear, then flight, then my cubs, then fight all flashed across her face in a millisecond. She stood up and clawed a tree and woofed twice. The next thing I heard was the cubs running past me to her. Just for good measure she clawed the tree and growled at us and ran off with the cubs close behind her.

We laughed with relief. The whole drama took place in less than 7 minutes, but it seemed like we had just watched a two-hour bear attack movie. The evening excitement was not over because two lunatics (us) with any brains would have left and called it a night. Oh no, not us, we couldn't learn from our close call, we stayed for more excitement.

You know, as I sit typing my different articles and remember all that I have been through, I think "Maybe I take too many chances." But then that crazy thought passes, because I know next fall I will be back for another adventure in the great outdoors.

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Waxing and Dyeing Traps

First off, I would like to thank all the wonderful people that I have e-mailed me. All your questions and comments have helped me. Two comments that have come up were waxing traps and homemade dyes for traps. I planned on writing just one article this week, but this has come up enough that I think I should address it now: DON'T WAX CONIBEARs.

Please listen to me, waxing traps is used to preserve the traps and to make them lighting fast. This is something you want when you are trapping predators on land and the traps are buried under the grounds for weeks at a time. The wax is very good to have on the traps then. Water leg-hold traps that are waxed pose two problems. The first is, the wax makes the jaws of the traps slippery and a large powerful coon can pull his foot out. Two, on bright moon-lit nights, the wax is shiny and sometimes a coon will grab the jaw of the trap, setting off the trap without getting caught.

Raccoons are very curious animals and they just love to grab shiny things in the water. One of the oldest methods of trapping coons is to wrap the pan of a leg-hold with tin foil. The coon will see the shiny foil and grab the pan setting the trap off on his paw. But, if they grab the outside jaw of the trap, the trap will fire without the coon getting caught. The biggest reason you don't want to wax conibears is, they become so touchy that sometimes while you are setting them, and they will fire off spraying you with water. Or, if you are unlucky, firing off and whacking your hand. This safety reason is why I didn't even mention it. I waxed conibears one year and had traps firing off in the water as I tried to set them, I swore I would never wax conibears again.

Please, for your own safety, don't wax conibears. For you people that are new to trapping, waxing traps was considered the only way to go years ago. The reason waxing is good for land traps, is the wax makes the trap faster, it comes up through the ground better, and to preserve the trap. If you are land trapping with leg-holds this method is still recommended. There is no reason to wax your conibears or your water leg-holds. Don't wax conibears.

Homemade Trap Dye

This was sent to me from one reader that preferred this method of dyeing traps. I would like to thank Blue Skies for sending this to me.

In early fall, collect black walnut hulls that are soft and black, when they're breaking apart off the nut. Collect 1 gallon, place in a 5-gallon pot, fill the pot with water and bring to boil for 30 minutes. Place your traps on a wire and lower into the pot. Remove the pot when cool and place outside. In two days, remove the traps and make sure you hang them in a tree to air dry. Once dried, pack in a clean box until you are ready to start trapping.

A warning from Blue Skies: Don't get any dye on your hands, or you will wear it for a week because you can't wash it out. That is why you wire the traps together and leave some wire hanging out of the pot. Then, you can just grab the wire and pull the traps out when they are done.

This is a good natural dye and scent for your traps. Another good one is, staghorn sumac berries. Do the same process as described above. I have found if you are just hobby trapping, a few traps here and there for a couple of weeks each year this is all you need. You still degrease your traps and rust as described before. The old thought on natural dyes was you would catch more animals. I have caught too many animals next to rusting farm equipment not to be convinced that rust doesn't scare animals. But in a survival situation, it is good to know how to make natural dyes to keep your traps in top working order.

Trapping is a lot like politics; some people are convinced certain ways are the best, and others believe different. I go by what works for me. Natural homemade dyes are just one more method to dye your traps that will help you get twenty years use out of the equipment. So please try this method.

Why Conibears

The question "Why conibears," also came up in a recent e-mail, and I just thought I would share my knowledge with you. Recommending traps is a logical guess on my part. I look at what a beginner would have success with and what are the most animals to trap. Muskrats, beavers, raccoons, are just about everywhere in the US. All three are fairly easy to trap. With conibears, just about anyone can catch them. You see, I was thinking long term, and the most reliable way people could prepare and actually catch fur and meat to provide for their families.

Conibears are the best trap for beginners because:

1. There is no trap adjustment.
2. All you need to carry is wire instead of stakes, which also means no hammer to carry.
3. Once the animal is caught, within 4 to 6 minutes the animal is dead.
4. The concept is easy to understand. The animal is trying to go through the trap.
5. Snares can get knocked over, but a well-stabilized conibear will not.
6. A leg-hold on land must be buried. This causes you to carry a sifter and anti-freeze.

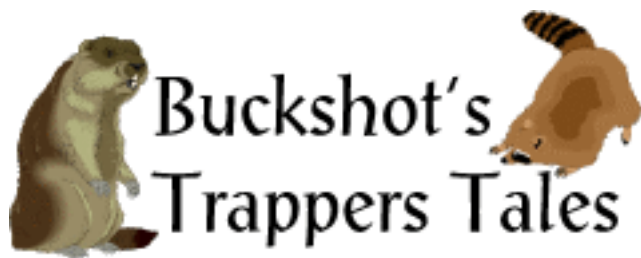
7. Less of a theft problem, because a dead animal is harder to spot than a live one.
8. Snares and leg-holds must be staked or grappled, again more equipment to carry.

The disadvantages

1. 1. You must use care and caution when setting to avoid catching dogs and cats.
2. 2. You will not catch many fox and coyotes with them.
3. 3. You must use care and caution when setting, because these traps hurt more than leg-holds if you get hit with one on the hand.
4. 4. Some trap-shy animals will walk or swim by without going in the trap.

I hope you enjoyed this and go out and try, it is a lot of fun. No better feeling in the world than knowing that if there is muskrats, beavers, and raccoons around you know you can eat. Just a dozen traps and freedom. E-mail me with any questions and there are no dumb questions, only the ones that haven't been asked .

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Scent and Using Lures

The issue of human scent has come up a few times. When you are trapping you have to minimize human scent. The first thing you have to do is have clean equipment, then what leaves the most human scent is your walking. So when you are trapping you don't want to go in to a gas station and walk there in the same boots you are wearing when you are trapping. Think about the last time you were at a gas station. Did you see, spilled gas, anti-freeze on the ground, oil spots, etc.? Even if it appears clean all those different smells are all around you, so just by walking there, you are picking up foreign smells that warn animals.

So don't wear the same boots when you gas up. Here is an example of how important human scent on the fox trapping line is. I run my traps and every year a friend and his son would come trapping with me for one day. The child had a ball and loved seeing fox and raccoons. I really enjoy having them come a long. After 3 years of doing this I notice a pattern. The next day after all three of us had check traps the catch would drop way off. Why? Because of all the extra human scent around the sets. So if you take some one with you when you are trapping you are going to catch less then if you are by yourself. That is for land trapping.

When you are land trapping fox and coyotes you should keep your vehicle clean, walk in mud puddles to wash your scent smell off. Check your traps with binoculars to stay away from your sets. Just think "scent" and keep it down. Fox and coyote still know you were there but you don't want them to know you were there every day. By using the binoculars you can check your traps from a distance keeping your scent down.

Water trapping different. Because you are in hip boots or waders your scent is being washed clean. The only pattern I have seen on water trapping is if you have more then one person and you are yelling back and forth a lot, the catch drops the next day. I have trapped plenty of raccoons and beaver setting the trap bare handed. But you should use gloves and just get in the habit of when you touch your traps make sure you are wearing gloves.

The question of rust came up also on a coyote trapping question. My answer: Stop and think of all the barb wire fences in America. Know that a coyote range is up to 50 miles. In that 50 miles how many barb wire fences has he gone under? When setting coyote traps if a little rust appears on the trap use fox or coyote urine sprayed over the cover trap. This will show the next coyote another coyote was all ready been there

and it is safe to walk up. For your conibears set in water there is not much of concern and when setting the #220 on land scent is not the issue with coon. Coons have no problem raiding chicken coops. They raid garbage cans and do not fear human scent the same way as a fox or coyote does.

So when I say trapping the exclusive ones that is what I'm talking about -- the foxes and coyotes. I think most of you will be trapping with conibears the first few years, going after muskrats, raccoons, beavers, and easier animals at first. Human scent is not that much of a concern, but having a trap well blended into the environment is a concern. Like I said, know what your are trapping, don 't wear the same boots to the gas station when you fuel up as do on the trapline.

There is a rule that the old deer hunters use around here. If you wound a deer at just before dark, track him until you find him. You don't have to do anything but touch the deer. Then the deer is safe from coyotes that night and maybe the next night. Now why do you suppose that is true? Because of trappers. That is correct -- coyotes learn that fresh kill with human scent equals danger. So think about it when you're trapping coyotes. Check your traps from a distance using binoculars to keep your scent down and you will catch more animals.



Lures are attractors to bring the animal over to take a look. Because animals are sometime fussy, you use lure that is blended together with different ingredients. Out of all the different ingredients it only take one to make the animal dig. Lure is hard for beginners to understand. It is an attractor so in order for it to attract, the animal has to smell it. There are of course different things that effect how much lure to use and when to re-lure. But the most important very first step in making any set is which way is the wind blowing. I watch the weather channel and see what is coming for the next week. Say for Sat. through Sunday the wind will be coming from the Northwest. Then on Monday and Tuesday it will shift to the southwest then the rest of the week the winds will again be out of the northwest. With that forecast I would make 80% of my sets so the back of the set is facing northwest and 20% of my sets facing southwest.

You see the majority of time for the whole week the wind will be out of the northwest. That is why 80% of my sets are made that way. But to prevent me from having two slow days on the trapline, I set 20% of my sets for Monday and Tuesday. How I test lure for fox and coyote is to have my dog test them. It only took a few years of that until I settled with one lure guy for all my predators lures. I like my own lure for the 3 different kinds I make. But I could not come up with a lure to beat this guy's product. It is Craig O 'Gorman out of Montana, and it is he who taught me to

trap predators. Craig has been the foundation for many a great trapper.

Lasting Lures

So you place 6-9 drops of lure at your sets or a small lima bean size of bait (commercially produced) down the hole. How long is it good for? That depends on many different things. First off, did you make a catch and the animal ate or dug it up so much it is not working anymore? What I do is re-set the trap and if the next day there isn't another catch then I re-lure. Always re-lure after a rain, even if it only rains hard for 10 minutes. My best catch always every year is that one night when it is foggy or misty light rain. Why do you think that is?

My theory is that because it is so dark out, the animals hunt more by their nose. Also, they can't see little things wrong at the set that may scare them off. Three, it is so dark they have trouble hunting, so they go more for what is already dead. Four, I think the lure carries in the mist better and makes it easier for them to find.

The last one is, if you know this type of weather is coming you should re-lure that day to make sure you are ready to take advantage of the weather. This is very important I don't care what you are trapping, make sure you re-lure and all your sets are in good shape. Then go home and sharpen the skinning knife because the next day you are going to be busy.

Cold effects lure also. This is how I handle cold. Above 32 degrees, I stay with normal lure use. Below 32 degrees, I double my lure. Below 0 degrees, I triple my lure use. This is for land trapping because below freezing, you are trapping under the ice on water trapping. Except on faster moving creeks, streams, and river then your sets will stay working longer.

After the first season, and you have made enough to pay back your investment on traps, the next year you can buy more traps and spend more on lures and baits. What good is having traps without good lure? Here is an example the guy that tested my beaver lure ran out of beaver lure his first day. So by the 3rd day his catch drops to 20% or less. This guy is one of the top -beaver trappers in the area. So against my better judgment I sold him 4 oz. of my lure. By the end of the week he was back up to 35 to 50% catch each day. So you see with lure his catch increase 15 to 30%. What does this equal in real numbers?

He was running 40 beaver traps catching between 4 to 8 beaver a day with no lure. With using lure his catch jumped to 12 to 20 beaver a day. In money at \$25 average price per beaver his top day of 50% equal \$300 more profit for a \$12.00 bottle of lure. Now do you see how important lure is? That is just one example. Look at it, good lure equals success.

I have finished my first video on how to trap. With the sets I teach in the video and with a #1 complete package deal and you can make sets for coons like I said. Go get permission and get 24 buckets out per-baited, find your muskrat runs, find your beaver spots. There is absolutely no reason you can not catch enough animals to pay

for all your equipment, give you some extra pocket change and have a freezer full of free meat. Name anything else in your survival supplies that you can say that about. Traps are the only thing I know of that pays for themselves, provides meat and you still have them to re-use every year, over and over again.

That 's all for now. Check out my [new special offer for this month](#). As always, feel free to [e-mail me](#) with any questions.

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Getting Ready for Trapping Season

I was going through my trapping equipment the other day, I do this often. Checking and cleaning the traps up. On the conibears I checked them over to make sure my trap tag is on. Most states require a trap tag on traps with your name and address on them. I checked the safety catches and set the trap, then fired it, to make sure all is in working order. Sometimes, on the larger #330 conibear's the eye opens a little. If the eye opens too much, then the jaws can pop out. If they are open a little, I just whack them closed with a hammer. Then, if the trap checks out, I place them in the dye pile. If I can't fix them quickly, I put those traps are in the repair pile. I have hundreds of traps to check.

The fox and coyote leghold traps take more time. I clean them up, set the trap and test fire with a 2 1/2-pound lifting weight. First, I place a 1 pound hammer on the center of the pan. The trap should not fire on the hammer. If it does, I tighten the adjustment screw and try again. Once it will support the hammer then I try the 2 1/2-pound weight. The trap should fire crisp and smooth. I bought some used traps a few years back, I tested the trap with a weight, some fired at 6 pounds. Some fire at 8 oz., they were all in the same pile. So, I always test the pan. Nothing in the world is more frustrating then seeing fox tracks on the dirt above the trap pan. That means the trap didn't fire and you missed the fox. Yes, it has happened to me.

Next, I check the trap chain and look for any weak spots. I also make sure the trap tag make is still attached. Make sure all the swivels are working correctly. Sometimes, a coyote will chew up a swivel so bad it has to be replaced. Set the trap and make sure the pan is level with the top of the base plate. All my leg-holds are laminated. What that means is that I welded #9 wire on the top of the jaws of the trap. What this does is increase the size of the jaws giving you more holding power on the animal. I check to make sure the welds are holding . Once that is done that trap is set in the dye pile.

Your equipment will directly reflect your success in trapping. If you buy a pile of old used traps that have not been stored properly, the springs on the coil spring trap will be weak and need replacing. I would put them in the pile of traps to be worked on, if there was a lot of rust on them, you know they will always need a lot of work. I bought a pile like that a few years back for muskrat trapping. After going through them, 2 of 12 failed to meet my standards. What was wrong with them ? Weak rusted chain that would break on an animal. They were missing trap pans, so the trap could not even be set. Weak springs that would not close fast. Misaligned jaws so when the

trap closed, the jaws weren't even. This will cause pull outs because the trap needs both surface jaws to close and hold together for the full strength of the trap to hold the animal.

So good equipment holds more animals. If you bought conibears, they are so nice. Very few adjustments. The springs stay strong for years. Set the trap, once the animal sticks his head in he is yours. Once in awhile you will find a conibear set off with nothing in it. Sometimes, it is a do-gooder setting the trap off. Sometimes, the animal is carrying a stick and trips the trap. Or, sometimes it is a trap shy animal that set it off. I look the area over and try to determine why it happened. 99% of the time I move the trap to a new location.

Now, when you are ready to dye your fox and coyote traps, make sure they are clean, being clean should be foremost in your mind. I boiled my traps in plain water to remove all the junk from last year. Then I poured the water off and rinsed the traps in hot water. Hang them up in a tree and allow them to air out for a few days. Then I pour in some trap dye, after I have scrubbed the pot clean. Get the dye at a low boil. The first thing I do is clean my Rubber Made Rough Necks that I use to store my traps in. I have already washed them and rinsed them three times in hot water and allow them to air for a few days. Now, I take some hot dye and splash it in, about a pint and stake it up so that the logwood scent is all over the inside. I dump that outside. Now, that storage container is ready to store traps. So, I seal the top on and store outside.

I boil the traps for 30 minutes and I have them all wired together, so I can just lift the wire up and haul the traps up and out of the pot I am boiling them in. I then allow them to dry by hanging on the outside of my porch. I get another batch going in the pot. Then I get the trap wax melted in a different pot. When the first traps are dry I set them in the hot wax and let them set a minute and slowly pull them out of the wax. You only want a thin light coat of wax. Make sure you are wearing gloves for everything you have handled with your hands. Clean rubber gloves work best for this.

Hang the traps in a tree for a few days, then store in the Rubber Made containers. It is best to do the waxing part outside. So after you pull the traps up you can shake off the excess wax. Some people melt the wax on top of the dye. Some have just a wax pot. Whatever way you decide, make sure you are thinking safety. Wax will catch on fire, if the wax is smoking your heat is too hot. Make sure you keep the kids back from this hot wax, melted wax will cause severe burns. Be careful. Have a tarp standing by to smother any flames. Wax is made from petroleum so using water on this type of fire will only spread the fire. **THINK SAFETY!**

So, you have your traps ready and the wife is ready to kill you for the mess in the kitchen. Now is the time to go scouting. By the time you get back the wife will have calmed down. Maybe you should make it an overnight camping trip if it is a real mess. It's good practice anyway, so grab your gear and go camping. Some women get upset with me after I get their husband into trapping. Just because the house smell like the woods. What kind of woman would be upset with the beautiful refreshing smell of

logwood dye is beyond me. Wait, maybe it's when the guys starts late season predator trapping. Oh, the wonderful smell of long-distance fox lure that has a skunk base. OOPS, sorry guys, I shouldn't have told the women.

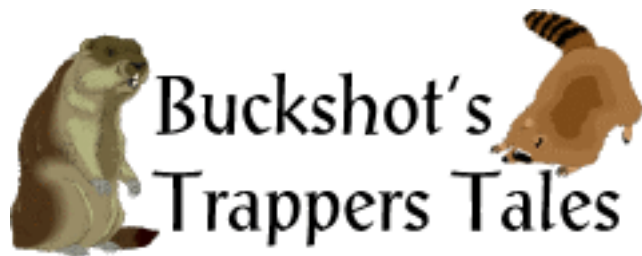
One friend of mine had this brilliant idea of washing his traps. He wanted them sparkling clean before he dyed them. Let us think about this one, sparkling clean, oh yea, that's a TV commercial, what was the name of that dishwashing soap ? Oh, how did you guess, he placed his traps in the dishwasher. There was skunk smell, wax, dye, dirt, leaves, grass and other assorted junk all over the inside of the dishwasher. Can you believe that ? I must admit it did do a pretty fair job on the traps though. We had to dye them at my house that year for some reason. I don't remember when his wife started talking to me again. I think it was a few years. Something about it being all your fault, if he would have never met you this could not have happened! Or some like that. I think that was what she was yelling at me when we loaded the truck with traps. Women!

I was too excited about trapping season to let a little thing like a dirty dishwasher bother me. Besides, since it was dirty I thought we should do all the traps that way. Why clean it twice ? For some reason the husband wouldn't let me ask her if I could do my traps in her dishwasher. She'll get over it. Besides, we are going to get piles of fur this year so when she sees that fur check all will be forgiven. Well, in 3 months that is, when the first fur check will come. Hey friend, my basement has a little room, you can sleep there for a few nights.

Scouting the fur. First, you have to decide what you want to trap. So, lets trap muskrat, mink, coon, and beaver. Ok, sounds like a plan. Besides, that will keep us away from all them famous black and white foxes (skunks). So, go out and find ponds, rivers, streams, marshes and other assorted wetlands. Walk around the woods looking for sign. Muskrats will be climbing on logs and leaving their droppings on them. You will see this on logs that are partially in the water. Look for feed beds where the muskrat can climb up on and leave pieces of roots and green stalks of cattails.

Check for raccoon tracks in the mud. You will see mink tracks also. Where they enter the water and come out. Follow the tracks for a while and see where they go and why the animal does different things. You can learn so much from observing what animal tracks tell you. All you need to do is ask why ? So, when the wife runs you out of the house because of a little dirt in the dishwasher you know it must be scouting time.

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Canoe Scouting and Lessons Learned

I recently floated a river scouting for fur. My cousin Larry was with me and we learned a lot together about nature, animals, camping and fishing. Nothing better in the world then being out with someone who appreciates the great outdoors and is always trying to learn. We try different things to make the trip more comfortable and enjoyable for both of us.



The first lesson I observed was on muskrat sign. I was looking for fresh muskrat droppings on a log half in the water. I wanted one with lots of sign in the sun so I could get a clear picture of it. The first thing I noticed was, the current effect on the muskrat sign. The muskrats avoid the faster current, even if there is good food there. I deduced that fighting the current was not worth the energy to obtain the food. The next thing I noticed was the logs the muskrat chose to leave droppings on. Some were observed in the open, but only a few droppings. The muskrats preferred open logs that had been washed down in the middle of the river with a part dipped under the water. The muskrats seems to like to be able to float in-between this dip and feed and rest on either side of the log. Where do you think the best sign was?



After 2 days of floating, I learned the fact of overhead cover for the muskrat. This is where the best sign was. Slow moving current, with grass and roots overhanging in the water. The best log was a small 3-inch diameter log paralleling the shoreline with a pine tree directly above it. The muskrats on this little log had several piles of droppings, as

many as 15, from old to many fresh ones. I reasoned then that the area had a high owl population and the muskrat soon learned to feed under cover before the silent death from above swooped down and ruin the night. Once you get in the habit of thinking like a muskrat and knowing where to look for sign then you will quickly discover more sign.

Next lesson on fur that was really observed was the river beaver. They preferred to set up bank dens and they range up to 1/2 mile up and down from the den. Rarely were many dens close together. But this was more, I think, due to available food supply then anything else. The beaver also prefer the slower current. Sometimes their den would be in the slow current just before rapids. I would swing the canoe down beside any log that was parallel the river and was stuck out from the shore by a 1 to 2 feet. By looking carefully I could make out the trail of the beaver swimming beside the log and his back feet would scrape the bottom. This is a good set for a #330 conibear. Several trails climbing out of the bank of the river in search of food.

Every side drainage, creek or run off with water had fur sign. These are a fur magnet. Every one with water in it had beaver, muskrat, coon, and sometime mink sign. I would walk up the drainage area and sometimes there was a beaver dam. Over that first dam was always a coon trail. Sometimes a bobcat trail could be made out. I think the animals that hunt the area soon learn where the beaver dams are and especially, the coon and mink learn to hunt the dams for fish, crawfish, and frogs.

Another fur sign area was logs going across the river. Some logs had a clear trail going to the log. By looking closely on the log you can make out faint claw marks from different animals using this as a bridge.



The river is a source of fur and there are always lessons to be learned if you will take the time to look and see. The fur is there, it is your job to not only find the sign, but to figure out where to trap. Always set the small water ways flowing into the main river. Look for cover that will protect the muskrat. Look for crossings over the river to take advantage of easy sets. The signs are easy to see if you just look. Think like the animal you want to trap, think of predators, think of the easy way for them to hunt and cross, then the picture becomes clear in your mind.

The next lesson was from a new water filter I purchased. The water filter fits into a canteen and you fill the canteen up with river water. Screw the filter and cap on and squeeze out. This is incredible, at how good this works. I have bought two, the first one was junk. I bought it the year before from a popular surplus place. It took two hands squeezing like your Arnold for 5 minutes to get one cup of water. This new one is awesome, it squeezed easy and the water is filtered. It is good up to 200 gallons of water. What is great about this is it frees you up from carrying the added weight of water. Plus, when the canteen became warm from the summer heat, I would just dump the water out, find a cool clean spot in the river and refill. Nothing like having fresh, clean, cool water during the heat of the day.

The next lesson was on bears. Something I do by habit but you may not. First, when you are in bear country, you should keep a clean camp. After eating your meal, clean up, wash the dishes, burn the cans down so there is no smell from them. If you have fish, clean them in the river and make sure you throw everything in the water. Then mark your territory. I know this sound funny, but it has always worked for me. When the call of nature comes, have everyone go around different sides of the camp and mark the area. Do all four sides and if you are going to be there any length of time make sure you do this the whole time you are there. Bears are still afraid of humans and by doing this even if the bear approaches the camp from the downwind side

before he gets into camp, he will get wind of one of the spots and leave. Of course this is a general rule and there is nothing like having a 12 gauge with slugs to help you sleep better at night.

The next was making bannock. My cousin had it made by someone else before the trip who tried to brown the bread with lifting the pan and tilting it, trying to bake it off the coals. This was a chewy, half cooked dough, that was not very good. I don't like carrying bread when I'm in the bush because it is always getting smashed to pieces. So, I read up on how the old trappers used to scout for weeks at a time and made their own bread. The recipe is quite simple. All you need is flour, baking soda, salt, and butter or some type of oil for the pan.

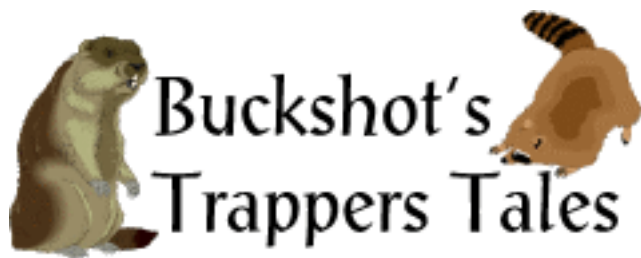
You build your fire and as it is burning down to coals you mix 3/4 cup of flour, one tablespoon of baking powder, a little salt and mix dry. Slowly add water and mix into a dough that is stiff. Don't add too much water. You want it like bread dough not like a thin pancake mix. I have an enamel 7 inch frying pan that is perfect for this. Place the pan on the coals of the fire to heat up. Add butter until it is melted and the pan is lightly coated. Add your dough and spread it out into the size of a pita loaf. Cook one side until you can flip it over without it breaking in half. This is a medium heat away from flame. Once flipped, add some more butter and cook. The bread will rise about 1/2 to 3/4 of its wet size. Check with a sliver of wood until no dough sticks to it.

This is really awesome bread. Like having fresh bread baked every time. We made peanut butter and jam sandwiches by cutting the loaf in half. Try it with summer sausage, eat it with baked beans, cook it for breakfast to go with the eggs. We made 4 pieces of bacon, 3 eggs, and one loaf each for breakfast. This kept us in energy for 5 hours on the river of paddling, hauling the canoe over logs, and walking up small streams. I was even surprised at how long I was full and had energy.

The fishing was fair. I did find that the trout preferred the Panther Martian spinner, about 8 to 1 over Mepps spinners. The river had brown trout and they were fussy, about two strikes per hole then that hole was done. If the fish could see you they would not strike.

Next trip I will re-float the same river and will take a notebook. This will be to figure out how many traps and what kind I will need for this stretch of river. I will also set up little sticks and logs in the trails so the animals will get used to walking or swimming through certain narrowed down spots. Until next time have fun and remember you are always learning.

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Take Your Kids Trapping

If you start your child out in the outdoors you will have some very memorable days. Start the kids out young before they reach 10. Before they are influenced by all the sit at home and I would rather play video games attitude. Show them some raccoon hats. Explain the benefits of trapping to them. Tell them that what they make on selling the fur is their money. Kids have the energy to go for miles. Most kids love to be out with Dad in the woods. It doesn't matter if your child is a boy or girl.

They will have thousands of questions for you. Have them read my trapping articles. Get them involved in every step, from preparing the traps, to scouting for fur, to running the traps, to skinning the animals. I have met some people that feel kids shouldn't be around this. Why? It is natural, clean fun. It helps to teach the kids responsibility, that hard work will bring results and a love for the outdoors. Most people learn by actually doing things with their hands. Kids are the same way. Besides, they will have no prejudices taught to them that skinning and cleaning animals is gross. Not unless you have taught them that.

Tell them the first coon is for their very own hat. If they are too small to set the trap, have them place the bait and the lure. Especially on the bucket set. Explain everything to them. Then after awhile you will come up to a set that has caught an animal. While you re-set the trap, have the child re-bait and re-lure. Call them your little partner. Have them carry the coon for a little bit. Even if it is only 10 feet, they will feel they were part of the adventure. Remember, the old saying, "and Mom I helped". It makes your child feel really good to have helped Dad.

As they get older, when they can handle traps, have them set some muskrats traps first. A real easy set for them to make is to dig a little channel at the water's edge. So it is about 2 inches below the water line, 5 inches wide and about a foot long. Then have them break some sticks and mud and cover the whole thing up on top, so there is a nice little tunnel going back into the bank with about 2 inches of water in the front. Now place a piece of apple in the back and some muskrat lure. Place a #110 conibear in the channel so if the muskrats wants the bait he has to walk through the trap. Stabilize with a small stick through the set jaws and the spring. Cover the top with some leaves to help blend it in. Wire off to a stake in deep water.

If you have them make 6 sets like this on a pond with muskrats, they should catch one or two muskrats a night. Sometimes more, it all depends on how many muskrats are in the pond. I have not met a young boy that does not like to play in water and mud. It

is natural for them to do this. While you are wading around looking for muskrat tunnels and feed beds this will keep them busy with productive work. Now, don't get mad when they catch more than you do. It will happen one day and you will never hear the end of it. But, so what? It helps build the child's confidence, so tell them what a great job they did and ask for some pointers. I'm sure there will be some special digging skill or special way to place the lure that they will mention. Make sure you tell them what a great job they did and how proud of them you are. Brag to someone in from the child about what a great trapper he or she is. Your child's eyes will shine and they will feel real proud of themselves.

Then when they are big enough, have them run the #220 conibears for coons and possum. The bucket set is great for beginners. The kids understand them. Make sure you tell them about the wind. The back of the bucket should be facing the wind. So the smell is coming out the front.

When they catch coon make a big deal out of it. Help them skin it and sell the fur. You will be surprised how important a \$18.00 coon is to a 12 year old. They will have a great time running around the woods, looking for sign, catching fur and just being like a normal healthy child. I remember my son's first raccoon. He set some traps back about mile in the woods from the house on a small stream.

He made 3 dirt hole sets and after 3 days with no catch. I reminded him to re-lure because it had rained. So on the fourth day he is out checking his traps after school and when darkness set in he still was not home. I was getting a little worried about him. About a half an hour later he comes in with a big old raccoon. His first one all by himself. He didn't take a pack, so carrying that 23-pound coon was a lot of work. If you have never done it, try carrying a tapered foot animal or anything that weights 23 pounds by one hand and a .22 rifle in the other. It is hard work, especially in the woods when it gets dark.

So, I took pictures of the coon and listened to story about how he had wired the trap off to a big old water logged tree. It had fallen over and was in the water. He used that for a backing and dug a hole under the log for the bait and lure. Well, the raccoon had chewed the log down, almost in half. He was real impressed with the strength and power of the coon. He said, "He growled and snarled at me." To say he was excited is an understatement. He was very proud of his first coon.

For his birthday I had it made it into a hat for him. That was several years ago and the raccoon hat is still in great shape. He wears it when he bow hunts for deer. When he was in a tree stand for deer, he used to say, "Don't worry deer, I'm just a raccoon and everything is OK, so come on in." I still laugh at that.

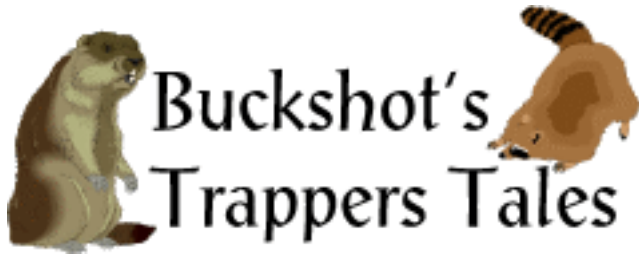
Then when your child is around 15, if you think they are strong enough, have them move up to the #330 conibears for beaver. Beaver trapping is a lot of work. They are big, heavy animals and I think it is the hardest work out of all the trapping I do. So, make sure they have trapped other animals first. The traps are no toys and I highly recommend you always be with them when they are using the #330.

Snares are also wonderful tools for catching animals. Children understand them. All you need is good snares, support wire, and a re-bar stake. Set them on animal trails. On a good coon trail set 3 or 4. That way you can catch 2 or 3 coons a night when they come through.

You will be surprised at how quickly children adapt to trapping. It is one big adventure for them. Spark the interest in them, have them watch my video and get them away from sitting around. I have noticed over the years, the children where the parents started the kids out early trapping, they grow up to be responsible adults. Plus, they like to think that if hard times ever come they will be valuable to have along. Make sure you praise them for catching animals, it makes them feel good about being a provider for the family.

Plus, if anything does happen like Y2K, wouldn't it be nice to know that you have already taught them some great survival skills? Also, they can make some nice pocket change. Why not teach your child to trap this year before you have to rely on the traps? There is no better way to learn trapping then to go out and actually do it. I can write 1000 pages, but nothing will replace hands-on experience. When you first start you will have some problems, make some mistakes, have some successes but most of all you will be out in the great outdoors sharing the experience with your child. Some of my best memories of my Dad are when we were camping, hunting and fishing together. You owe it to yourself and your children to go out and make some life time memories together in the great outdoors.

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A Deer Hunting Tall Tale

I'll tell ya, yes sir, that was the world's biggest buck. Full 20 pointer beams, as thick as a beer can, tines as tall as arrows. This buck was so big, a bull moose would run in fear of him. I mean to tell ya, he was big. One winter he took on a pack of hungry coyotes in deep snow. It was said the fight lasted over an hour. Fur and antlers were just a flying, when it was over, off limped the pack of coyotes. Left standing, was the world's biggest buck. I mean, he didn't even break a sweat whoopin' on them coyotes. Hunters from around the world have chased this buck and no one has ever seen him with a loaded gun in his hand. Well that's not entirely true, there was that greenhorn that saw him.

The greenhorn was all of 19, it was his first time hunting in the big woods of the North Country. The kid was so spooked of the big woods he had himself a compass, a GPS, and a cellular phone. Had himself some custom built \$2,000 rifle with two triggers, with a big fancy scope, said he could hit a gnat at 1000 yards with that rifle. A .300 Win Mag, I think he said it was. Anyways, he come up here in all his fancy duds and walked out to kill, the world's biggest buck. That day the big buck was in one of his funnin' moods and was playing with the dude. You know, he would let the kid get a look at him, you see, so the kid was following him into the Deadman's Swamp. The swamp is so thick that wolves take a detour around it.

So, after four hours of playing with this kid, the world's biggest buck decided it was time to put a little scare into him. I'm here to tell ya, this is the God's honest truth, this is what happened. The kid was tired out from chasing this buck and decided to sit down to eat his lunch. The kid sat his rifle down against a tree and walked over to a fallen log and sat down. Now, the world's biggest buck all 375 pounds of him, breaks through the swamp right between the kid and his gun. I swear to God that this is what the kid told me himself. The buck, standing all proud and mean. Turns to the kid and snorts. You know how them deer snort at you sometimes. Well, this was like 5 feet from the kid's face. The kid said the world's biggest buck snorted so hard it blew his hat off. The world's biggest buck was just playing with him you see.

The buck took a deep breath and shook his antlers, snorting at the kid again. Then he flared his nostrils back and started pawing the ground in front of him. You know how bucks do that when they are about to charge. So, the poor kid was shaking so bad he dialed in 911 on his GPS and then was punching in where he was on his Cellular phone. The world's biggest buck tired of the kid just sitting there playing with his toys, turns and slanders off. Stopped broadside 15 feet past the kids rifle. The kid somehow decided to get up and walk to his gun. The kid picked up that fancy rifle and the world's biggest buck did one of his now famous, paw the ground and snort acts. The kid was pretty shook up, he fired all 6 rounds into the top of a pine tree. Snow was flying down on the buck.



The kid said, and I swear to God to this, that the buck smiled, turned, kicked snow in his face and walked off. The kid never came up to the North Country again, no sir, took him 10 hours to get out of that Deadman's Swamp. I hear the kid sold his rifle and everything. So, began the legend of the Deadman's Swamp's monster buck. The kid said the buck had a 35-inch spread, beams bigger than a beer can, and he swore to God the tines were 20 inches tall.

So, each year the legend of the Monster Buck grew. Professional hunters flew in from around the world and tried for the legendary buck. Bait, scents, lures, stalking, sitting, driving, nothing worked. No one ever came close to the buck.

Right next to Deadman's Swamp is a little stream. I was following it one day and about 8 miles back in, I came across the pond that was there, it was just packed full of the biggest tastiest brook trout one man could ever hope to find. It was a walk in and another walk out, but well worth the effort. So, coming home late one night from the stream, my highbeams hit, what at first I thought was a moose on the road. But, it turned in to the worlds biggest buck. I'm here to tell ya, he was huge, he towered over my pickup. He wasn't moving. My hands were just a shaking, my heart was racing a 100 miles an hour, my God, that's the World's biggest buck. He pawed the ground and snorted. I swear to God, it shook the truck. Then, he just walked off into the woods, without a care in the world.

Well sir, I'm here to tell ya, something powerful came over me. I mean it was almost a message from God himself. I started formulating a plan to get that buck. Come Fall, that buck was gonna die. I would be on all the Hunting shows, Babe Winkerman himself would do a whole show on me. I marked the trail with an empty Pepsi can. Drove home and formulated a plan. I knew how to get the world's biggest buck. Yes sir, it might be a wee bit on the shaky side, but it was worth the risk.

The next day I sold my brand new John Deere riding lawn mower. Took that money and went straight over to Joe's Army Surplus. Joe's a nice guy, just kind of different. Started selling Genuine U.S. Army surplus. So, I told Joe I was gonna be hunting coyotes and didn't want them to smell me. Out of Joe's garage I found the equipment to get the world's biggest buck. First thing I bought was a genuine U.S. Army approved NBC suit. I guess when your in the Army you don't want them pesky reporters from NBC smelling ya. Joe Guaranteed me that the suit was lined with genuine Virginia virgin coal. Some special coal the Army tested and the reporters from NBC couldn't smell them, I guess. Only \$299.97 for the suit, what a deal!!! Ok, I thought, the Buck can't smell me, now what else will I need ?

I came up with a quick plan for phase two of the equipment. Ok Joe, I need some special camouflage because you know them coyotes can see a mouse at 300 yards. Joe, what a great guy, he starts digging through this and that, kicking boxes over, working his way back into the far reaches of the garage. You would have to have been there to understand Joe's highly efficient stock system. To an outsider it looked like a dump with more junk then room. But, oh, to a trained eye like mine, this was the show of a highly organized skill, at it's finest. After about 15 minutes of Joe disappearing into the stacks of boxes and supplies, I was starting to wonder if the garage had a basement, when Joe returned. A big smile on his face.

Joe was dragging a genuine Vietnam Camouflaged net. It was used to cover tanks up with, it said so right on the package. The old good stuff. Boy, he will want \$600 to \$700 dollars for that, I thought. Joe said because we were friends he would give me a deal. But, look you know them coyotes have eyes that can see traces of infrared just like deer can. So you see this here underside of the net has them fancy, genuine approved from the Pentagon, special thinning rolled Washington state aluminum strips to stop infrared. It looks likes tin foil to me, I said. Joe was stunned by the remark, but forgave me for my ignorance. He said " To the untrained eye that is what it was suppose to look like. But, it is so special that after the Pentagon had it made they destroyed the formula for making it, so the Russkies couldn't get it. That is why you can't find it on the new netting.

"Ok Joe, how much ? I only need enough for one suit," I said, trying to get the price down.

Joe sighed, "Have you been listening to me?" "This is a one of kind, it's take it all, or nothing."

"How much?" I asked.

Joe stared at me to figure out how much money I had and says, "For you only \$499." Wow, what luck. Now the world's biggest buck can't smell me or see me. I had to hide my happiness.

"Ok Joe," I said. "Last thing I need is a good infrared night vision scope."

Now Joe was thinking quick, he grabbed a third generation 35,000 powered infrared Russian rifle scope. "Russian, what the heck, how can I read the directions if their in

Russkie talk ?" I asked.

"Hold on there, look a Genuine U.S. Army scope cost ya \$3000. I'll sell this one with the American written directions for only \$1499."

What a deal. I left Joe's with all my stuff minus over \$2,400 when all them taxes was added on. Well, I still had enough left over to buy some shells and a hunting license. I sewed a ghillie suit out of the NBC suit and Camouflaged netting. I could lie next to the road and people would drive right by. I practiced sneaking up on dogs to see if the dogs could smell me, nope, this stuff worked.

The plan was simple, I saw the world's biggest buck cross the road at 2 minutes to midnight. So, the night before opening day of deer season I was gonna be waiting in the woods for the world's biggest buck. The wife would drop me off and I would nail him, wait until morning then come out and be on TV.

So, I dug a little pit and was a waiting in the cold frosty night. At about 11:27 p.m. a coyote came walking by me and never even looked twice at me. Wow, if I can fool them coyote infrared eyes, I can fool the world's biggest buck too. At 2 minutes to midnight I was all excited waiting, searching the woods with the scope on for the world's biggest buck. At 10 minutes after midnight I was about to give up. The world's biggest buck figured out my plan and was laughing at me in the woods. I had been outsmarted, just like everyone else. At 12:30 a.m. I decided to start walking home.

But just then, I heard the crashing in the woods of two bucks fighting. That was why he was late, I thought. The fight was over quickly and then silence. At 2:02 a.m. the worlds biggest buck snuck up right behind me. I heard the ground stumped and felt the warm breath on the back of my neck. How the hell can he smell me ?, I thought. Just then the world's biggest buck slammed the ground with his hoof. It shook the ground like an earthquake hit I knew next what was about to happen, the famous snort. The snort was so powerful the ghillie suit almost came off. The cold night air shot in, chilling me to the bones.

I was so upset, I just spun around put the barrel of the gun right at his chest and pulled the trigger. I swear to God, I hit him dead center in the chest, but nothing changed, the world's biggest buck just stood there like I missed him. So, I fired another shot, and another shot and another shot, and another shot and then it happened, the lonely sound that every deer hunter dreads. CLICK, the gun was empty. The world's biggest buck turned and walk off down the two track and fell over dead, sliding down a little ditch out of sight. Just great, how the hell am I gonna get him out of there ?

I walked over and looked down the ditch. 15 feet straight down, lay the worlds biggest buck and by God, I nailed him. Just then, it looked like the 4th of July was going on. I'm here to tell ya, there was flashing red lights, flashing blue lights, flashing red and blue lights, sirens, police cars, game wardens, flashing yellow lights for the tow truck. There was trucks, and cars coming from both directions. I did what any red blooded American would do! I ran straight into Deadman's Swamp. Night

vision goggles and infrared was all searching for me. You could hear a helicopter over head, using a FLIR (Forward Looking Infrared Red), sirens screamed and dogs were barking. The lead cars saw me running into the swamp. I heard the convoy screech to a halt and doors slamming and guys yelling in the swamp.

The dogs and 25 men, started chasing me into the swamp. Yes, I lead them on a mighty chase. Through the creek water and out on the bank I did the old deer trick and circled back to watch my back trail. The circus of officers and dogs with their night vision goggles and infrared looked right at me, but couldn't see me because of the special Pentagon approved thin-rolled Washington state aluminum strips in my ghillie suit. Guys were yelling and cussing and the dogs were hot on my trail, until they hit the water. They started following the creek edge and I knew they all would be lost soon enough in the Deadman's Swamp. I circled back to the road and just then I saw another vehicle coming. I laid down on the edge of the trail. I looked up and it was the wife with the truck. All the others were chasing me in the swamp, nothing but empty vehicles remained.

I jumped in the truck and had the wife drive over to the ditch where the world's biggest buck laid. I grabbed the portable winch cable placed it on free floating and threw it over a thick branch of a tree in the middle of the road. I grabbed the end and ran down the ditch. Threw the cable around the deer neck and raced back up top. Then I turned on the 2 horsepower electric winch and hauled the world's biggest buck up. The branch was a sign from God, I tell you. That deer raised up and was hanging just perfect over the truck bed. I lowered the world's biggest buck into the bed of the truck. The truck springs groaned in protest. I unhooked the neck and retrieved the rest of the cable, jumped in the truck and raced home.

"How the hell did the law know where I was?", I said aloud. The wife looked a little sheepish and said, "Well... you remember the press release you wrote out to TNN Outdoors, Babe Winkerman, Outdoor life, Buckmasters, TV 6 news and the radio stations all saying you killed the world's biggest buck?", she asked. Ya, so what? ,I replied. "Well, to save time I e-mail the auto loader at 1:30 a.m. giving the exact location of where you killed the world's biggest buck", she replied. "Woman ,I told ya not to e-mail that until I was home. Don't ya know computers put the correct time on it when they send ?" I replied.

We raced home and hung the buck in the garage. I'm here to tell ya that was the world's biggest buck. He weighed in, after field dressing, at 375 pounds. I went to bed. At 6:30 am. when most hunters were heading into the woods I was sound asleep, when all of sudden, I heard someone shouting on a bull horn "your surrounded give yourself up." I stumbled out to see what in the heck my neighbor did this time. Them darn cops had my house surrounded. I opened a window and yelled out to them, "You dang fools the drug dealer's house is next door, I've been telling you that for 2 years now." I mean it looked like the woods all over again, but more cars this time.

There was FBI, ATF, the Sheriff's Department, the State Police, Game Warden's, and the Mayor. Helicopters flying all over my house. Dogs barking. "Next door ya

dang fools", I told them. When the bullhorn guy said my name, I knew I was in trouble. " Leave me alone, I' m eating backstrap from the world's biggest buck for breakfast and I'm not moving until I finish my breakfast", I told them.

So, the wife cooked up breakfast. She cooked backstrap, fried potatoes, fresh farm eggs and biscuits. When them darn fools started knocking on the door. I was thinking of Cheech and Chong. "I hear ya knocking but you can't come in, I'll be out in a minute", I yelled. "Hey look the drug dealer is home, while you are waiting, go arrest them."

I was just starting to eat my breakfast when them darn fools started on the bullhorn again. "Come out with your hands up you poacher", he said.

"Poacher, I wasn't a poacher", I thought. I waited until opening day to shoot him you darn fools", I replied. I was just finishing breakfast when they started bashing my door with the Genuine Battle Ram made by K-tel. As I placed the last piece of backstrap in my mouth, four of them tackled me. They treated me like I was a drug dealer. I was still chewing as they hauled me outside.

The Game warden took the world's biggest buck and said the head would be mounted at the state museum. I was given a \$1,500.00 fine, plus \$5,000.00 restitution for the deer, and 30 days in the County Jail. So son, as we sit here in this County Jail, I'm telling ya my story of the world biggest buck. "What do ya think ?", I said.

And I swear to God this young Whipper Snapper said, "Wow man wouldn't it have been cheaper to go to McDonalds?"

"Where in the world would he get a dang stupid idea like that?" I thought. Shaking my head, "These young folks of today just don't understand nothing anymore."

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An A-to-Z Dictionary of Trapping Terms

I have received 1,000's of e-mails over the last six months from wonderful people all around the world. Thank you all for your support. One thing that keeps coming up is definition of trapper's term. After trapping for so long I didn't realize we have our own language and definition of terms. So here it is, trapping from A-Z. I hope you enjoy it.

A= ALMYGODITSABEAR. This term is will know to bear hunters and trapper who in a chance encounter with a bear this phrase is often heard.

B=BULLETS. This phrase is often in conjunction with 'A' after the one partner says ALMYGODITSABEAR, the other replies I hope you remember the Bullets!!!!!!

C=CAUSEYOU SAID. This phrase can be heard when you ask your partner HOWINTHEWORLD DIDYOU MISSTHATSHOT, he replies causeyou said try for head shot so we have more meat.

D=DUMB. This phrase is heard a lot among new trappers. That dumb animal sure made a fool out of you.

E=ELEPHANTGUN. This phrase is often heard about dude hunters. 'With that ELEPHANTGUN he carries the bear well die of heart attack just from the noise .' A good thing because he can't hit the broad side of a barn.

F=FISHINGTALE. This phrase is heard at night around the campfire. 'We were spring beaver trapping up in the grand Tetons and I had a hankering for fresh fish so I build me a fish trap just like the old Mountain Man did. I swear to God the next day that trap was so full of fresh trout we would have fish for a week. But then ALMYGODITSABEAR happened and then my partner said the dumbest thing I ever hear. "I hope you remember the bullets" Heck I even forgot the gun!!!

G=GRINNERS. This is when you spend 15 minutes making the perfect fox set and the next day a big ole possum is waiting for you. When you approach him, he opens his mouth and shows all his teeth like he's grinning at you.

H=HOWINTHEWORLD DIDYOU MISSTHATSHOT. This phrase is heard when you just miss an elk broadside at 20 yards. If you hadn't had fresh meat in a month it

will go more like this #^\$&^(*&)*(&&^&%^\$^\$%shot.

I=IDTRACK. Sooner or later someone will be heard that you are a trapper and call you up to come Identify some weird track they found in their garden. If they say it looks like a bigfoot track tell them they're right.

J=JUSABOUTHATTIME. This phrase is often heard at the campfire and is either an F or an A story so pour some more coffee and sit back for another hour of (lying) of true wilderness tales.

K=KILLTHEBEARNOW. This phrase is heard during the middle of the night when some thing warm and furry brushes against your nose. That is why I had all my trapping partners sleep closest to the open tent door. The accidentally dropping the pound of bacon grease on his sleeping bag may have been a contributing factor but Heck I don't think so. I wiped it all up with his pillow.

L=LONGTIMAGO. This phrase is heard when talking to a dude about Trapping. "A long time ago I use to trap fox." I swear not one them use to trap anything else. Just ask them what size trap they use and when they say you know those 221-222 connybears traps, just smile and walk away.

M=MIGHTGET. This phrase is heard on the way to the fur buyer. We mightget \$40 a coon.

N=NOTHINGDOIN. This phrase is heard when you ask for \$40 a coon.

O=OHMYGODTHAT'SABIGBEAR. This phrase is heard from your partner in the middle of the night. Just tell him to go back to sleep we can IDTRACKS in the morning it is just a bigfoot!!!

P=PURPOSLYMISSED. This phrase is use when you miss the 50 pound bobcat that was worth \$350. 'I purposlymissed him so he will bring a friend next time and we can trap both of them!!!!

Q=QUOTEME. This phrase is used when talking to the dude about IDTRACKS. You can quoteme on that "I say them are bigfoot tracks no bear has a 16 inch track.

R=REALGOODTIMETOTELLME. This phrase is heard when the bullet question comes up. Ahhhh I thought you pack the bullets. Can also be use with

KILLTHEBEARNOW. When your partner is praying out loud about why the bear pick him and you mention that you accidentally drop the bacon grease on his sleeping bag.

S=S**TOUTOFLUCK. This phrase is heard after trapping all year you and your partner dump the canoe fill of furs on the little waterfall losing the whole year's catch. Of course the fur prices will be at an all time high when this happens.

T=TRAPS. This one is use all the time. I ordered 10 doz. traps, I set 10 traps, I have to dye and wax my traps, I need more traps, I have to check my traps, I have to set

more traps, if I had more traps. My wife said I need new traps because my old ones are rusty!!!

U=USUALLYMYTRAPSAREFULL. This phrase is use to explain why all 150 traps are empty when you are applying for a \$100,000 contract and the owner ask why all your traps are empty.

V=VERRRRRYGOOOOOOD. This phrase can be heard when you take the dude trapping and he catches twice as many animals as you do. Remember the bacon grease for these occasions.

W=WATERFALLNOPROBLEM. This phrase can be heard just before S**TOUTOFLUCK.

X=XPARTNER. This phrase is sometime heard after KILLTHEBEARNOW. That no good xpartner drop a whole pan of bacon grease on my sleeping bag.

Y=YDIDIEVERSTARTTRAPPING. This phrase is heard AFTER S**TOUTOFLUCK happens or you lost the \$100,000 contract. Or just before your partner said WATERFALLNOPROBLEM.

Z=ZIPYOURMOUTHSHUT. This phrase can be heard when your partner is telling the best trapper in ten states were you caught all your fur and how no one else is trapping near you.

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Living on the Edge

I have, through out the many years enjoyed lots of great adventures in the great outdoors. What I'm about to relate are all true tales of my quest for fur and fun. I hope you enjoy reading them.

Don't Worry, He'll Play Possum

When I was a teenager my younger brother and I were walking home at night. We cut through an open field and ran across a possum. Not by any means a large possum, only a little 5 or 6 pounder.

It was a cool Fall night and the pelt was worth some money. Being in a open field I had to run back to the woodline for a stick to properly dispatch the animal with. As I ran off, I told my younger brother to go up and kick it and it will play possum. Playing possum is when the animal feels it is in mortal danger and it will play dead. The animal actually slows it heart beat down and appears not to be breathing.

My younger brother was always impressed by my vast outdoor knowledge. He ran up to it believing what I said was true and kicked the possum. The theory must be true you know, the old timers have told me my whole life. Well, guess what the possum didn't do?

How did you guess ?

My brother kicked him a good one and the possum took a roll and came up a fighting. No, the possum is not known for his fierce fighting skills. But, didn't here to tell you he is no slouch either. So, I grabbed a stick and came running back, just in time to see my brother running toward me. Right behind him is this little possum, all teeth and coming up quick. I dispatched the animal with one blow to the head. Adrenaline is amazing stuff. For some reason to this day, 20 some odd years later my brother still talks about not listening to me for some reason.

Muskrat Playing Possum

Back about the same time of the now famous possum incident this happened. I was running muskrat traps along a small stream and had made a log set for muskrats. The set is where the muskrats climb up on a log to eat. So, I set a trap there and used some lure and was catching a muskrat a night for 3 nights in a row. The only problem was

the set was off a steep short bank. The creek was over my hip boots and I walked the bank, then would climb down the steep bank to retrieve the muskrat and re-set the trap.

This time the muskrat was not drowned and out of sight. No, it was laying on the surface with it's head under water. A friend was with me. I said, "I'll the grab the m'rat and you go check the next trap." I climbed down the steep bank and stepped in the water. The whole time the muskrat has not even wiggled one tiny bit. I stepped out in the water and reached down for the tail. I remember thinking why isn't this muskrat drowned in deep water ? When my hand wrapped around the tail and I gave a pull the strangest thing happened. The dead muskrat moved like grease lighting. I mean this old male thought it's sole purpose in life was to bite me 200 times in a minute. Muskrats have long teeth, two upper and two lowers. The lower ones are about 2 inches long.

isn't here to tell you that when this enlightening experience happens to you, where you can't run, it help you to understand what the survival instinct of flight or fight really means. I looked for a stick to defend myself with. The only one I saw was one sticking out of the water. I grabbed hold and yank it out of the mud and ended this dispute quickly. Then my friend, hearing the whole ruckus came running back and pointed out that the stick I pulled out was the trap stake. I had pulled it out so quickly the trap ring had fallen off and the muskrat was free to swim off with the the trap. He probably would have made it too, if he had not been so insistent on biting me. The little muskrat is not afraid to fight. He may be little, but he is mean.

A Dog and a Red Fox

When I was growing up I had a dog name Tiny. True to his name he was only 11 inches at the shoulder, weighed about 15 pounds. He was half Beagle and half Dashound. This dog did not know the word fear. He would take on anything. During pheasant season one year my dad and brother and myself worked a cornfield, then worked the woodlot looking for rabbits. In the woodlot a red fox came by my dad and he knocked it down with birdshot. The fox got back up and my dad yelled to me it was coming my way. I froze and waited. Soon this red fox was trotting by and at 20 yards I shot it. The fox went down and I ran up reloading along the way.

Just about then, Tiny shows up, seeing the fox get on his feet and charging me. I couldn't shoot because the little dog ran in to protect me. The fight was loud and fierce. The dog looked to be out matched as the fox was twice as long as him. The fight was a ball of movement, of red and black as the two fought it out. The dog would cry in pain when the fox was winning, then the fox would whelp in pain and growling, snarling to beat the band. What a sight ! My dad was yelling, shoot the fox. I was yelling, I cant, Ill hit the dog. Neither the fox or dog was giving an inch, this was a death fight where there would be only one winner.

The fox being larger, gained the advantage, it had my beloved dog on his back, working in for the killing bite to the throat. I knew I had to do something before I

watched my beloved hunting pal die before my eyes. I couldn't shoot. My dads yelling at me to kill the fox or the dog is going to die. So, I waded into the fight and kicked the fox as hard as I could. The fox flew a few feet away and landed on his feet, the dog was up and the fight continued. I could see the dog was hurt and getting tired, but would not give up the fight.

My dads still yelling as he ran through the woods. The blood and fur was flying and the dog was losing. The fox pinned him down again and I decided it was time to end this. I waded into the fight again and kicked the fox off the dog and before he hit the ground shot him in the throat with a 20 gauge single shot. This time the fox was dead. Tiny ran up and grabbed the fox by the throat and shook him until he was convinced the fox was dead.

That was one of the most spectacular animal fights I have ever witnessed. Tiny and I had many adventures when I was growing up. The dog was unreal. He lost part of one ear in a coon fight. Was shot with a .22 rifle by some jerk. Climbed down possum dens and fought it out with the possums. He would kill the possums and haul them to the top for me. Caught the largest pheasant I have ever seen without a shot fired. Hunted rabbits until you shot them. I miss him, his dedication and loyalty has never been replaced in any of my other dogs. This is a tribute to my beloved hunting companion, Tiny.

Bobcat Trapping up Close

I was running fox traps one year and was having a typical day with a couple of fox and coons in the back of the truck. I pulled up to a farm and was walking out to check my set. I was using drags to get away from a theft problem I was having from spotlighters driving around and stealing the animals in my traps. These people are typical in some areas. No job, living in a dump, kids running around and welfare supporting them. They are some of the best poachers in the area. Some areas of the country they call them shiners, spotlighters, jack lighting, and assorted other names. I call them scum bags.

They drive on private property, drive over the farmers fields, shine deer and shoot them by the truck full. Plus, steal from trappers. As they are out looking for deer with their spotlights they will come across my foxes, coyotes, and coons in traps. Then, I find the trap circle made by an animal and the area looks torn up and an empty trap with a pile of blood where they shot them. You can tell when it is poachers, because they don't steal the traps and they shoot the animal with a .22. A shotgun shot animal leaves a larger blood spot. The poachers know that the trappers are sick of being stole from and have marked their traps with weldings and other tricks. Then the trappers show the game warden, so if the scum bags rip off the trap tag, the trap can still be ID in the field. Once the poachers know this, they stop stealing the traps. But not the animals.

I was sick of doing all the work while these leeches were stealing my catch. So, I switched to drags. This works good because the animal goes into bushes and is out of

sight and the poachers miss them . Not all, they still find some, but I bring home more fur than when I staked the traps solid. So, this one morning I came up to farm to check the trap and the drag was gone. It was raining lightly, it was a cool day. The woods smelled of Fall. A friend was with me. The drag was gone. There was a faint trail going into some brush, about 20 yards from the trap. I walked in and saw where the area was all torn up. But no animal. I looked carefully and could just make out where the animal pulled through to a dirt road. We spilt up and I allowed the other guy to take the .22 rifle. He took one side of the road about 20 yard in and I took the other side. The rain had washed away any drag marks on the road.

About a 100 yards from the set. I heard this noise and saw this animal jumping like mad trying to get out of the trap. At first with the brownish skin, I thought it was a coyote. Because it was so tall. Then it stopped fighting the trap, flattened its ears and let out a blood curling scream at me, that I will never forget. He was only 20 feet away. This bobcat was not afraid of me at all. So, he decide it was time to fight. Me not having the gun decided it was time for some help. I yelled, Bring the gun. The cat thought this was a challenge, now remember, he is on a drag with 6 feet of chain between me and him. He turns toward me and charges. I'm yelling, Bring the gun. The bobcat is snarling and screaming and I'm wondering if the drag is going to pop off. The drag stopped the cat, but he kept growling deeply at me. The other guy came up and I said, shoot him, now. The shot end this quickly. The bobcat weighed in at 31 pounds.

A Fisher in the Dark

For those of you not familiar with the fisher. It is in the same family as a mink. The females are about 6 to 8 pounds and the males are 12 to 15 lbs. After releasing several of these animals, I started calling them Tasmanian Devils. I mean they are hyper, strong, and just go wild when you try to take them out of a trap. The females are not too bad, you can cut a forked stick, hold their head down and release the trap and the animal is gone in a flash. The males on the other hand want to kill you from the start. I mean, I have had them pop their heads out of the forked stick and just chew their way up the stick, like corn on the cob. I let one male go and he chased me back to the truck.

I have a great respect for these animals. So, I wised up and bought a release pole. That way when I run my traps in the dark, for fox before I go to work, I can easily release the animal. So one morning I'm checking traps and have this big male fisher in the trap. I mean, big, close to 20 lbs. Of course, my flashlight died when I was checking the last trap, so, I could just barely see in the early pre-dawn hour. I placed the release noose over his neck, tightened it down and put the animal to the ground. Much better I thought. I stepped on the release pole and grabbed the trap lever and popped his foot out. Well, if I had a flashlight with me, I probably would have seen that the release noose wasn't all the way around his neck. Anyway, the strangest thing happened. When his foot pop out so did his head.

He grabbed a hold of my pant leg and started to climb and bite his way up my leg.

Now, all I can see is a super hyper dark animal growling, biting, snarling up my leg. I kicked out as hard as I could. The fisher had his teeth dug into my pant leg and when my leg came back so did he. Real panic set in. I think I kicked with other foot hitting the Tasmanian Devil in the head and then kicked out with the other foot. Old Taz went a flying. He hit the ground at a dead run, straight back for me. If I would have had a gun, I would have shot him on the spot. But no gun, I ran for the truck.

Making it to the truck just before Taz, I leaped on the hood. He circled to the other side and I jumped in the truck, slamming the door. Poor defenseless animals, does not apply to fishers !!!

So when someone says, Its not a job, but an adventure, ask them if they trap. If their answer is yes, now you understand, if the answer is no, then tell them they should start and see real adventure up close.

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How to Trap a World Record Coyote

One year I was fox trapping and checking my traps in the dark before work. One morning I came up to a trap on a drag and notice the trap was gone. I started following the trail in end up in an old coyote den. Having to be on work on time I left. After work I return with a friend and a shovel. Thinking that I had caught a coyote and he got inside the den and then the den cave in behind him. We start digging up this monster coyote.

I came up the drag about two feet in hook to a root. The drag chain was over 6 feet long so we had a lot of digging to do. I un hook the drag from the root because it was in the way. I thought the coyote must be in a hiding chamber and soon I will break through and see him. I set the drag down and reach back to get the shovel and the drag move in about 3 inches. I grab the drag and yell to Craig (the Craig from the bear story) get some wire for the drag. The coyote didn't like the yelling and started to pull me in the den as I tried to hold the drag from being pull out of sight. Hurry the coyote must be one of those 65 pounds because he was dragging me inside. Craig show up with the wire and we wired it off to a strong tree.

"Craig you dig for a while that was work" I said "That has to be the biggest coyote in Michigan maybe we have the new record size coyote" Craig point down in the dirt and there was my boot tracks in the dirt trying to dig in and being drag inside. Craig Said "we are going to be the most famous coyote trappers in Michigan after we get him." Start digging. It was around 4 p.m. when this little adventure began. At 6 we were at the trap chain and still digging. The trap chain was only 12 inches from the trap. The drag chain was 6 feet long. It would be dark soon.

I took my Ruger 10-22 and thinking the coyote was just inside the hiding den shot a few rounds were I thought his body should be. Nothing. The smell of burnt gunpowder was thick. I keep digging until I could see the trap in it was a foot and the animal had gray fur. I saw the gray fur and thought, what a coyote. I was looking at the fur and not the foot. I pick up the 10-22 and guess were the body should be and was about to fire when the meanest looking badger decide it was time to fight.

Now I'm no guy with nerves of steel, no sir. But I know that when you are 6 feet underground and Mr. attitude is having a bad day is not the time to run. If you have never had the pleasure of such encounter let me try to explain what it looks likes. Image the Tasmania devil on steroids. Badgers front feet have claws about 3 inches

long. Of course the trap was on one of his back feet. Teeth that can scare a Grizzly bear off. The attitude is already there now give it a bad day and meet Charles Manson of the badger family.

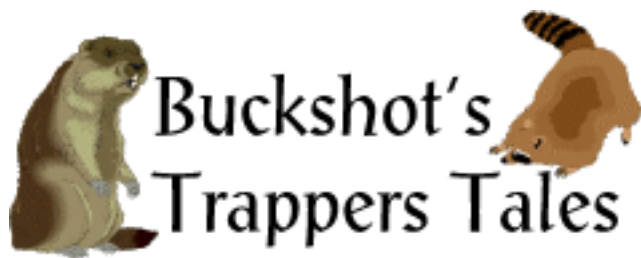
Of course this is not only Mr. Attitude of the badger but it is the largest badger I have ever seen or heard of. He weight in at 23 Lbs. I believe my thought pattern went something like this, oh it is a badger that exp.....oh my god he is going to rip me to shreds, Those claws are 6 inches long, his teeth the way they are snapping are going to hurt, Please God make sure I ex leave the safety on. Where the heck is the trigger? MY MIND WAS THEN IN NEAR PANIC STAGE AS THE BADGER CLOSE THE SHORT DISTANCE BETWEEN US. Shoot, shoot, shoot, my mind was screaming at me at 1 foot in front of my face my hand found the trigger and ten shots were fired in less then 2 seconds. The gun was on my right side and the barrel was no more then 6 inches in front of my face. The hole was so full of dirt flying, smoke and dust I coulcouldn't what happen? Craig said I was screaming and he grabbed my feet and pull me out.

Big Badger, big badger den, big badger, Craig said I was mumbling. When the dust and smoke clear Craig climb in and pull out the largest Badger I have ever trapped. 23 lbs and 400 grains of lead to add to his weight. I didn't miss a single shot. But at 6 inches from the barrel it would have been hard to miss. The sound of the growl and the attack was blood chilling and I can testify that a badger has the strength to scare a bear off. I know I saw first hand.

The badger is short stout mean little critter. The badger spends his life digging through the ground like a possessed demon. Creating mazes of underground tunnels and exploring the world. There main diet is grubs and I think if you spend most of your life underground digging holes and eating grubs you too would have an attitude. When the badger comes up for air and to see the other world they have a defiant attitude about being left alone. For some reason they will attack anything in there path and because they are very nearsighted they fight like demons.

So here is my definition of the badger. Short, mean, bad temper, grub eating, hole maker, bad breath, nearsighted, needs to relax in the sun, ball of muscle teeth and claws. Gray in color powerful, prefers to fight, think he owns the world, and will make a 1000 pound Grizzly run for cover. Other then that he is just another cute cuddle woodland creature.

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Hunting When it Counts

There is a whole different outlook on hunting where a miss means you don't have food for the table. As I learned late last year.

In the beginning of October the wife and me hit on some tough times. We had invested most of our money in trapping supplies and the orders had fallen off. Money was tight. It looks like we had a \$100 for food for the whole month. Well if you have not shopped lately, a \$100 is a joke for food. So we stocked up with a 50-pound bag of potatoes, onions, carrots, flour and a few other things. I told the wife it was good Y2K training. We bought no meat. None. The meat had to come from my hunting skill.

As I said, there is a whole different outlook on hunting where a miss means you don't have food for the table. I have done it before, but each time it is a learning lesson. As I scouted for trapping area, I start carrying my 16-gauge pump shotgun with #6 shot. After scouting along a stream for three hours I walk right until a covey of grouse. The leaves were still thick at the time and the birds disappear quickly before I could draw a bead. One landed in a tree about 100 yards away. I crept over and flushed a grouse -- an open shot but I missed. The sound of that shot scared the bird in the tree. It flew away and I was standing there with an empty game pouch.

Lessons learned: I should have stayed with the bird in the tree bringing one bird home is better than none. The old saying one bird in hand is worth two in the bush rang true.

I set up a deer blind and baited it with apples. After two days the deer still hadn't touched the apples. We don't have a lot of deer in the far north because of the heavy deep snow. So I took a bottle of muskrat lure and pour about a 1/4 of a bottle high on a branch. The next day the apples were all gone. Good deal. I re-baited and sat with my bow until dark nothing. Must be a morning stand?

The next morning before daylight I climbed on my bucket and waited for daylight. If you have never sat in the woods before daylight and watched the sunrise, you are missing a special treat. As the light come in the forest wakes up and chipmunks start running all over. Then the squirrels start hopping and at a distance they sound like a deer. Because they hop and stop and hop and stop. Like a deer walking a few steps and then stop to look around. After a few like that and you are waiting for a deer you started to ignore the sounds. A flock of chickadee flew in and I watched them work the forest floor for food. One landed on my bow and I held perfectly still watching the bird.

How amazing the woods is! Even after all the years in the field, I still enjoy being there. About one hour into daybreak, no deer. I stretched looked around and opened a paperback. I will wait another hour then was about to move on, when, I hear a squirrel coming from my right hopping stop, a few minutes later, hopping, stop. I just keep reading ignoring the squirrel. Out of the corner of my eye I saw something large move. I slowly lower my book and set it down. Then I S-L-O-W-L-Y sat up and saw a doe was walking in really cautious. No matter what I do when I set up a deer stand, they come in on the wrong side.

I'm right-handed so I like the deer to come in on my left side so I don't to move as much to shoot. The light breeze was coming from behind me to the left. I had to shoot before the deer reach my scent. When the deer took a step, I moved my bow. When the deer stop, I stop. For what seemed like an hour I was almost ready to draw my bow back. I'm sure it was only a few minutes. The deer had looked at me a couple of times but keep scanning passed me not alarmed. The deer step behind a tree and I swung the rest of my body over so I could draw when she steps out. She stepped out right when I finished moving and the bucket groaned. She whipped her head around and stared right at me.

I never stare back at the deer eyes because it is a staring contest and I have learned you will lose this one. The deer will stare for 10 minutes until your eyes water and then you blink. So I stared at the shoulder. She turned toward the apple pile then took a step and whipped her head around to see if I had moved. I almost bust out laughing. She did this once more and then, satisfied it was nothing, started toward the apple pile. With her head past me, I drew back and the bowstring scraped my coat. She whipped her around but it was too late. Starring at me I ignore her and focus my complete thoughts on where I want the arrow to hit. When I was sure the arrow would hit the 2-inch square just behind her shoulder I released. Before she could react the arrow was through her. A perfect double lung shot. She ran about 60 yards and stood there staring back at me.

I know from pass bow hunting experience the best thing to do now is sit still and watch. A doe, unlike a buck, will watch for a while then lay down after a while and will bleed to death so you can find her easy. A buck, even a spike, will run forever until they die. I have tracked a buck for over a mile to find them. But if you spook the doe when she is close you will be tracking for along time, just leave her alone. After about 20 minutes I walk over slowly looking for movement. Nothing. I place my bow tag on and gut the deer.

I breathe a sign of relieve, the freezer has meat. The wife and I processed the deer and there is some great video footage on deer processing ready to go on the market. The next night we celebrate the success with back straps, fried onion, fried potatoes and fresh garden tomato slices. That is living.

I switch to my .22 single shot loaded with Remington yellow jackets. I cut a load of firewood, then scout for fur. No wasted gas, firewood, scouting for fur and hunting every trip out. One day I see two grouse sitting on a down log. One was nervous and

ran off but the other one turn sideways and the .22 cracked -- one grouse for dinner. The other grouse flew off when I walked up. As I was driving out about a 100 yard up on the logging road two gray squirrels run across.

I parked the truck, grabbed the old trusty single-shot and slowly walked up. I spotted one squirrel the same time he saw me and he ran back across the road up a pine tree out of sight. I look for the other squirrel and finally spotted him at 35 yards, sitting on an oak stump. I can just see the squirrels through the leaves. I didn't want to move and spook him so I decide to shoot through the leaves. I shot and knocked the squirrel off the stump I hear leaves rustling then nothing. I work my way over to the stump no squirrel. I didn't miss I saw the squirrel get knock off from the shot.

I look all around no squirrel. The loggers had cut down a lot of trees and the tops were all over. I circle back to the stump and look for where the squirrel hit. A blood spot. I stop and bend down looking for disturbed leaves. About 5 feet away I see leaves all moved around. I step over and look another blood spot. Then another blood spot, a few more feet another spot, at 20 feet from the stump under a log is the tip of a gray squirrel tail. I grab hold and pull the squirrel out. My shot hit him in the stomach instead of the heart lung area.

A grouse and a squirrel -- a good day! I walk back and hear a squirrel chirp. I slowly creep over and spot him on the tree one more shot and it is two squirrels and a grouse for the day. Then the first one I saw started chattering away at me, up in the pine tree. I look for 10 minutes for him. Finally way up on the top I see a branch move and a clump. Through all the branches and pine needle it look like the gray squirrel. The .22 crack the clump rattle but nothing fell. Just then about 10 feet away the squirrel decide this tree wasn't a safe place to be. He takes off running and jumps from tree to tree. I ran over, reloading as I run. When I saw the squirrel running on a long branch with about a 3-foot leap coming up, I knew from past experience that the squirrel would hesitate before the leap. I aim at the end of the branch. I have seen this many times squirrels will stop for just a second before they leap. Right on cue, the squirrel stops and the .22 cracks -- three squirrels and a grouse for one day's hunting. I fired five shots.

When I'm in a "have to have the meat" mood, I pass up some iffy shots. It is not good to spook game. But remember hunting in good times is different when hunting is done every day by a whole crew of people. Animals quickly learn new tactics to hide from you. I have seen pheasant crawl passed me in an open field 2-inch high grass. I saw the grass move but did not see the bird. Not until my dog flushed her. Rabbit will turn nocturnal and so will deer. I have walked up on some deer and almost stepped on them before they moved. Deer learn that most hunters walk too fast and don't see them, so staying put works for some. I have also tracked deer for 7 hours and never seen them.

That is why it is called hunting. You never know what to expect.

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Choosing a Survival Weapon

The weapon debate is as old as guns themselves. The question of what caliber is best for a battle weapon will go on for years. I have read several survival books and have seen different guns recommended. Some writers don't even recommend -- they just ramble on. I, for one, form my opinion based on actual people who fought in wars, the police and FBI reports. I don't rely on the TV for my news and never, never for my weapons. Here is what I recommend for weapons in the survival camp.

One, you need a battle rifle. Military weapons are built to take punishment and keep on working. If you are on a budget then get an SKS, I prefer the Russians, but the Chinese weapon is good also. The rifle comes with a shortened stock, and most women I know that have shot the weapon like the short stock and light recoil. The weapon's price is from \$200 to \$300 and ammo for a case is about \$100. The SKS is a proven battle rifle, chrome barrel and very reliable. Compared to the .30 caliber carbine the SKS is far superior. The SKS round past a 100 yards has more knockdown power then the M16. I have choreographed the SKS and most brands come in at 2400 fps.

Most are reliable with the tapered shell design and they are forgiving when gotten dirty. The M16 must constantly be cleaned and has all kinds of design faults corrected over the years. The SKS was invented during WW II and has not had very many changes. You don't change what works. The stripper clips need a little work. I found they are pinched in spots and you need to pry them up so the shells feed smoothly through them. Out to 200 yards with the sights from the rifle, the gun is outstanding. Most people can learn how to strip them down and clean them. They come with a cleaning rod and a cleaning kit in the butt stock. For the money, there is no better battle rifle.

The next choice is the M 1 Garand. This 30-06 caliber is a very proven weapon. The U.S. used this caliber in WW I, the bolt action A03-06, and in the M1 Garand in WW II. You see, I talked to an Army sniper in WW11 who thought the M1 Garand was the best rifle ever invented. I hunted with this gentleman and saw him drop running deer at 100 yards. He was so good, before we even walk up to the deer he told me within a 1 inch of where the bullets hit the deer.

The M1 Garand is capable of 1,000 yd. shots. Surplus 30-06 ammo has been dumped on the market and FMJ, and armor-piercing shells can be found. This is a great

caliber.

The next weapon is the M14; this shoots a .308 caliber, the same as the M60 machine gun. The US Army uses this caliber for their sniping needs. FMJ's can be found for this weapon and it is a great one to have. The gun is semi-auto with clips for quick reloading.

One of those 3 rifles is a good choice. Military weapons are built to last and take more punishment than civilian rifles. Ammo in case lots is easier and cheaper to find. FMJ, tracer, armor piercing and match grade ammo is available. This gives you more of a choice for ammo and greatly increases the effectiveness of your gun.

To me, a military rifle is the only choice, one of the top three will last for years, each has their benefits and weakness. Pick one and make it a standard for all of your rifles.

The next gun on my list, is a .22 rifle. I like the Ruger 10-22, a well-built repeater. With good ammo, the gun quite accurate. You can use it running traps and you can use it for light defense. A well placed .22 round, using solid points have killed bears, moose, and deer all over North America. Plus, with the TV on or sleeping most people can't hear the shot. It is a good small-game gun and you will find many uses for it.

.22 ammo is cheap and you can get 500 rounds from \$11.00 to \$20.00, so stock up. I would have 5000 or more rounds stored.

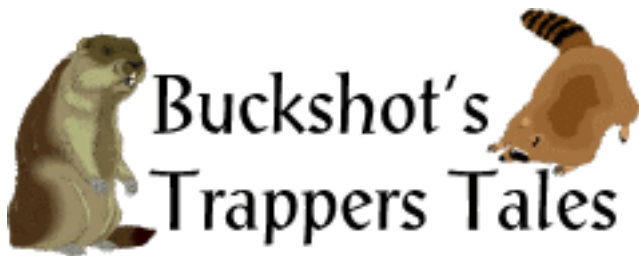
The next gun is a 12-gauge pump, I prefer the Remington 870. It is simple to break down to clean and is very reliable. That is why the military choose this gun. With double ought buckshot, out to 20 yards -- this gun is deadly. The big drawback is the short range. But, as a final defense weapon, it is highly desirable because of the spread and at close range more hits will happen. This was proven in the Civil War. A Pennsylvania company of Union soldiers loaded their smooth bore rifle with the main ball and 3 buckshot size balls. The rebel Army suffered so many wounded and dead from this company that they were feared for the rest of the war.

Only after you purchase the battle rifle, the .22 rifle and the shotgun and enough ammo to back them up, then and only then, should you buy a pistol. Ask anyone in a war how much their pistol was used in combat and 99% of the time it was never used. I don't like the 9mm. The SW .40 or the .45, these would be good choices. Buy one and get extra clips for it.

All weapons should have extra clips. 1000 rounds for the rifle, 500 rounds of 00 buckshot and slugs, 5000 rounds for your .22 and 1000 rounds for- your pistol.

We can debate weapons and choice for years. I believe in the proven weapons from the military.

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Young Trapper Tales

This is a new part to Trapping Tales any young trapper under 17 years old that write a story that is put up wins one free video and one free bottle of lure. The writer can choose which videos and lures. Here is the first one. Thank you Cody.

Cody's Story

Trapping tales from a new Young Trapper. I'm 14 and I live in Superior, Wisconsin, a town of 30,000, on the shore of Lake Superior. The way I got started trapping is I was over at my grandpa's house one day out in the garage and I saw some traps hanging from the wall. I asked him what he trapped and how, he took the traps down and showed me how to set them.

In the house he told me stories about trapping in North Dakota where he used to live. He told me of trapping Mink and Muskrats, back then the mink were worth \$60 and he helped his family with that money. That day I asked him if I could use some of his traps, he said go ahead take as many as you want I took 1 doz. #1 ½ Jumps 1 doz. #2 Jumps and 2 doz. #1 Stop-loss. He helped me clean them up and dye and wax them. The traps were all ready to set. He also gave me some homemade 21" stakes. When I got home my dad gave me some 110 conibears and showed me how to set them. There was still a month before trapping season opened.

A week later, when me and my cousin were fishing, we saw a 3 mink coming out of a hole along a bridge I told my cousin that I was going to catch them, so the next day my cousin and I put 2 little buckets with a notch in them for a 110 to fit in but we didn't put the trap in. We put along the bridge wall and put a piece of fish in them. I took 6 days for the mink to eat the fish.

Soon it was trapping season and I went down to the bridge on my bike and put some more fish and a 110 in the buckets, then I went to a pond behind my house and set #2 in a pocket set for Coon or Mink and a dirt hole set for fox. The next day I went and checked them all the traps were untouched I was disappointed but my grandpa's told me to be patient. That night, I went and bought a 220 for Coon, and when I got home, I boiled it and made a bucket. The next day the coon trap was snapped but nothing in it, which was very frustrating. I set the 220 bucket with a fish head in it.

The next day I walked up to my mink bucket and there was a 23" buck mink in my trap. I was so excited, it didn't even make it out of the bucket. I never rode my bike so fast home.



When I got home I showed my dad, he was happy for me then I called my grandpa up and he said he would come over and show me how to skin it out. So I went and checked the rest of the traps and something stole the fish head out of the bucket so I re baited it and went home. My grandpa was waiting for me. He showed me how to skin it and stretch it.

The next day all the traps were fine and my dad said he had seen some Muskrats in a pond by the road and he told me I should go set for them. So the next day, I checked the traps there was nothing and I went to the pond with 10 stop-loss 3 110's. When I got there, there were 4 houses, so I set the first one with 1 stop-loss on the house, the second one with 3 stop-losses on the house. I saw 3 muskrats come out of there, the third house with 1 stop-loss on the house and a 110 in the runway the last house 1 stop-loss on the house. The rest of the traps in bunkhouse. The next day I checked the traps I got a Gray Fox in the dirt hole set -- I was so excited! I went and got my dad and he shot it with the 22. Then I checked the Muskrat traps the first house had nothing, the next house had 2 and the other trap was snapped, and the next house had 1 and the last none. I caught 1 in a runway.

That night my dad showed me how to skin Muskrats and Fox. The next day I got a skunk in my 220 and I got 3 rats. That night my dad skinned the skunk and I did the rats.

The next day, I got 4 rats and a one got ate by a mink. The next day I got 1 rat and I set a #1 ½ for a mink. I put a hole in the house and set the trap next to the hole and baited with muskrat and covered the trap with cattail duff.

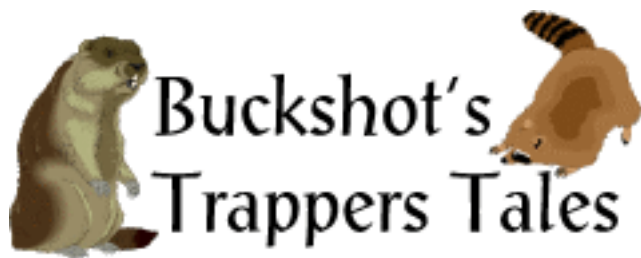
The next day I got a 21" female mink, I was so happy, and 1 muskrat. I skinned them out and didn't even put a hole in it. The next day I got to my mink set and my trap was

gone. I thought someone stole my trap so I pulled the rest. When I got back, I was looking out in the water for my trap when I herd a stick snap, so I looked up here was a big male red fox looking me in the eyes. I was in shock that I caught a fox in a mink set and he almost took my trap.

I pulled all my traps that day cause we were going on a hunting trip. When I got back, I didn't set them until 2 weeks ago. I set for otter on a little creek channel and beavers. I got an otter in a 220 in a deep channel and a big beaver 50 pounds in a 330 baited with an Aspen branch. I really like trapping and I hope I get lots more furs, but if it ended today I would be happy. Good luck trapping -- keep putting fur on the boards.

--Cody

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More Young Trapper's Tales

My First Skunk

By Arvid Pellicer

It all started when I was getting ready for school. I decided to check my box trap that was on the way up to my bus stop. I had made a box trap set for a raccoon that I had baited with some muskrat flesh, bacon grease, apple, and some of Buckshot's raccoon lure. I had made the set with a box trap that was given to me by an old retired trapper that had caught a lot of skunks in it. The set was made underneath our bridge that goes over the creek. I had made the set so the raccoon would swim up to the set and climb on in. I had seen a lot of raccoon sign in the area and I was very anxious to catch my first coon.

As I was heading up to my bus stop, I went to check the set. When I neared the set, I heard scratching, thumping, and I got really excited. I had the bright idea of picking up the box trap and trying to carry it home. When I was half way home with it, I smelt the familiar odor of SKUNK! I kept on going because I thought that it was only the box trap that had caught skunks for years. When I was almost home, I finally denied the possibility of it just being the trap. It smelt so bad that my dad smelt it 200 feet away when he was in bed.

I'm only 11 years old and this was the first animal that I had caught (besides squirrels) so I did not know that I was suppose to leave it there and put the trap in the creek to drown it. Anyway, my dad stuck his head out of the door and said "go get your older brother." So I ran out to our new house where my older brother was trying to get his precious sleep so he could check his trap line "early", well his kind of early. So I woke him up and told him that I caught a skunk and I didn't know what to do with it. So he got up and came out to help me dispatch him. I carried the trap back to the creek and he showed me how to drown it. And that was the end of the skunk. I smelt pretty bad and I had to take a bath and be brought to school by my mom. That was a very exiting and fun time and I will always remember my first skunk.

My First Trapping Season

By Anonymous from Maine

I first became interested in the sport or art of trapping by the tales told by my dad and great uncle of large catches and full stretchers. As a younger child of seven or eight, I often asked my dad about his old trapping experiences. One sunny day in mid July at a yard sale, there was a box of 7 old rusty traps. My eyes lit up at the opportunities. In the old wooden crate there were three #1 jumps, five #1.75 coils and one #3 jump. The crate of traps cost \$20.00. I had \$15.00 in my pocket and the nice old man went down to the \$15.00.

Knowing little about traps of trapping I brought the small box of steel back to the house. The next day I bought the current issue of Fur-Fish and Game along with a copy of "The Trapper and Predator Caller." Luckily there was an article on "trap preparation" in the Fur-Fish and Game.

After lots of ridicule from my father for buying the traps,(for fur prices weren't good and dad thought that it was too much work for the money) I started to ask about some ingredients for a home-made trap dye(not knowing about speed dip, of course.) I was told to gather; cedar and hemlock tips, maple and alder bark and some beechnut hulls. Dad finally began to see that I wasn't in it for the money and started to help me out a little. We built a brick fireplace on the lawn and searched the attic of my grandparents garage for any surviving trapping supplies. We managed to come away with a pair of elbow length gauntlets, a dirt sifter, a trowel, some antifreeze and 12 victor #1 jumps. I was beaming with pride as we loaded the equipment into the back of the pickup. On the way home we stopped at the local hardware store and purchased a carbide skill saw blade. When we returned to our house we got a 50 gallon drum from down back and cut it in half to boil the traps in. After lugging pails of water and starting the fire inside the brick fire pit. The thin broth slowly turned into a black thick goop. We boiled and waxed the traps and hung them on the cloths line. Mom was not too happy about this "little stunt."

Now it was time to order a few supplies for muskrat, coon and mink. Duke Trap Supplies was the best supplier for my budget. (you don't make too much haying.) I ordered six muskrat stretchers, two coon and fox stretchers and one mink board. The shed was cleaned and ready to roll.

My plan was to trap a small meadow, a brook and a hardwood knoll down behind the farm. My birthday was on September 22. One of the gifts given to me by my parents was my very own "Old Timer" jack knife. The day after my birthday I went to cutting slide poles and building coon cubbies. All during bird season I scouted for sign. Two weeks before trapping season began I started prebaiting my coon cubbies on the hardwood knoll. My bait of choice was fish. It took the coons four days to start eating the fish.

The big evening had arrived! The night of Nov. 2nd was the night before trapping season. Since I knew that there would be no pressure down behind the farm, I waited until daylight the next morning to start setting traps. My alarm clock rang at 5 a.m. I was out of my bed like a rocket and dressed just as fast. I can't say the same for my father. After getting ready and my dad grabbed his deer rifle. (Nov. 3rd was three

days into deer season here in Maine.) Grabbing my pack loaded with traps and supplies, we stepped out into the cold yet refreshing morning air. We stumbled our way down behind the barn into the enveloping woods. Coming upon the first coon cubby we found that the fish head had been eaten. Carefully putting on my gauntlets I selected a #1.75 coil spring and set it in the entrance of the cubby. Next I re-baited the cubby with another fish head. I looked at my watch and found that I had spent 45 minutes on my first set. It felt good to finally have my first set completed.

By 3:15 p.m. I was on my 10th set. This was a set under an overhanging rood in the stream for muskrat. By 5 p.m. I had all of my sets out. Making the seemingly long trek back to the house, three deer crossed the toat road right in front of us. Unfortunately dad had his rifle unloaded. We arrived at the field below the house at 6 p.m. Dad dug his flashlight out of his pocket. Finally we were back in the warm comfort of our kitchen with a nice dinner on the table. After eating we went straight to bed.

The next morning I woke up at 7 a.m. Dad woke up a little later. Dad had cautioned me that I would probably not catch anything and not to get my hopes up. The first and second coon set were empty. The third held a large male ringtail. I was so excited! Dad showed me how to dispatch the coon with my .22 rifle. After re-setting the cubby we placed the coon in my pack. Boy did that thing get heavy! Later we found that we had caught one muskrat.

After returning home we skun, fleshed and stretched the two pelts using my new oldtimer knife. My mom and dad were extremely proud of me. That season I caught six more coon and 12 more muskrat. No mink were caught however. At the end of my season the fur check totaled \$46.50. Even though it wasn't much, I dug out the supply catalogs and started preparing for the next season. The memories of my first trapping season will be stowed away in my mind and room will be made for many to come. If there was one thing I learned; it was that trapping isn't about the money, it is about the love and respect for the great outdoors.

A Big First Catch

By Brian

I've got a good story for you. I first began trapping when I was 5. At first I went with my dad and uncle. One Christmas my grandmother gave me a #1.75 victor coilspring. I wanted to catch something with it really bad. January first I took it along with with my dad and uncle beaver trapping. Dad thought it would be too small but reluctantly set it anyway. I was beaming with pride. I had set my own trap! Two days later we came back to check the sets. I had caught a 55lb. beaver in a #1.75 coilspring! My dad could'nt beleive it, I had finally become a true trapper. It was the biggest beaver I had ever caught since. We brought the beaver home and skun and stretched it.

At the end of the season we took the catch over to the local fur buyer. When we told him the story he was shocked. I was very impressed when I took the \$45.00 home. That \$45.00 went right out in the mail the next day for more traps. Since that year I

have extended my line and now have a drivers license so I have an auto line as well. Last year I caught 3 otter, 6 fisher, 3 raccoons, 3 red fox, 3 beaver and 12 muskrat with my dad. With another line with a friend I caught 39 beaver, 2 otter, and a few muskrat. These are my memories of trapping with my dad and reaping the benifets of the great out doors.

Used Traps Still Catch Game

By Kenny

I started trapping after hearing a story about my neighbor catching a fisher in a box trap. My mother and I were down to their house one day on our way to town to ask if the older couple needed anything at the store. Roy, my neighbor took me out to the barn where laying on the back racks of his three wheeler were two big fishers and one mink. After ogling over them for a minute I asked how he had caught them. He showed me all sorts of his basic equipment. Roy let me watch him skin, flesh and stretch the animals telling me the step by step process. I started asking more and more questions. After my first educational course in the art of trapping it was time to go. However, before leaving Roy handed me a stack of four "Trapper and Predator Caller" magazines. Before I left Roy said to me, "In order to be a good trapper you must think like your prey." That phrase has helped me a lot in my two years of trapping. Boy was I ever tickled. I couldn't wait to get home and start indulging myself with the knowledge. A couple of years ago Roy passed on but with me will always be the knowledge from him and those four magazines.

After talking to my dad about what Roy and I had done in the shed, dad informed me that he had once been a fairly good trapper himself back in the day when fur prices were quite high. I also learned that my great uncle and great grandfather helped support their families on the money that they made from trapping. All throughout out that winter and spring I saved every cent I could get my hands on. By June I had saved \$65.00. This was enough to buy my first dozen traps. Dad advised me to get #1 victor coils since I would probably be trapping 'rats my first year. It seemed like those traps would never come in the mail. One hot spring day I had walked off the bus to see a cardboard box setting on the deck. I was jumping out of my sneakers when I got inside I started opening the box just like it was Christmas wrapping paper. Sure enough there were my traps. Dad took one out of the box and thoroughly inspected it. Then with the greatest of ease he set the trap on his knee and set it. "He didn't even need to use his feet" I thought to myself. Now after lots of practice I too can set traps on my knee.

During that summer I joined my state trapping association. I also got a job haying for the farmer down the road. This haying money would be plenty for the small number of supplies I needed. I had planned to trap an area behind the house. This area contained a hardwood ridge, a stream and a large meadow. I had planned to trap with just the dozen traps I had but one day during my brother's "newspaper studies" in school he read that there were used traps for sale in Newport. I could hardly wait for my mother to get home so that we could go check them out. It just so happened that I

had \$43.00 in a jar from the left over haying money. Finally mom pulled in the dooryard and I was in that Bronco like a jack rabbit. We made our way over to where the man said he was located. Arriving at the barn where the traps were held I noticed two men lugging of an armload of #110 conibears. My heart kind of sank but I wanted to get in there and see what the man had. Stepping into the barn a nice old man greeted me. I asked if he had any #110's and he told me that those men had taken the last of them. I came out of there with 12 #1 jumps, 4 #4 jumps and 6 #1.75 coils for my \$43.00. Mom bought me two coon/fox stretchers and 6 muskrat stretchers. Gathering up all of my trapping supplies I de-scented supplies and boiled traps and gauntlets.

Finally the big day was here. Father and I were all ready to go. Traps were waiting out by the door step and our licenses were in my dad's pocket. I thought I would never get to sleep. Finally I caught just a small wink and awoke to country music blaring in my ear. My feet pitter-pattered on the cold floor. It was hard waking dad up. We wolfed down breakfast and headed out into the frosty air to begin my experience of a lifetime. On our way out our mom saw us off, dad tried not to act excited but he was just as excited as I.

Stumbling down through the pasture with our packs on we suddenly saw a pair of glowing green eyes in the flashlight. It was a red fox! We went to the corner of the fence row and made a dirt hole set there. We used old tainted deer meat for bait and put a splash of urine on the top. The dirt hole set took about half an hour to make. Next we sneaked through the woods to a nice natural leaning log. Dad took the hatchet out of my pack basket and notched a flat spot in the tree. We put a little deer meat on the tree for bait and set a #4 jump and stapled the chain to the bottom side of the log. There was two sets done! And only 7:30. Next we made two coon sets with the #1.75's. When we arrived at the brook we went to our pre-scouted spots and set 7 sets for coon, mink and muskrat. Making our way to the meadow we jumped a deer. That jumped the heck out of us, seeing how we almost stepped on it and all. At the meadow there was abundant muskrat and coon sign. We made 10 sets around the meadow in den holes and on feed beds for muskrat. For coon we made four sets in trails.

We arrived at the house at 4 that afternoon. We were both bushed and after peeling out of our waders we both hit the couch. Dad and I conversed about which sets he thought would be the most productive. The next morning we dragged our soar and aching bodies out of bed to check the traps. The first set held a nice boar coon. After dispatching him with the .22 we re-made the set with a clean trap and moved on. The fisher set was empty along with the next two coon sets. On the brook we picked up two muskrat. While re-making the muskrat set we noticed fresh mink tracks in the washed up sand. We were very optimistic about this set. We picked up 3 more muskrats on the meadow. I was so happy, I couldn't wait to get home and start skinning. At home I was able to use many of the techniques that Roy taught me and pick up some new ones from dad. It took us about two hours to skin, flesh and stretch all of the animals. The fur check totaled out to be \$67.00 all of which went right back into supplies.

Trapping has become one of my favorite past times. I have had many memorable experiences (good and bad) like the time I rolled the canoe, that would be a bad experience. Or the time I caught my first mink, that would be a good experience. Trapping is an excellent sport for the "true" outdoorsman. Remember, "in order to be a good trapper you must think like the prey."

Justin's Tale

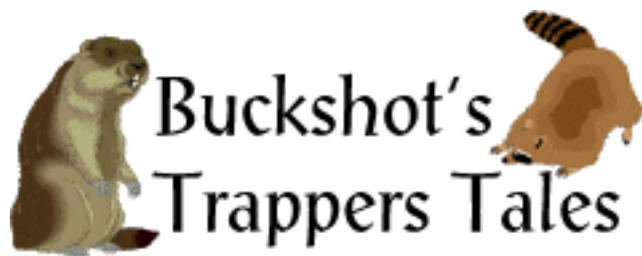
By Justin

My first year trapping I went trapping with my brother and dad. They both like trapping fox, coyotes, fisher and otter. This was the first year that they had ever used boxes, we were just trying them out. They told me that I could set one wherever I wanted. When we were driving down the old camp road one day I saw black bear cross the road. I said stop! This looks like game country. I wanted to set my box there worse than heck. My big brother showed me where I ought to set it. We were in a thick softwood grove. I stuffed the newspaper box under a log. The log was close to a big ol' spruce tree. We set a #120 conibear in the entrance of the box and baited it with stolen chicken from the coop down the street. (They think they have a coon problem and I get to trap them too.) (Just kidding)

The set was all camouflaged and stapled to the tree. We had seen lots of fisher sign. There was a big turd in the trail (maybe it was the bear's but I insisted that it was fisher) along with lots of tracks. We went on the rest of the day setting up more baited cubby sets. By the end of the day we had 13 sets made for fisher and mink.

The next day we went back to check. After two empty sets we came upon my set. By golly we walked up there and saw the hugest male fisher we had ever seen. The fisher weighed 8 lbs. We took it home and skun it out and I got \$45 for it.

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Success Stories

People are saying great things about Buckshot and his videos. Seem like he may be responsible for a resurgence in trapping! Here's what just a few have had to say:

From a first year trapper.

Buckshot, I have been really busy getting thing's done around here for the holidays. Seems everyone wants to stop in and chat and chat. Me I would rather be out in the woods looking for new places to set traps. Well the old timers here are in total awe and disbelief. I went to the little local fur buyers market Sunday to see who had what and how much of what. I was feeling pretty good after I left. Most of the old trappers came in with about 30 coon, a few foxes, lots of rats, and only 3 mink in the whole place. Well I am new at this trapping game and maybe I shouldn't toot my horn but I have 75 coons, 6 reds and 5 gray foxes, 3 coyotes, 18 mink, 5 weasels, 14 gridders and 90 muskrats. I don't know if this is good or not but after what I saw Sunday I was very happy. I am only allowed ten traps for beaver and a total of twenty pelts for this area of Penn. I would like to have all 20 done in a week. The season opens for beaver the day after Christmas. I saw a newly cut a tree that just fell and the beaver is eating the bark off the upper part of the tree. I just hope there is enough bark left to keep him busy for 18 more days. Ok take care and I will keep in touch. Bob

This next one is from a 14-year old.

We caught a coon and possum in the bucket set using your coon lure. We set another one about 40 feet down the creek from it so tomorrow we might catch 2.

-Seth from Oklahoma

This one is from a college student who watched the Survival Trapping and Water trapping videos.

Thanks Buckshot for your videos. I used to think setting and checking traps was fun and a good excuse to get in the woods, but it just doesn't compare to actually checking traps and finding animals in them. I hope you put those videos on a durable brand of video tape because they are going to be watched again and again! There is just too much information to get it all the first time through."

-Jarrod from Michigan

This one came from a trapper in Kansas he watch the Predator trapping video.

Hi Bruce, been a while. So far this year I've really had a ball trapping those dogs (coyotes). I've really learned a lot. My son was down from Neb. last week and he went out with me to check traps, he really got into it and said he wanted to try and make a set, so I let him. Two days later he had a nice sized female caught by both front feet in a #2 Bridger. I've heard of it but never actually seen it before. Before we went out that day, he watched your video so he made the set just like you explained with the dog toward the black block and right up against it, after he caught that bitch, he said that Buckshot really knows what he talking about. As of yesterday I nabbed # 30, that is with traps, snares and calling, About 12 were called and that's only running a dozen traps. Thanks for all your help. Terry

This was one off the forum.

Finally caught my first mink in a set purposely made for mink! Was caught in bottom edge set right after a 2-inch snow. Buckshot was right, bad weather sends them to the bottom. I had 2 110's set at 2 points on either side of a culvert. The water is only about 1 foot deep. This little ditch leads back to a swamp. I couldn't believe it when I shined the flashlight down on my sets and saw the biggest buck mink. It is 23 inches long on the stretcher from the tip of the nose to base of tail. Wanted to get it mounted but my wife was kinda against the idea. Thanks for all the info. I've got 48 110's waiting to be set. On the bottom of course!

From an e-mail first year trapper, 14 years old.

I got another mink yesterday on a muskrat house. My dad and I got a #50 beaver today using your baited set with a 330 thanks a lot. Does the 220 bucket work for Fox to? I got lots of Fox around here but I can't get them. My total catch this year is 15 Muskrats 2 Mink 1 Red Fox 1 Gray Fox 1 Otter and a Skunk (Yuk).

-Cody from Wisconsin

Another one off the forum.

Today I caught my first beaver. It weighed 69 pounds. Is this a really big beaver or is it about average? Yes 69 pound beaver is a super blanket great job.

More from the forum.

About a year ago I decided I wanted to start trapping so I bought a few traps and gave it a whirl. A friend had a watermelon patch that the coyotes were just tearing up, so I told him that since I had now decided to be a trapper that I would gladly take care of his Wiley (coyote)

problem.

What a pathetic situation this turned out to be. Anything that a person could do wrong, I must have done. I was darn near ready to give up on the whole thing when I stumbled into Buckshot's camp on the Internet. My first E mail to him didn't give him enough information to help much, so he mailed me back and told me he needed more information before he could help me out. Now a year later and probably 30 or 40 E mails later I have finally learned enough to be fairly consistent on ole Wiley. I got number 30 yesterday. About a dozen were caught in footholds and that is only running about 10 traps and part time.

No doubt about it that Buckshot has helped me the most. I remember in the beginning I was really confused by all the different opinions about sets, traps, how to prepare traps Etc. Buckshot's advice was to pick out one or two good professional trappers and mold yourself to their way of doing things. After all Buckshot reminded me, you can't argue with success. He was right and I've had a real ball this season, just wished I had more time to enjoy it now.

Another first year trapper.

I got 3 more coon's today. I don't like it but I had to pull my traps this morning. I have to go back to work, but I plan to re-set them over the Christmas holiday. In three nights with 19 traps set I got 6 raccoons, 1 possum and 2 rabbits. I guess that is O.K. for a rookie!! LOL This trapping stuff sure does get in your blood.

-Quintin from S.C.

Here'what they are saying about Buckshot's lures

Tried your coon lure last night in a cage trap. It worked real good. Nailed a nice coon first night. What is in the lure? No bait, just your lure.

-Andy a 12-year-old from California

What is in your coon lure? I tested your coon lure in 6 bucket sets and 6 more bucket using XXXX coon lure. Your lure caught 5 coons and brand XXXX coon lure caught one. Also, your muskrat lure was one of the better producers.

-Luke from Michigan

What is in your beaver lure? I was trapping for years without lure and catching my fair share of beaver but after testing your beaver lure and seeing my catch total goes up I now wonder how many beaver I have missed not using lures. Great lures -- don't change a thing. Jeff from Wisconsin

Review: Buckshot's Trapping Videos

By James Wesley, Rawles Proprietor, Clearwater Trading Company, author of *TEOTWAWKI*, now published as [*Patriots, Surviving the Coming Collapse*](#).

This review covers two recently-produced VHS format videos by veteran Michigan trapper, "Buckshot Bruce". This guy *really* knows his stuff, and his 23 years of experience is evident in the videos. Don't expect a Cecil B. DeMille production when you order these videos. While these videos are obviously home-produced, there is an incredible wealth of useful information included. The camera work and lighting is hardly studio quality, but they certainly get the information across.

Buckshot's Trapping Video #1: This video covers both leg-hold and Conibear traps (wire spring killing traps). It describes how to prepare traps for use, how to use bait and lures, and most importantly, detailed practical descriptions/illustrations of how to set up traps. It covers traps for squirrels, coons, muskrat, beaver, foxes, coyote, et cetera. A lot of it was filmed in the field, so you can really see how to do all this, hands-on. The dog-proof bucket coon trap shown in the video is particularly useful if you or your neighbors have dogs. (A big Conibear trap will kill a dog.)

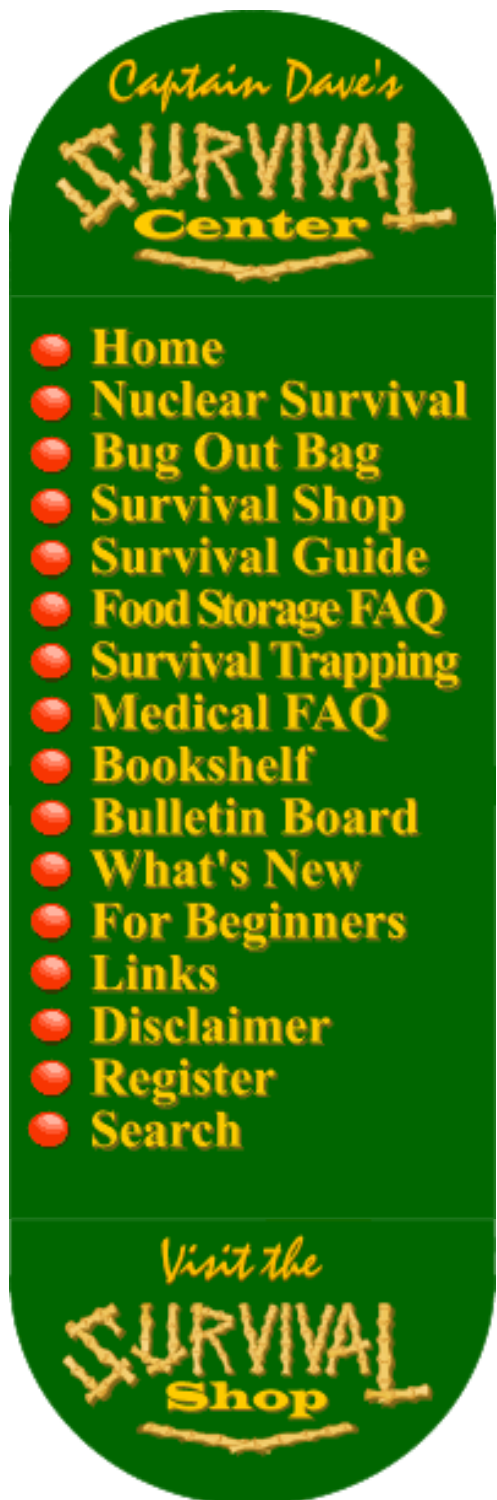
Buckshot's 10 Homemade Traps: This video covers both improvised traps and snares, as well as how to inexpensively make foolproof cage-type traps. It even has a simple and effective trap for starlings and other garden pest birds. The bottom line is that these videos could someday save your life. The knowledge that you'll gain from watching these videos could make the difference between being able to feed your family, and starvation. I highly recommend these videos! An aside: I bought my set of Buckshot's videos as part of a trap package that also included three different sizes of Conibear traps, a trap setting tool, some snares, trap dye, and some very potent lures. When you buy the package, you get the best pricing. Again, I highly recommend them.

Disclaimer: I don't stand to earn a nickel from writing this review. I just like Buckshot's products. He offers high quality products at very reasonable prices.

"This is a sample of some of the great people who contacted me over the last 3 months. My Survival trapping video was review in the Backwoodsman in the Nov. Issue. I also did a radio show with JRH on his Survival report and JRH Owner Robert endorse my videos. I did a 1 hour long lecture at the Columbus Y2k survival show. The crowd love the information. I'm trying to help as many people as I can with my trapping knowledge. Learn from my mistakes and as you can see from the testimony most people with good solid information can provide food and fur for their family."

-Buckshot

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Welcome to Captain Dave's

We're here to provide news and information to help increase your chances of survival before, during and after natural and man-made disasters of all types.

We've got loads of **free** preparedness tips covering specific disaster types, surviving nuclear disasters, evacuation planning, bioterrorism protection, SARS self defense, food and water preservation and storage, weapons procurement, caching, first aid and survival medicine, plus reviews of survival books and products. We also offer a [well-stocked store of survival and Army/Navy goods](#), including winter clothing, gas masks, potassium iodate and lots of food. Our newest addition is this section on preparing to survive a [nuclear disaster](#).

So add us to your bookmark page and [sign the guest book](#) if you wish to be notified of special events, new sections and receive our newsletter.

Survival Risk Quotient: 71

Captain Dave's Survival Risk Quotient, is updated regularly and attempts to rank how close we are to an all-out global disaster, also know as TEOTWAWKI, or "the end of the world as we know it." 100 is TEOTWAWKI, 50 is an average threat level and 0 is a peaceful world with no threats, or what it would have been like for Adam and Eve without the Serpent.

This quotient, updated on Saturday, July 24, has increased to reflect the possibility of an increase chance of a terror attack in the U.S. before election day, the increased risk of inflation and Iran's stance on nuclear weapons. Captain Dave reminds his readers that the terror threat is always lurking and the question is not if another strike will occur, but when. Specific threats include:

Threat #1: Terrorism at Home and Abroad

- The release of the 9/11 Commission Report demonstrates that **the U.S. is not safe from further terrorist attacks** and shows that there are multiple weaknesses in our system of domestic defense. Simply put, Al Qaida and affiliated terrorist groups still wish to strike at the U.S., instill fear in our populace and harm our economy, and we have not done as much as we can to thwart their attempts. While we are safer than we were three years ago, we are not and may never be safe until the war on terrorism is over.
- Although the government has not raised the threat level from yellow to orange, we believe the chances of a **significant terror attack** in the next 90 days are higher than at any time in the past year and are raising our Survival Quotient accordingly. We believe terrorist groups will try to repeat their success in Spain by staging a large-scale attack prior to our election. This summer has multiple targets, including the Olympic Games and both the Democratic and Republican National Conventions. We believe the most likely target would be an attack during the Republican Convention, possibly in New York using a dirty bomb or bioterror weapon.

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- We also expect to see an **increase in Terrorism** in the Middle East and throughout Europe, not only against U.S. targets, but also against our allies. Encouraged by weak governments who capitulate to terrorists holding hostages, terrorist operation in Iraq will increase and we will see this behavior spread outside of Iraq. The cowardly governments who appease terrorists by withdrawing troops only legitimizes the tactics of terrorism and encourages proliferation of kidnapping by terrorists who wish to blackmail a government with the life of one citizen. We need more countries to stand fast, refusing to negotiate with terrorists. The only thing these terrorists understand is strength and weaknesses, and countries, companies and individuals alike must stand fast.

Threat #2: Middle East Unrest

- Although the U.S. has returned sovereignty to an Iraqi government, the **dangers remain** for U.S. troops and citizens in Iraq. The U.S. faces continued fighting in Iraq and political friction at home, but the media is making things seem worse than they really are. In practice, whenever our forces meet the Iraq militias face to face, we are killing many of them, often with no U.S. casualties. Of course, these fanatics do not care. Please join Captain Dave in supporting our troops.
- Although much attention is focused on Iraq, we see an **emerging trouble spot in Iran**. Not only are they actively fomenting unrest in Iraq, they are refusing to dismantle nuclear production capacity and are quickly working toward development of a nuclear bomb. This action is taking place under the noses of international and UN inspectors who do nothing more than threaten with words. If the UN does nothing to halt this development, the U.S. or Israel will, most likely by making a pre-emptive strike, as Israel has done before to keep nuclear weapons out of the hands of Arab states.
- As if the **nuclear threat** is not enough to warrant increase attention on Iran, the 9/11 Commission's report suggests that Iran actually had more to do with the 9/11 terrorists than Iraq. Although we do not see any action being taken prior to the U.S. presidential election, the combination of a nuclear threat and a state sponsor of terrorism could put Iran high on the list of countries where we would like to see regime change.
- Finally, the Palestinian Issue remains chaotic and violent, a flash point of future unrest in the Middle East. As long as **militant Arabs** see Israel as a threat and the U.S. as her primary ally, we will never achieve a lasting peace. Look for things to continue to stay ugly over there. Dave predicts it will last years or even decades rather than months. Only through time, economic pressure and enlightened leaders in Arab states will this issue be resolved.

Threat #3: Economic Issues

- After almost 18 months of strong economic progress, the stock market is in the middle of a correction, interest rates are rising, housing starts have slowed and **fears of inflation** are everywhere. Tech stock earnings have slowed and as a result prices are collapsing, there is talk of a housing bubble, people are concerned about the growing deficit and foreign ownership of U.S. debt.
- But despite these worries, **the economy appears to have underlying strength**. Captain Dave believes that what we are seeing is a slow down in the rate of growth from heady to steady not a contraction or recession. Of course, there are two sets of numbers to be concerned about: Metrics that measure economic



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performance and metrics that measure consumer sentiment. If sentiment sinks based on fear, the real numbers will drop later. And if people panic as the Dow crosses back below 10,000, it could send out economy into a slow downward spiral. Dave's advice: Wait it out until we get a clear direction, and in the meantime buy some hard assets such as gold incase inflation grows worse.

Threat #4: North Korea

- Earlier this year, **blueprints for a nuclear warhead** were turned over to the United States from Libya as that former terrorist sponsor state decided they wanted no part of the Bush Doctrine. In return, diplomatic relations between Libya and the U.S. and U.K. have begun to normalize.
- The U.S. recently offered **North Korea** a similar deal come clean and we'll provide aid and security assurances, but North Korea remains stubbornly unwilling to agree to any conditions. As a result, they remain an unrepentant nuclear threat and a potential source of nuclear material and know-how for terrorists and other rogue states. This problem is like a festering wound, occasionally troubling but potentially ready to flare up into an acute stage at any time. North Korea will be dealt with at some time, but we doubt anything will happen soon unless they precipitate U.S. action. In the meantime, the North Korean people continue to suffer, starve and freeze to death.

Threat #5: Contagious Diseases

- Both **SARS and avian influenza**, also known as the bird flu, are long term threats that could re-ignite at almost any time. While scary, these early outbreaks serve as warning signs that our current world is ripe for the development of a new contagious viral illness against which we have no natural immunity and spur governments to improve their disease reporting, tracking and handling. Unfortunately, rapid air travel means a disease in a family farm in China could reach a major metropolis on our shores in 48 hours. The high density of people in major cities, the increased availability of local and global transportation, the lack of trained doctors and a paucity of isolation facilities compound this threat. Even the way in which we school our children bussing thousands to a single building and then intermingling them freely for six hours -- will allow diseases to spread more rapidly than past epidemics.
- Whether a **new disease** emerges or an old disease re-emerges in an altered form is almost a moot point. But experts believe the world is over due for a major pandemic. We're monitoring the news and will keep you apprised of emerging threats, but we hope our lucky streak continues.

Other Threats

- There are always **additional threats**, from personal emergencies such as disability, death or unemployment to regional disasters such as hurricanes, earthquakes and ice storms, to global disaster such as an outbreak of war between China and Taiwan, North Korea and South Korea, Pakistan and India, North Korea and South Korea, or almost anywhere in the Middle East. The only good news is that general preparations you make to protect you against one emergency will also protect you against almost any other. Having food, water, shelter and a plan will cover 90 percent of your needs.

[Buy the TecnoPro gas mask -- our best -- for only \\$129.95](#)

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 - [Altama Boots](#)
- [Knives](#)
- [MREs](#)
- [Survival Food](#)

[Visit Captain Dave's Survival Shop](#)

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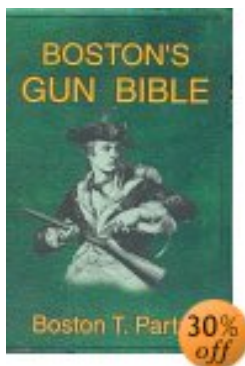
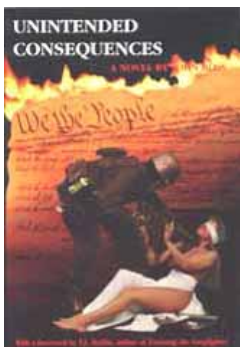
- The important thing is that you **start preparing today**. Prepare before the emergency, not once it is here. Not only will this give you the best chance, it will be cheaper and easier. Read [Captain Dave's Survival Guide](#) and other information on this site to help improve your odds.

Captain Dave's Survival Shop and Army/Navy Supply

All the great free information on Captain Dave's is made possible thanks to sales from our store. We continue to expand the store and in the past few weeks have added more [kids clothing](#) and expanded the number of [combat and survival knives](#) we sell. We've also expanded our line of [ghillie suits](#) and added new clothing and tactical items, [including Uncle Mike's holsters and duty belts](#), throughout the store. We now have more than 600 items and more are on the way! Check out the [Survival Shop](#), for long-term storage food, clothing, outdoor supplies, electronics such as GPS units and flashlights, knives, night vision and many other items. [Save from \\$3 to \\$200 with these coupons!](#)

Interesting Reading

Click on the books below for more info:



The Terrorist Threat

We know that these extremists hate America and what we stand for. They hate our freedom, our individual rights, our wealth and our opportunity. They hate our religion, and they hate our values and our culture. They hate not only our president, but our form of government. And they hate the military progress and success we have made in Afghanistan and Iraq. They fear us and our might and know that we seek to destroy them before they can destroy us.



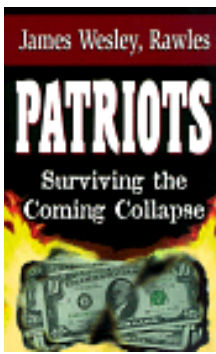
We know that many of them have been trained in camps, trained to build and set explosives, trained in guerrilla warfare, trained in how to create car bombs and dirty bombs. We know they have a burning desire to use this training, to attack Americans and Europeans and Jews and even those who believe in a gentler form of Islam. We know they will gladly die in the process of delivering an attack that succeeds in killing Americans or people who cooperate with the United States.

And because we know this, we know that they will strike again. We expect it. In fact, Captain Dave is surprised it hasn't happened within the Continental United States since 9/11/01. But now it looks like we are closer to an attack on U.S. targets than we have been for more than two years.

But what we don't know is how and when the attack will take place. We don't know how many cells of terrorists are lying in wait, planning one or more attacks. We don't know if they have biological weapons like Anthrax or chemical weapons like nerve gas. We don't know if they have plans to attack a chemical facility that could release phosgene, hydrogen cyanide or another deadly chemical into the air. We don't know if they will attack a rail yard or a water purification plant, releasing a cloud of poisonous chlorine gas into a nearby neighborhood. We don't know if they have conventional weapons, or if they will target an important bridge or dam, blowing it up with a truckload of fertilizer and diesel fuel.

Dave predicts the attacks will take place before election day, as terrorist attempt to sway our election process, possibly influencing the vote as they did in Spain.

Every expert Captain Dave has spoken to believes terrorist will strike



again. It is just a matter of time. Each and every American citizen needs to be prepared, both mentally, emotionally and physically, for another 9/11, or for a far worse scenario such as a nuclear attack on Washington or New York. You should be ready and able to gather your family together if they strike again. You should have food and water for several weeks or even months should our water supply be poisoned or transportation disrupted. You should have a means to defend yourself if civil unrest develops. You should have a means to survive if the economy falters and the stock market crashes.

Use the information on these pages to prepare. Before it is too late.

If you are worried about chemical or biological attack, read about [how to create a safe room](#).



Potential Epidemics Boil in Asia

That person in front of you in the grocery store line, a friend from work, even a kid in your child's school could be the vector that introduces SARS, the bird flu or some future virus into your family.

Think back to last year's flu season. How many people did you know who got sick? How quickly did the flu or even a bad cold spread through a school or workplace. How many people do you know who took an antibiotic this winter? Now, think of what would happen if every other person you knew who got the flu had died, or if antibiotics were powerless to stop an emerging disease. Think of how caring for a sick family member could mean a death sentence. It's a frightening possibility, and even a death rate of one in eight, like SARS, would transform the world as we know it. Imagine if 30 or 40 million people in the United States died. Think of the social, cultural and economic impact that loss of life would have.

Experts agree that the U.S. and the rest of the developed world have been lucky to have gone so long without a major epidemic. But with increased intercontinental travel, crowded conditions in major cities, and Chinese farmers living in close proximity to their animals, it could just be a matter of time.

Many of these respiratory diseases will start with symptoms similar to a cold or the flu, so an epidemic could start before anyone really knows it. U.S. hospitals are under prepared and don't have enough isolation wards. Most scary are "super spreaders," people who contaminate dozens of others without even knowing it. People riding in an elevator in a Hong Kong hotel caught SARS from a doctor who stayed there. From that single point, it roared across much of Asia and into Toronto. The same could happen with a future illness.

The Centers for Disease control has recommended strict quarantine in the case of an outbreak, including travel restrictions, closing work places and schools, shutting down mass transit and setting aside entire hospitals for SARS patients. They would adopt similar precautions in the event of another highly contagious disease. Are you prepared for this?

Dave recommends that you take steps to stay healthy and build your immune system so that a casual exposure will not sicken you, but once an outbreak starts he recommends:

- If you must go out in public, wear a surgical or N95 mask and wash your hands regularly. Decontaminate (wash with antibacterial soap) as soon as you come home.
- Limit your air travel as much as possible. SARS has been spread

by people on airlines.

- Stay off public transportation once the illness has reached your area.
- Avoid crowded public spaces such as movie theaters, malls and arenas. Pull your children out of school.
- Avoid hospitals and health clinics where sick people will go for diagnoses and treatment. A huge percentage of SARs patients got sick while in the hospital.

Once an epidemic has reached your region of the country, practice Self-Imposed Quarantine. Instead of expecting sick or contagious to isolate themselves, take the initiative and isolate yourself. Locking your family inside the house is much safer and more full proof than expecting someone who is contagious to know it and to willingly quarantine themselves.

Read Dave's [fictional account](#) of how the next SARS epidemic gets started. I could be the same for any similar contagious disease.

The Nuclear Threat

We've believed for years that North Korea had one or two nuclear devices. Now it appears that they may have developed half a dozen more. They posses the missile technology to reach Japan and much of Asia and possibly even the U.S. West Coast. But even if North Korea never uses a bomb, they could sell one to another power or to terrorists who wish to strike at the U.S.

Iran is also aggressively working to build a nuclear warhead, spurning International pressure to halt production and claiming that their nuclear facilities are for power generation. This blatant excuse isn't even fooling the French!

While tension between Pakistan and India has died down, both are nuclear powers with a chip on their shoulder, daring the other to knock it off. And we've seen proof that Pakistan has already aided Libya in her efforts to create a nuclear bomb. Who else has gained design and possibly technical help from them?

Parts of the former Soviet Union nuclear arsenal are supposedly unaccounted for. Their thousands of warheads, ranging from massive missile-delivered devices to nuclear artillery shells and suitcase bombs, may be the gravest threat to nuclear stability. Rumors and reports of missing devices and materials, as well as scientists with extensive experience selling their weapons expertise on the open market after the collapse of the Soviet Empire, cannot be discounted or disproved.

A nuclear device in the hands of a competent terrorist group could be smuggled onto U.S. shores before we were even aware such a transaction had taken place. And while a single nuclear bomb will not destroy the U.S., it will no doubt change our world and our world view significantly.

Look how the U.S. reacted to 9/11, where that single terrorist attack lead us to two wars. Can you imagine how we will sweep the earth after a nuclear attack on U.S. soil? We will do more than offend the French and Germans. I expect such an attack would result in nuclear attacks on North Korea and other rogue nations as soon as we proved any complicity on their part. How would China react in such a situation? How would Russia react? Once the nuclear genie has been let back out of the bottle, the world will be a much more dangerous place to live and could

throw us into turmoil that could last a decade and affect every living person. Scary stuff.

We wrote our section on [nuclear survival](#) before this North Korea and Iran crisis, but it remains useful regardless of the source of the bombs. It may be unimaginable to consider the use of nuclear weapons on U.S. soil, but we must remember that the fall of the Twin Towers was unimaginable until September 11, 2001.

Starting to Prepare

Every time there is a disaster, a terrorist attack, talk of war, or another threat, people turn to these pages searching for answers. If you are reading these pages because of a sudden desire to protect yourself and your loved ones, to survive and perhaps even thrive during the down times, we welcome you and can help you get started. We suggest you read [Captain Dave's Survival Guide](#) and follow its recommendations.

You don't have to live in the woods to be a survivalist, as plenty of New Yorkers proved after 9/11. That determination to survive, to walk home, barefoot, bloody and covered in ash, shows that there is a little bit of a survivalist in thousands of New Yorkers. We're betting its there in you, too. Hopefully, we can help you tap that inner spirit.

Here's your first lesson: Do not count on others to protect you. The police usually cannot stop a murder, a sniper attack or terrorist act from occurring, only arrest those who have committed it and hope it serves a deterrent. The government cannot always stop terrorists, only kill them afterwards and try to track down their leadership. The first lesson of being a survivalist is that you must be responsible for your own well-being. You must protect yourself.

When in Doubt, Plan

Many people facing fear and uncertainty have found that knowledge is the best cure. This web site exists to help you gain some of that knowledge, to help you prepare, to give you the information you need to improve your odds at survival if you are ever caught up in the worst case scenario.

Whether you fear bombs, biological weapons, something as severe as the collapse of civilization or as mundane as a hurricane, making a plan to deal with the worst-case scenario can help reduce your level of fear. We believe the information and guidance we provide here can help you be better prepared and therefore overcome, or at least manage, your fear.

For example, people fearing anthrax can learn [how to construct a "safe room"](#) in your home.

Preparing for a Biological or Chemical Attack

The government has bought at 100 million doses of Cipro, 1.2 billion does of doxycycline and has ordered 300 million smallpox vaccines, but they tell us not to worry. Yet they clearly fear the threat of continued or expanded biological terror attacks, and for good reason.

We have all seen first hand the disruption caused by a few envelopes and a few sniper's bullets. Worse yet are concerns of terrorist in crop dusters spraying sporting events and downtown streets with anthrax spores. And Anthrax is the least of our problems because it can be treated with antibiotics and is not very contagious. No, officials are far more worried

about Smallpox, a disease that the UN has considered "eradicated" for some 30 years, and they are worried about suicidal bombers setting off Sarin gas bombs similar to the ones in Tokyo subway system ten years ago that killed dozens and injured 5,000.

But how much should we worry? Is the threat realistic? Do you really need a gas mask to survive in the future? If Uncle Sam is preparing to vaccinate 20,000 first-responders, up to 500,000 medical personnel and 500,000 soldiers, should you get a smallpox vaccine too?

First, you need to realize that the chance of you personally being on the receiving end of an attack is very low, unless you live or work in an area that is a high-potential target, such as the post office, the media or the government.

Second, the greatest risk to the population in general is not an attack, but its aftermath. (In the anthrax attack, only 17 people came down with anthrax and less than half died.) The threat is not only the disease, but the unrest and disruption. Will the government declare martial law, close airports and block roadways, order everyone to remain quarantined in their homes and take other harsh precautions designed to stop the spread of disease? If so, do you have enough food and water to survive for a week or three without being able to run out to the store?

Will a bioterrorist attack be the straw that breaks the economy and sends it back into a recession? Will the food supply be disrupted? Will you have fresh, clean water to drink? Will you lose your job?

These are things you need to prepare for. And reading the [Survival Guide](#) is a good place to start. If you won't feel safe without a [gas mask or chemical protection suit](#) by your side, we're happy to [sell them to you](#). But we suggest you stock up on food, water filters, blankets, flash lights and other more mundane items as well.

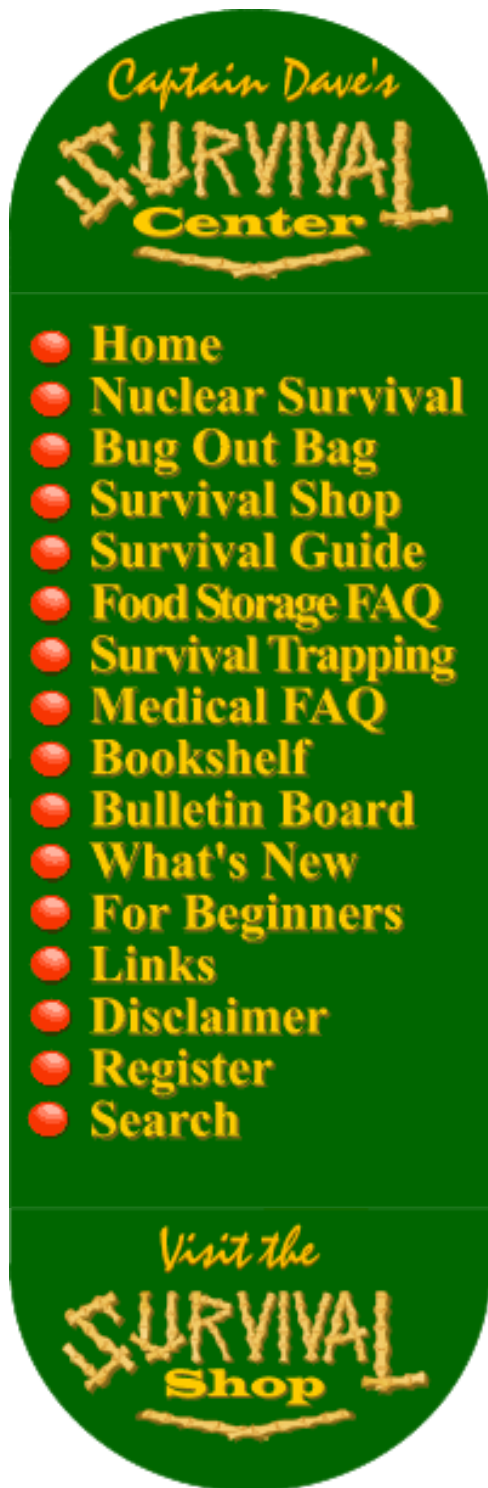
Captain Dave is preparing a detailed report on the threat of biological and chemical weapons and how to prepare to survive an attack and its aftermath. [Sign our guest book](#) to have a copy e-mailed to you as soon as it is complete.

Contacting Captain Dave

If you have any questions or comments, please [E-mail](#) us. Our address is Captain Dave Inc. P.O. Box 72298, Durham, N.C., 27717. Our phone number can be found in the Survival Shop, but chances are good you will only reach our voice mail system. [E-mail](#) is the best way to reach us and the most likely to get a response.

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Use the search function to find what lurks in Captain Dave's archives. Who knows what you might find?

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Food Water Clothing Gear Electronics Optics Guns & Knives

Captain Dave pride's itself in providing the three basic necessities for survival: Food, Water and Shelter. But we don't stop there. We have a host of useful gear for the survivalist or self sufficient individual and outdoor enthusiast as well as law enforcement and military personnel:

Clothing:

- [BDUs, shirts and pants, combat shorts](#)
- [Coats and Outerwear, including flight jackets, sweaters and sweatshirts, and rain gear](#)
- [Coveralls and flight suits, including insulated coveralls](#)
- [Vests, including safari vests, concealed carry, combat and weight bearing](#)
- [Hats and gloves](#)
- [T-shirts, including military, camouflage and printed](#)
- [Cold weather gear, including thermal underwear, hats, gloves and wool socks](#)
- [Boots and footwear accessories, including jungle boots, desert boots and combat boots from Altama](#)
- [Uniforms for police and security, police windbreakers and jackets](#)
- [EMT Pants and gear](#)

Gear:

- [Gear for bug out bags](#)
- [First aid kits](#)
- [Chemical, nuclear and biological protection](#)
- [Optics, including binoculars, night vision and sunglasses](#)
- [Flashlights, radios, compasses and GPS](#)
- [Packs, bags and web gear](#)
- [Ghillie Suits](#)

Law Enforcement:

- [Handcuffs, batons and badges](#)
- [Bullet-resistant vests and riot gear](#)
- [Duty belts, holsters and gear bags.](#)
- [Uniforms for Police and Security](#)
- [EMT Pants and gear](#)

Food:

- [Main food page](#)
- [Long-term storage food packages](#)
- [MREs](#)

Water:

- [Water filters and purifiers](#)
- [Water storage](#)
- [Hydration systems](#)

Shelter:

- [Tents, tarps and camping equipment](#)
 - [Sleeping bags](#)
 - [Hammocks and cots](#)
 - [Camping gear, including hatches, saws and shovels](#)

Knives:

- [Survival and combat knives](#)
- [Folding knives](#)

Firearms Accessories:

- [AR-15 accessories and spare parts](#)
- [Magazines](#)
- [Holsters and duty gear](#)
- [Accessories and cleaning kits](#)



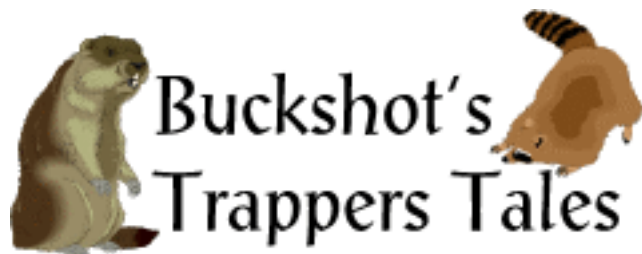
This store is best viewed with your screen set to 1024 x 768 and a minimum of 256 colors and a broadband connection. However, 800 x 600 will work relatively well and dial up customers will just find that some large images load slowly. It requires javascript to be on and has been optimized for both Internet Explorer 4.0+ and Netscape 3.0+.

Questions? Comments? Email Webmaster@survival-center.com

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Tips, Tactics and Technics for Trappers

Plus tales and plain old good advice for anyone who ever thought about trapping for survival, sustenance or money.

[Visit Buckshot's Online Catalog](#)

Buckshot, the author of the following articles and [Buckshot's Modern Trapper's Guide to Xtreme Trapping for Safety, Survival, Profit, Pleasure,](#) has been trapping for 25 years in 5 different states. He has caught minks, raccoons, opossums, skunks,



red foxes, gray foxes, coyotes, bobcats, muskrats, fishers, otters, beavers, ground hogs, snapping turtles, weasels, badgers and other game animals. He has built a log cabin and lived off the land. He says "I love the woods and being a free trapper in God's great outdoors."

Why is trapping important for survivalists? "The most important reason I think everyone who plans to survive should know how to trap," says Buckshot, "is that during the Great Depression the game animals were hunted down to nothing, but the trapper *always fed his family.*" You can contact Buckshot via [e-mail](#) with questions or comments.

- [The Best All-Around Trap](#)

- [Using the Conibear #110](#)
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Check back next month, because more articles are in the works.

Trapping Items for Sale

- [Here's what people are saying about Buckshot, his videos and advice *New!*](#)
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