

Chapter 5

Important Terms

You should know the following terms:

- Stake
- Annealed steel wire
- Trowel
- Hunting license
- Fur taker permit
- Trap tags
- Packbasket
- Gauntlets
- Drowning locks
- Dirt sifter

Learning Objectives

You should be able to:

- Understand the use and function of other trapping equipment including: stakes, wire, trowel or shovel
- Recognize that a hunting license, fur taker permit, and trap tags are necessary items of equipment
- Identify three items for carrying trapping equipment: packbasket, bucket, or sack
- Recognize the need for proper clothing for running the trapline
- Identify equipment needed for water trapping: hip boots, chest waders, and drowning locks
- Identify equipment needed for land trapping: dirt sifter, clean gloves
- Learn options for assembling equipment on a limited budget

Chapter 5

General Trapping Equipment

Hunting License, Fur Taker Permit, and Trap Tags

You must not forget your hunting license, fur taker permit, and trap tags as part of your trapping equipment. You can get your fur taker permit after you pass this trapper education course. Both the hunting license and the fur taker permit are required for trapping. Each of your traps must have a waterproof tag attached to it showing your name and address. It is a good idea to carry a few extra tags with you in case an animal tears one off of your trap.

Hunting License, Fur Taker Permit, and Trap Tags

Your hunting license, fur taker permit, and trap tags are part of your equipment.



Stakes

You must fasten your traps in place to prevent the animals from escaping with them. For this, you will need stakes. Stakes can be made from wood or steel. Steel stakes are more durable and are especially good for trapping on dry land. Steel stakes are usually made of 1/2-inch or 3/8-inch steel rod or reinforcing bar. They can also be made out of angle iron. Wood stakes can be fashioned from straight growing tree limbs. They can also be made out of sawed lumber. Whether made out of wood or steel, your stakes must be long enough to hold the largest animal that will get in your traps. You will need a tool, like a hammer or hatchet, for driving stakes into the ground.

Stakes

Steel stakes (on the left) are best for land trapping. Wood stakes work better for water trapping.



Hammer and Hatchet

You will need a tool to pound your stakes into the ground. Many trappers use a hatchet for this. The hatchet can also be used to cut wood and brush on your trapline. You can use a hatchet to cut wood stakes. A straight claw hammer can be handy for trapping on land. You can use the straight claw to help you dig into hard ground or cut away roots where you want to set a trap.

Hammer and Hatchet

These tools can be used for pounding stakes into the ground. The hatchets can also be used for cutting wood stakes.



Wire

Wire is used to fasten your traps to stakes or to other solid objects, or to make a drowning set when trapping near the water. The best kind of wire to use for trapping is *annealed steel wire*. This is available from trapping supply dealers or building supply companies. **DO NOT** use copper or aluminum wire, like that found in electrical wiring, for trapping wire. It is not strong enough. An animal might break the wire and get away. **NEVER** use twine, rope, or similar materials for fastening a trap. A pair of pliers will help you in cutting and twisting wire and should be included as part of your trapping equipment.

Wire and Pliers

Steel wire is an important item of trapping equipment. If you use wire, you will need a pair of pliers to cut and twist it.

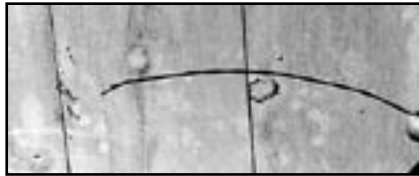


Double Strength Wire

Annealed steel wire come in several sizes; 16, 14, and 11 gauge are the most common. If you use 16-gauge wire, you should double it. The following illustrations show how to double 16-gauge wire for added strength.



Cut a piece of wire twice as long as you need and fold it in the middle. Holding the folded end, start twisting the wire working towards the loose ends.



Twist the wires together until you come to the end. You now have a double strength wire. Twisting the strands of wire into a spiral gives it more strength than two separate strands of wire.

Trowel or Shovel

Another item of equipment that every trapper needs is something to dig with. It is often necessary to prepare the place where you plan to set your trap and dig out a depression to hold the trap. This can be accomplished with a small shovel or trowel.

Carrying Your Equipment

You should have something to carry your traps and equipment in as you travel your trapline. Many trappers prefer the traditional packbasket for this. A packbasket has straps so you can carry it on your shoulders. This distributes the weight making the load easier to carry and leaves both hands free for trapline chores. You could also carry your trapping equipment in a large bucket or a sack.

Trowels and Shovels

These are some typical tools you can use for digging purposes on your trapline. On the left is a short-handled garden trowel. In the middle is a standard "trappers" trowel that can be purchased from a trapping supply company. On the right is a tiling spade which is good for digging large holes.



Bucket, Bag, and Basket



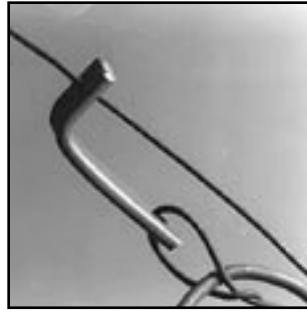
These are some typical things used to carry trapping equipment. On the right is the traditional packbasket, but a bucket or a durable sack will also work.

Clothing

You need proper clothing to keep you comfortable on the trapline. Remember, your traps must be checked every day, so you will be out in all kinds of weather. The weather is usually cold during trapping season, and you'll need a good coat or jacket. A jacket with a lot of pockets is best. A hunting jacket makes a good trapping jacket. You will also need a good pair of boots and gloves to protect your feet and hands during the cold weather of trapping season. During rainy, muddy weather you will need waterproof boots and gloves. A good raincoat will make you more comfortable if you have to check traps in the rain.

Water Trapping Equipment

Depending on what type of trapline you intend to run, you may need some special equipment. If you will be trapping in the water, you should consider investing in a pair of hip boots or chest waders that will allow you easy access to your sets. Also, a pair of elbow or shoulder length rubber gloves will make you more comfortable as you set and tend your traps. These gloves are called "gauntlets." You may also want to invest in some specialized fasteners, called drowning locks, for your traps. These will help you make drowning sets that will quickly dispatch the trapped animals.



The lock should point toward deep water. When the animal travels toward deep water, it slides easily.



When the animal tries to return to the shore, the lock binds on the wire and holds the animal in place.

Water Trapping Equipment



These are some items you might need if you are trapping animals that live in or near the water. Waterproof boots will help keep your feet dry. Rubber gloves will help protect your hands in the cold water. The wood stakes in the middle are good for water trapping. You can probably make these yourself.

Drowning Locks

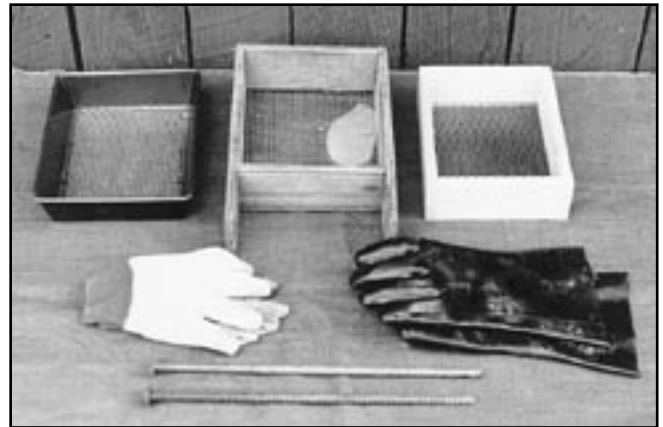


These are three types of drowning locks. They can be fastened to the end of your trap chain. They are used with a length of wire to make a drowning set. The lock slides on the wire, but only goes one way.

Land Trapping Equipment

If you will be making sets on dry land, especially for fox and coyote, you will need a sifter to sort the sticks, stones, and large clods out of the dirt you use to cover your traps. You should also have a clean pair of cloth or rubber gloves for handling your traps.

Land Trapping Equipment



These are some items you might need if you are trapping animals that live on land. At the top are three different styles of dirt sifters. The cloth gloves are for everyday use. The rubber gloves are used when the ground is muddy. The steel stakes, at the bottom, are better for land trapping because they are more durable.

Assembling Your Equipment

A limited budget is one problem most beginning trappers face in assembling their equipment. However, you may be able to gather up many of the things you need at little or no expense. You may already have some things available like pliers, a hatchet, and a garden trowel, or you may be able to borrow them. It should not be too much trouble to find a bucket or sack to carry your equipment in.

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You can also make some of your own equipment if you have the tools and materials. Wood stakes can be cut from straight growing tree limbs. You could also make your own dirt sifter with a few narrow boards and a piece of hardware cloth mesh. You may be able to find discarded pieces of steel that can be made into metal stakes.

Trap tags can be purchased with your name and address printed on them. You can also make them yourself with some thin aluminum. Cut the aluminum into rectangular pieces and use a nail or other sharp object to write your name and address in the soft aluminum. Press hard and print plainly.

Traps are somewhat harder to come by. You may be able to find them by asking relatives and friends. Sometimes, particularly in rural communities, there are a few used traps hanging in sheds, barns, and outbuildings. These can often be had for the asking.

Otherwise you will have to purchase traps. Sometimes you can find used traps for sale at auctions and flea markets. Another good place to look for used trapping equipment is at a trapper's meeting or convention. You can find the dates and locations of these meetings in most trapping magazines.

Trapping magazines can also be valuable in helping you assemble your equipment. Trapping supply dealers advertise in these magazines, and most of them have a catalog that you can request. There are many items of trapping equipment that are available only through a trapping supply dealer. New traps and packbaskets are examples.

You may be able to buy some of your trapping equipment at a reasonable price at a discount department store. You should be able to find boots and waders in the sporting goods department. You can also find tools like pliers, hatchets, shovels, trowels, and gloves there.



Review Questions

1. List the five pieces of equipment needed for water and land trapping:

1. _____, 2. _____,
3. _____, 4. _____
- _____, 5. _____.

2. To legally trap you must have a

_____ and a _____.

3. What can be used to carry all of your trapping equipment?

- A. _____,
- B. _____,
- C. _____.