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### Live Trap for Nuisance Animal Control

Cooperative Extension South Dakota State University

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# live trap for nuisance animal control

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# live trap for nuisance animal control

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Most animal damage caused by small mammals, such as raccoons and skunks, can be prevented. Proper maintenance of buildings, fencing of gardens, and other mechanical restraints will minimize losses to these animals. Removing or destroying garbage dumps, old cars and machinery, old haystacks, dilapidated buildings, and other hiding areas will discourage small mammals and reduce their numbers. If raccoons and skunks are a persistent problem, a live trap can be helpful in catching and removing them.

## Trap Selection

Live traps should be used around farms, human dwellings, or other areas where non-target animals such as pet cats or dogs may be present. Other types of traps may occasionally injure or even kill animals that are not doing damage.

Live traps are easy to set, easy to check, and easy to use as a cage for transporting the offending animal elsewhere. Even skunks can usually be transported to a remote area to be disposed of or released without any disagreeable odor if the trap is covered and handled with a minimum of jarring.

A live trap should be checked at least daily since a captured animal will injure itself in its attempts to escape.

Domestic dogs can usually be captured in a live trap. However, wild dogs, coyotes, and foxes are difficult to catch in a live trap and other methods must be used.

## Kinds and Sizes of Live Traps

Commercially made live traps, which are constructed of steel and wire mesh, are available in several sizes. For raccoons the trap should be at least 30" in length and the release mechanism for the trap should be placed near the rear of the trap. Prices range from approximately \$10.00 for a trap to catch small animals to over \$40.00 for the size needed to trap raccoons.

For a person handy with carpentry tools, a trap large enough for raccoons can be constructed for \$15.00 to \$20.00. Plans for such a trap are included in this fact sheet.

If you do not wish to build your own trap, most sporting goods stores, hardware stores, and trap supply dealers sell commercially made live traps of various sizes.

## Setting and Baiting a Live Trap

**Location.** For best results place the live trap near the area where the damage

is occurring, such as alongside a chicken house or garden. If a den can be located, place the trap there. Look for tracks or droppings near water sources such as springs, stock dams, road culverts, or along creeks. Animals are creatures of habit and they often return to the same locations.

**Bait.** Sardines and one whole fresh egg are the best baits for raccoons and skunks. Other baits that have been used with success include peanut butter, canned pet food with a meat or fish base, bacon, and fish. Place the bait behind the tripping mechanism. Some animals, such as raccoons, may try to reach the bait from outside the trap so be sure to center the bait in the trap.

Make sure the trap is level and will not tip when the animal attempts to enter it. Remove tall grass and other obstructions from the front of the trap door so the animal has a clear entrance.

Set the live trap in the evening and check it early each morning. Many animals caught in traps harm themselves by trying to escape; prolonged suffering can be prevented if the animals are removed as soon as possible.

## What to Do With a Trapped Animal

**Relocation.** Skunks and raccoons are of value as furbearers when their skins

are prime. If the animal is trapped during the spring or summer, then relocation to an area where depredation will not be a problem may be advisable. The release should be several miles from the capture site to prevent the animal from returning.

**Killing the animal.** When there is no suitable relocation site (away from other human dwellings) or when an animal returns after relocation, the animal should be destroyed. Carbon monoxide from a vehicle exhaust can be piped to a covered trap to kill the animal. The trap can also be immersed in water to drown the animal. If the animal is to be destroyed by shooting, it is recommended that the animal be released in an open area and shot with a shotgun in an area large enough not to endanger humans or property.

## Assistance

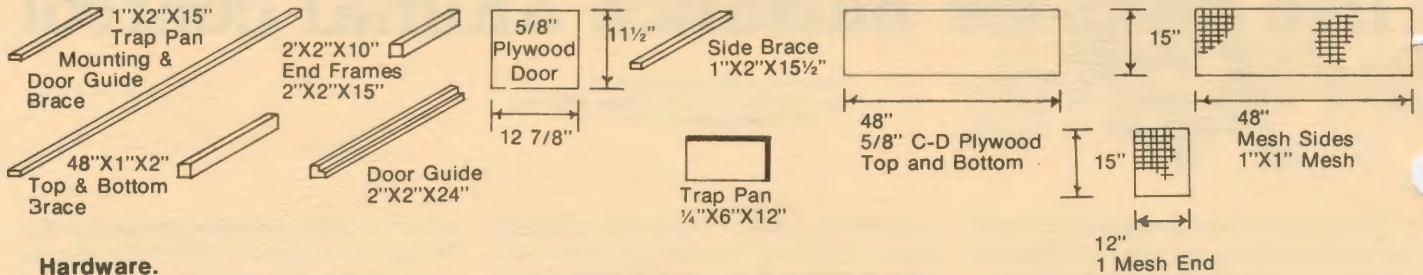
Further information and assistance can be received by contacting South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks extension trappers through the county Extension office, your conservation officer, or the Game, Fish and Parks regional offices in Mobridge, Chamberlain, Watertown, Sioux Falls, or Rapid City.



Remove Old Buildings and Junk

## Building A Live Trap

### Materials.



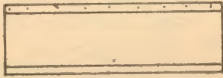
### Hardware.

- 2 2"x2" Flat Surface Hinges
- 1 4" Strap Hinge
- 6 1"x 1/8" Bolts and Nuts
- 4 #10 2 1/4" Screws

- 1 Pound Small Staples
- 5 Foot Piece of String
- 1 Metal Strip
- Nails

### Steps in Constructing a Live Trap.

1. Nail 1"x2" on edge of top and bottom of plywood.

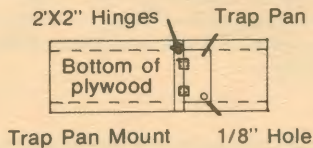


2. Assemble end frames.

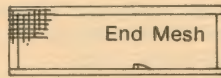


3. Install trap pan bottom of plywood. Drill 1/8" hole in pan.

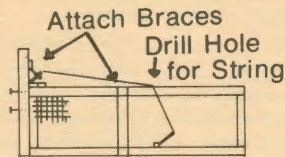
4. Assemble top and bottom to end frames.



5. Put on 1"x1" mesh beginning with end mesh on inside of frame, then side mesh on outside.

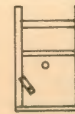


6. Attach door guide with the #10 2 1/4" screws.



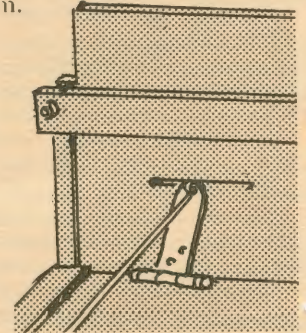
7. Slide door in grooves, making sure door has slight play on sides. Drill hole in door for trigger. Notch door guide and

- attach metal strip to door with one bolt.



8. If desired, a bait door may be installed in top.

9. Install 4" strap hinge on trigger mechanism.



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