



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
INFORMATION SERVICE

UNITED STATES FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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NEW TYPE OF LIVE-TRAP OUTSMARTS THE WILY RACCOON

The wily raccoon, wise in the ways of successfully snitching bait from a trap, apparently has finally met his match.

It is an aluminum-frame box trap newly developed by the Fish and Wildlife Service of the Department of the Interior. The new type of trap will replace the wooden-frame device which the Service has used for decades in live-trapping small animals.

Technicians at the Service's Patuxent Research Refuge in Maryland have had frustrating experiences in their search for a gadget that could outwit the raccoon. When the new aluminum-frame contraption was built and had surpassed expectations in a variety of tests, it was agreed the new machine should be pitted against a raccoon.

Three of the old-type box traps were baited; at the end of the line was the new device.

In one-two-three order, the raccoon stole the bait and eluded each of the old traps. When he tried the new one, however, the trap closed with a rather quiet click, and the perplexed animal found himself inside looking out through close wire mesh.

Among the several advantages in favor of the new trap--aside from its ability to outwit a raccoon--are its lighter weight, more efficient operation, and less chance for injury to the trapped animal through its use. Animals are live-trapped to obtain them for study or for transplanting to other areas.

The new trap protects the animal from outside attack by its natural enemies, something the old trap did not do in many instances. The trip mechanism is so arranged that animals will not be injured, and the metal frame insures the device against damage by animals gnawing it. The more efficient trip mechanism and the greater length of the box result in a greater percentage of catches than could be attained with the old trap. Its 11 pounds is just half the weight of the wooden-frame trap.

John T. Lineham, the Service employee who devised the new trap, has received a \$100 incentive award from the Department of the Interior, and the Service has a letter of commendation upon the accomplishment from the Defenders of Fur Bearers, an organization interested in the development of more humane traps.

Further information, including the plan of the successful trap, may be obtained by writing to the Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior, Washington 25, D. C.

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