

Hobby Trapper Dreams
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Tales of longlines, megacatches and big fur checks is pretty heavy stuff to the everyday hobby trapper. The mere mention of it stirs up the blood and the imagination enough to want to try your hand at it, at least once. Personally, I have had all those same feelings and even dabbled at my own "long line". Normally, I run eight to ten trapps before work in the morning and skin out my catch after work. Even a moderate catch keeps me busy. I took a week off work and set what I considered a "long line." consisting of approximately 50 sets for muskrat and 12 for raccoon. It generated considerably more fur and it felt like double the work. I found out that it stopped being fun and started being work.

My sets normally are made with an average amount of time and I pay attention to the details that make a good set. On the "long line," I found myself taking a lot less time making the sets and felt a little sloppy, but I felt I didn't have much of a choice if I wanted to rack up the "big numbers" I must admit, the sets still produced the catches but the sets just lacked the "sweet" look they had when I had more time.

I also noticed that while running this "long line," I wasn't seeing as much of the surroundings as I did when I only had a few traps. I was so intent on running the line that I didn't have time to follow that single mink track or figure out how that raccoon fooled me this time. I covered a log of ground being a "speed setter" but I didn't see much of it.

The fur check isn't here yet, so I won't know how I did in the monetary department. After I figure in the extra gas it required, the extra traps I purchased to fill the "long line," the tire I blew because I didn't pay attention to where I was parking, and the time spent away from my family, it isn't going to be as big as I would have hoped. It will be a bigger check than I would have normally received though.

I have thought a lot about this "long line". I have run and compared it to the small line I normally run and came to some not so startling conclusions. The longliners, who do this day in and day out and year after year, are to be commended for their perseverance and stamina. It is work, pure and simple. It's a job, not a hobby. They are doing this for a living and have no choice but to find ways to speed things up and cut as many corners as they can to be more efficient and cost effective. I am sure it takes a toll on their physical and mental strength, not to mention the strain it puts on their family life. My hat is off to them!

I want to say that my "long line" was by no means in comparison with the length that the professional trappers run. It was long enough to convince me of one thing though. I think I will be content to stay a hobby trapper . I enjoy making my sets look "sweet" and natural. I like to blend and camouflage them so they fit in with the surroundings. I get a kick out of following that mink track to see where it goes and what it does. I want to get another chance to trick that raccoon into stepping into my trap instead of stepping around it. If I want to take a detour to check on a deer trail or photograph a couple of frisky squirrels, then I know I'll have that time. I like knowing I can pull my line in an hour or so and not have to worry about needing to check it the next day if something unexpected pops up. The fur shed and it's chores will once again require an hour worth of attention instead of an all night marathon.

I wrote this to let other hobby trappers know that there is at least one other trapper out there that shared some of their dreams. Not running the long lines or making the big catches doesn't mean we enjoy trapping any less, but possibly enjoy it more because we have more time. I encourage you to take that time and use it to the maximum. Get the most out of every set and just have some good old-fashioned fun doing it