

First Year Trappers Journal Part Two
Article from May-June 2011 Buckeye Trapper
by Wayne Looker

November 24, 2010

Today I pulled all the traps and reset at a friend's farm. All the traps were empty today again except for the last one. The same pocket set that produced 3 coon in the 3 days it has been set connected again. On my first attempt at a pocket set, I connected on 4 coon in 4 days. I couldn't be happier with that.

I went and set at my friend's farm today and took him along. He has never had any trapping experience so I tried teaching him what I could. We set a few coon and canine sets along a fence row with a dried up creek bed running down in it. I taught him about snares, footholds, bodygrips, and DPs. He seemed really interested in it! I gave him a DP and told him to set it and he put his very own set out. Then we moved to the other end of his farm where a large creek runs.

At the large creek I put in a few pocket sets before turning it over to Sean. He made his very own pocket set in the side of the creek. I hope it connects to keep his interest going. We also found a dead deer that was on a sandbar along the edge of the creek. I didn't see any trails leading to the deer to set snares. I put in a pocket set close to the deer thinking that the deer should at least draw interest to the area.

November 26,

We have gotten 4 inches of rain here in the past 2 days so what was once a dried up creek bed is now a strong flowing creek, with my traps somewhere in the bottom of it. What was once a small creek that I was able to walk across in my hip boots, is now a river chest deep with a fierce current. Those pocket sets I had are a good 2 feet underwater now. Right now I am just waiting on the water level to go back down. I did put in 5 more coon sets today up higher on the bank. My friend Sean seems very excited about trapping so I really hope something is in one of the 6 working sets I have right now. We shall see.

Coyote Quest:

I tried a post hole set today. It's a hole with the trap bedded at the bottom of the hole. Then I took a stake and poked a hole into the side of the big hole and put a little bait in it. I had tracks all around this set but the coyote never stepped down into the big hole and onto the waiting trap. I know that as soon as I catch my first one or 2 it's going to get a lot easier because then I'll know what to do. Right now I am just doing trial and error.

November 27,

I got to go to the Ohio State vs. Michigan game today. That was a ton of fun. Great to see my Buckeyes pull off the victory. After the game I got home just in time to check traps before dark. Today was the first day for not catching a single thing. Disappointing especially since I want to catch something to show Sean. I am probably going to have to pull traps this week with a bunch of end-of-the-quarter papers/projects/finals this week.

Went coon hunting tonight with a buddy of mine. I can't hardly make a cut in a woods without getting coyotes all over the dogs. I sure wish I could get the hang of this coyote trapping to thin them out a little.

November 28,

The water was finally low enough for me to get to the traps that I set. With deer gun season coming in tomorrow, I pulled most of the sets but left a few because Sean wanted to run a small line during the week. I did collect my first muskrat in one of the traps that was under water. I was kind of curious how I caught him. He was in a pocket set for coon baited with fish in a Duke 1.5 coil. Hopefully I will get a call tomorrow from Sean all excited about having a coon.

Coyote Quest:

I am frustrated on this one. I went to check the sets and pull the traps today. When I got back there I found that 2 of the 3 traps had been dug up without being fired. The third was just flat gone. I had the trap double staked and it was still gone. All I had left was one of the stakes. I had it staked in an "x" formation. I know it wasn't someone that stole the trap because it was a flat set between 2 pretty obviously dirt holes. If they had stole the flat set then they would have stolen the other 2 as well. What am I doing wrong? Why do my traps keep getting dug up and how do I catch this now trap shy coyote? I think I am going to start cable staking because if I can't hold a coyote with the double staking method then I don't know what else to do. What advice do you have for me on this one?

November 29,

My buddy Sean ran traps today my himself for his first time. He had a nice coon waiting for him and he was really excited!

December 7,

I do have a bit of new news. The mystery was solved about what happened to the missing trap. The coyote did indeed pull the trap out of the ground even though it was cross staked. Last night my dad called me and told me that one of our neighbor boys was hunting deer and saw this coyote run past him. He shot it and when he found it, lo and behold my trap was still on his foot. So I can't exactly count that as my first ever caught coyote because I didn't hold him. Needless to say though I am extremely excited to know that I did well enough to catch one. I know that I am on the right track now.

December 13,

Today I went and got peat moss from Lowes. The bags were outside and were covered in snow. I opened up the bag and the peat felt a little moist to me so I have been drying it out by the fireplace all day. We have had some real strong winds that made looking for tracks and setting snares impossible because any tracks that were there have blown away. I did get one post hole set in. I put wax paper under the trap and then the peat over top. Then I sifted a real small amount of snow over the top of it. I put 2 small holes in with a stake. I used wool and put coyote gland lure in one hole and groundhog bait with wool in the other.

December 14,

My trap had tacks all around it. It was all around my hole but there was no catch. These guys are beating me right now. Got the truck stuck because it's a piece of crap and the 4 wheel drive went out. With the truck stuck I didn't get any new sets out. It was a frustrating day.

December 22,

Well I put out 5 DP sets today at an abandoned house with 3 little buildings around it.

I haven't had anything touch the coyote traps that were getting all the attention before. I put out 3 more coyote sets at a place I noticed tons of coyote sign while deer hunting. I'm still trying to bring in my first song dog!

December 26,

I did it!!!! I finally caught my first coyote!!! O man I am still shaking with excitement. It has been pretty tough getting one of these guys into my trap but I finally did it! Man it is a great feeling.

Now the set....I was deer hunting last weekend and I noticed TONS of coyote sign in this woods by my house. This woods is bordered by a state route, an interstate highway, and a big cornfield. There was a finger of woods that shoots out into the cornfield. At the very end of this finger is a pond. The dam to the pond makes a perfect path across the finger connecting to the cornfield on each side.

I made a double dirt hole set on the west side of the path. In one hole I had June's Fox Frenzy and in the other hole I had Groundhog bait. I used a broken off corn stalk as my backing. It was a Bridger 1.65 Offset that held well. I used an 18" cable stake that wasn't budged.

I have been trying all year to catch my first coyote and have had traps dug out, snapped, and pulled out. I drove up on this guy and was so excited. I am STILL excited. I am for sure going to get him tanned. Maybe I'll get him mounted. We'll have to see how much that costs. He howled and barked and everything else at me and it was just so cool to hear. Definitely something I'll always remember.

January 2, 2011

Well today sure held a nice surprise! The coyote traps that I had have snapped and dug up and had tracks all around finally produced! It had been a good 2 weeks since I had baited or lured them. We have had 6 inches of snow on top of the set and a sheer downpour this weekend. The coyote's nose was STILL strong enough to smell the bait. After having traps snapped and having tracks all around I set a trap on the side of the hole and that's the one that held this beautiful female. It was a 1.75 4 coiled Victor that did the job. I almost pulled the set yesterday but due to all the rain we have had the field was real wet and I didn't want to drive the 4 wheeler back there and rut up the farmer's field. So I waited a day and had this little girl waiting on me! The best part was my dad came with me and even told me he wants to get her tanned so he can have her.

I don't think I will be able to get many, if any, more traps out due to having Friday evening classes. I did hear about a farmer that is having problems with beavers flooding his field. If I can get a Friday free or some 3 day weekend I may be able to set out to catch a beaver.

I'll be heading up to Ashland Ohio this weekend for a fur handling workshop. I am really looking forward to that as it's just another good opportunity to learn.

Overall, I couldn't be happier with how my season has gone. I learned a whole heck of a lot and got to spend time outdoors. I had a once in a lifetime catch (at least here in central Ohio) with the badger. I met my goal of catching a coyote. I haven't met my goal of catching a beaver just yet but I am still not ruling that one out. Thanks for reading and I hope you were all able to enjoy and maybe laugh a little at my expense.

I have finished the year with:

2 coyote

6 muskrats

2 mink (one from my friends dog)

28 coon (a handful from coon hunting)

1 badger

Happy Trapping! ### Wayde Looker 7147 County Road 14 Fredericktown, OH 43019