

Blind Pocket Sets
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No, this is not a new type of set nor is it a new way to make it. It is a plain old pocket set, made however you would like. It is where you make it that is important. I started to use it after one particular mink gave me a few gray hairs.

I was standing in the middle of a brushy creek looking at a set of fresh mink tracks that passed right through a blind set under an overhanging bank. I didn't know what more I could have done. The mink simply just missed the pan of the trap. I had used a jump stick as I always do, but to no avail. I don't like missing a mink. Unlike muskrats or raccoons, they usually don't pass through again over the next night or two. Sometimes it takes weeks, if at all, before you get another chance. It is best to catch them the first time around.

I wondered if there was anything more I could have done to increase my chances, short of setting two traps at the set. Then I remembered something Charles Dobbins told me one day as we were discussing mink trapping. He said, "A mink and a hole go together like peanut butter and jelly, like bacon and eggs, like cookies and milk". I thought about that statement for a minute and decided that maybe I should make a blind pocket set.

What is a blind pocket set? Well, plain and simple it is a blind set made for mink with a hole added for extra attraction. What purpose does the hole serve if it is already a good location? The hole gives the mink something to focus its attention on as it passes through the set location. The hole may cause the mink to slow down a bit and as it investigates the hole, your chances increase that it may step into your trap.

I decided to try my idea and proceeded to make a pocket set under the overhanging bank. Nine days later my idea paid off. Floating tail up in about two feet of water was a nice male mink. I don't know if it was the same mink I missed, but I figured the chances were pretty good.

I now try to make at least one blind pocket set at each stop along my line. It seems to be very effective on small streams that mink are able to readily crisscross as they make their rounds. At a couple of locations where I trap there are ten or fifteen decent places where I know that sooner or later, a mink will check it out. I don't want to set all of these locations but I also don't want to see where a mink passed within four or five feet of my set, but on the other side of the stream. That is very frustrating. Trust me.

What I try to do is pick what I feel are the best three or four locations based on the amount of tracks, droppings, gut feelings, etc. These locations are where I then make my sets. Then, at a couple of them, I dig a pocket set back into the bank and set my trap in front of the hole. I don't add any lure or bait to the hole, because I don't want to attract any more raccoons than necessary to the set. I would rather catch them elsewhere in sets made specifically for them.

Now, when the mink comes down the creek and it isn't where I want it to be, maybe it will see my pocket or the fresh digging and come across the creek to check it out. If it is where I want it to be, the pocket can't do anything but help increase my chances of having to skin yet another mink.

I have used this set the last few years and have caught several mink in it. I still would have probably caught the majority of the mink anyway, because the sets were excellent without the hole. But I am sure that the hole helped increase my chances. I will gladly exchange a little extra work and time to avoid that let down feeling that I get when I see mink tracks passing over my sets.

I like to use this set under overhanging banks, behind tree roots, (when I can dig there) and under grassy overhangs. These are places mink like to investigate anyway so it is sure to discover your set. Plus, it isn't

readily visible to the raccoon on its nightly rounds or that two-legged bandit looking for traps to steal.

This set, when used along with trail sets, lured and/or baited pocket sets, and plain old blind sets, just gives you another weapon in your arsenal that you can throw at the mink.

See if you can't make those blind sets even better by trying this set, especially on those smaller creeks.