

D.P. What's That?

By Doug Wilson

Believe it or not, there are people who haven't tried one of the many dog proof traps on the market today. This type trap is the greatest innovation in trapping since the introduction of the body grip trap. Now these type traps have been around since the 80's like the egg trap, coon cuffs, and some others, but they were tricky to set. A trapper needed a mechanical engineering degree to get them set, some requiring a special tool. The new types that have come out in the last 5 or so years can be set by hand with no special tools.

If you want to know what effect these DP's are having on trap sales, ask your favorite trapping supply dealer how #11 and 1 ½ coils are selling since the introduction of dog proofs, dead in the water. How many used raccoon type foot traps do you see for sale on the forums and at trapper's conventions. To make a big statement, think along these lines. You have a trap that holds the bait so the raccoon has to reach in and dig it out, once the raccoon is caught the coon cannot get to his foot with his teeth, my foot damage with DP's is less than 1%, read that again less than 1% to be exact, 174 coons, 1 with slight damage. 0.57% that is fantastic!

One thing I do that may shock you a little is I add 4 to 5 feet of chain to my DP's with a coyote size grapple hook. I don't stake mine

Set the DP, bait it, and stick it in the bank, throw the hook out in the water, go onto the next location. Fast, easy, convenient! For dry land sets around corn fields, I will throw the grapple hook in a bush, so I don't have to chase the coon to far, I'm lazy. The ease of setting, baiting and just pushing the anchor into the ground, frees up more time to set and check more traps, which means you can cover more ground and catch more raccoons, which should lead to more cash for the wife or girlfriend to spend.

All of the manufacturers of these traps tout theirs as the best, with the latest bells and whistles, but in reality they all work under the same principle. Raccoon reaches in for bait, disengages trigger, gets caught, end of story.

These traps range from the Cadillac "sterling grizz" to the working mans "duke" with a multitude of makes and models in between. There are one way triggers and two way triggers. I haven't noticed that it makes a difference. I have very few missing baits and if I do I credit it to mice, shrews, chipmunks ect... because I occasionally have one pinched in the trap.

One way to stop the mouse theft of bait is to wrap the top of your DP with aluminum foil. Poke a couple nail size holes in the foil to let the bait odor out. The foil is shiny and attracts the raccoon. The coon rips off the foil and mice can't. The foil also looks like a piece of discarded trash and helps a little with theft. Another thing foil will do is keep rain off of your bait so it doesn't get mushy.

Now onto the subject of bait. I have used everything that has been suggested, marshmallows, jack mackerel, fish chunks, pellet fish food, soft cat food, dry cat food, moistened dog food, commercial baits etc. I now make my own bait. I use the cheapest bag of dry cat food Kroger sells. I then made up an oil based bait solution to mix into the cat food as needed. I like my chunky pieces of cat food to stay solid, that's why I went oil based. With the chunky pieces staying solid, I get a lot of two foot catches where the raccoon can't just scrape the bait out like they will with mushy bait. Now you have your cat food and your bait solution in separate containers. I purchased a large mouth pint plastic jar from Sterling Fur, I fill it with cat food and then pour in just enough bait solution to coat the cat food, I don't want it mushy. As I use up my pint jar I can mix up a new batch right at the truck as needed. I think this method gives the bait more punch as it hasn't been sitting around in a jar for months losing some of its strength. Also oil base will float on water and increase the attracting area.

Another thing I do is carry some cheap plastic spoons in my truck since they fit into most dp openings. That way you don't spill a bunch of bait. Two spoonfuls and trap is ready to set.

A word of warning on baits, sticky baits, like marshmallows or gummy worms, are hard to clean out at the end of the season.

So if you have tried a few DP's yet you may be missing out on a few coons. Good luck!