Workshop trapping: information in this document is largely taken from the chapter *Trapping and Fishing* Ray Mears' book: *The survival handbook – practical guide to woodcraft and woodlore.* So you might want to read through that chapter.

Goals:

1.Explain the basics of trapping; Siting, Designs, Baited/not-baited, Strength, Camouflaging(visual and scent) of the trap.
2. The participants should get familiar with different designs by constructing a few traps, these traps will be tested using a rabbit as guinea-pig. See the exercises.

Trapping has a somewhat negative image mostly due to the fact that animals suffer when they are caught in a trap. Although you can build traps where an animal is killed swiftly with little suffering for the animal, you should only use traps in survival situations.

Why would you use a trap? Traps have 2 great advantages: Once you have set your trap your hands are free to do other things. 2 You'll be hinting at night when your senses are less effective.

So trapping sounds pretty good just set a trap and come back the next day and voila there is a piece of meat. Off course it is not as easy as that. As is with most things, being successful at trapping requires some skill and practice.

Today you will focus on building different traps. But building traps is just one thing that you need to keep in mind when setting a trap.

Lets say you are in a survival situation and you want to set some traps.

First you need to determine what am I going to catch, for this you need to determine what animals are in the area you're in. Look for animals or traces of animals like track, manure, hairs.

Then comes the siting of your trap, this is one of the most important factors in being successful at trapping. Setting up a trap anywhere and hoping to get lucky is of no use. A good place for a trap is a location where:

1. animals frequently pass
2. You can arouse their curiosity to without too much suspicion

Baited and un-baited traps: There are roughly two types of traps baited and un-baited.
These should be placed at different locations.

1. **Un-baited trap.** An animal trail. May be used by more than one species. So look for side trails to see if you can find a species specific trail. Look for hairs and footsteps to find the species you are looking for. How to set your trap:
    1. Near the end of a trail where the animal has to cross open terrain. So it is preoccupied with the dangers of crossing open-ground, and may easily miss the trap.
    2. Camouflage is important. The trap must blend in with the surroundings and the scent(human) must be removed or disguised.
    3. Place twigs and sticks at the side of the trap to act as a funnel, this way the animal more or less has to pass through the trap.
    4. Set your trap with as little changes to the surroundings as possible. Broken vegetation will give off scents that may alert the animal. Also an animal will notice major changes to the run.
    5. You can also scare the animal you are trying to catch just before it will enter your trap.

2. **Baited trap**. Are placed away from animals trails at places where the animal feeds or marks its territory.

What do you use for bait?
For this you must know what the animal eats. However food is not the only bait you can use. You can also use a scent to attract an animal. Scents have greater range than food and will attract animals even after they've had dinner.

How to get a scent for bait?
1. For scents you can use the scent glands of an animal that you have killed before, in a survival situation this is unlikely. Another way is to find a scent marking post and put some dry plant material against it. Leave the material for a few days so it has been marked or has absorbed the scent.

What food to use?
It obviously depends on the animal you try to catch. A carnivore you can catch with a piece of meat or fish. A herbivore must be attracted by foods they prefer to eat. So you'll have to know or find out what food is liked by the animals.

Funneling: CONVINCE the animal that through the trap is the easiest way.

1. **Un-baited traps**: Convince the animal that the easiest way is through you trap. A few sticks will mostly do the trick, don't build a rigid wall of sticks. Animals will become suspicious of this.
2. **Baited traps**: A more substantial wall can be made, to ensure the animal is prevented from circumventing the snare or the deadfall. Since the animal is enticed by the bait. And possibly the environment is also new to the animal.

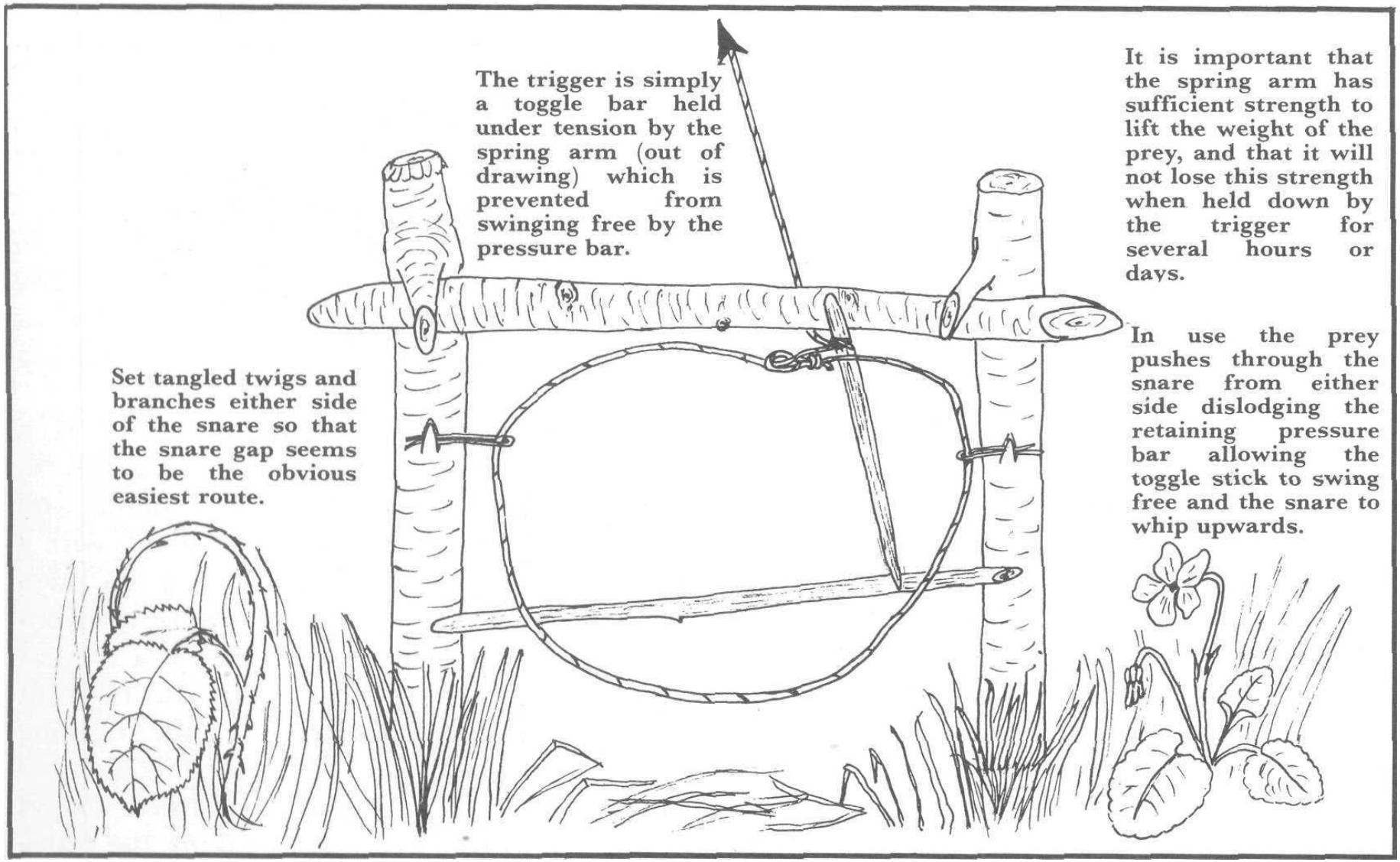
The choice of your trap design

1. Depends on the prey you want to catch: 1. weight 2. size 3. height at shoulder 4. strength
2. Available materials.
3. You want a clean kill: No risk of your animal that escapes or being eaten by another animal. Better for the animal well being.
    1. Spring Snares should be able to cleanly break the neck of the prey. And keep it out of reach of predators that may otherwise eat off the animal.
    2. Dead falls should be able to break the back of an animal, using a solid anvil instead of the rather soft ground, will help. the weight should also remain in place.

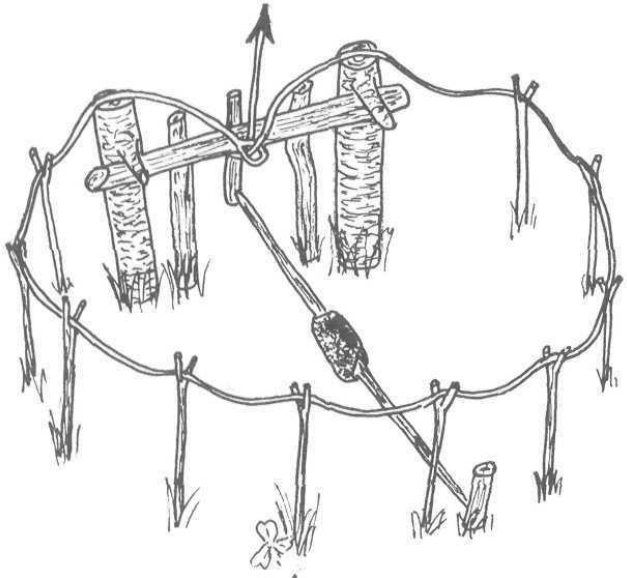
Now that you have chosen your design and know the site of you trap you can start to manufacture the trap. But before you start to manufacture or even gather raw materials wash and disguise the scent of your hands and tools. This can be done by washing your hands and letting them dry in the smoke of a fire. Since this smell doesn't bother animals. Also your feet or shoes can be de-scented.
In order to reduce the scent on the trap itself handle the material as little as possible. Also cover any exposed cuts with soil, in order to disguise the smell of a fresh cut.

Now that the trap is manufactured you will have to set it quietly quickly and efficiently, in order to get as little disturbance as possible. So there is little chance of being noticed by wild animals. If you place multiple traps put them in such a way that is easy for you to check them.
When the trap is set you should check it daily preferably twice a day. Check it by keeping as much distance as possible. You could integrate warning system to your trap so you can easily if an animal set it off.

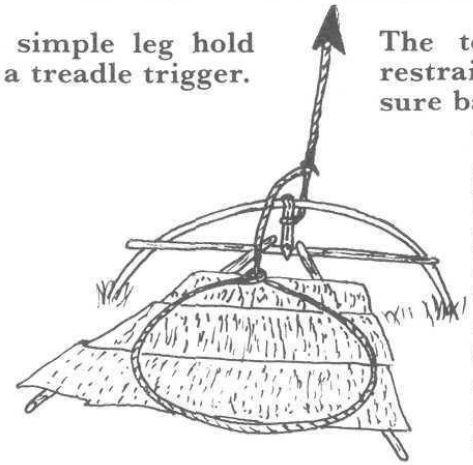
Below you'll see some designs of traps


The trigger is simply a toggle bar held under tension by the spring arm (out of drawing) which is prevented from swinging free by the pressure bar.
It is important that the spring arm has sufficient strength to lift the weight of the prey, and that it will not lose this strength when held down by the trigger for several hours or days.
Set tangled twigs and branches either side of the snare so that the snare gap seems to be the obvious easiest route.
In use the prey pushes through the snare from either side dislodging the retaining pressure bar allowing the toggle stick to swing free and the snare to whip upwards.

The stockade serves two purposes: firstly to restrict access to the bait in a predictable manner as shown from above only; it also ensures that when the trigger is released the snare is in the optimum position for success.

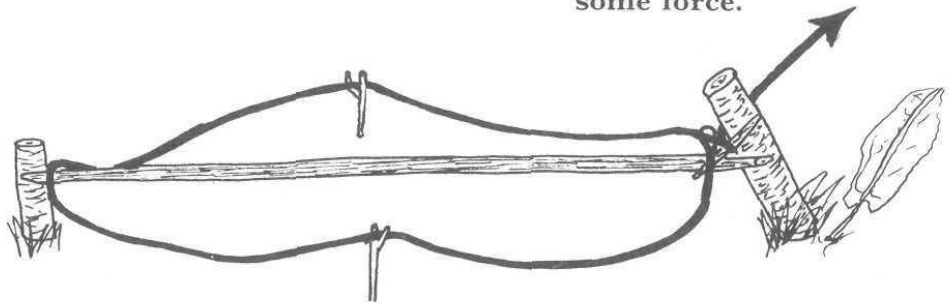


The simple leg hold has a treadle trigger.



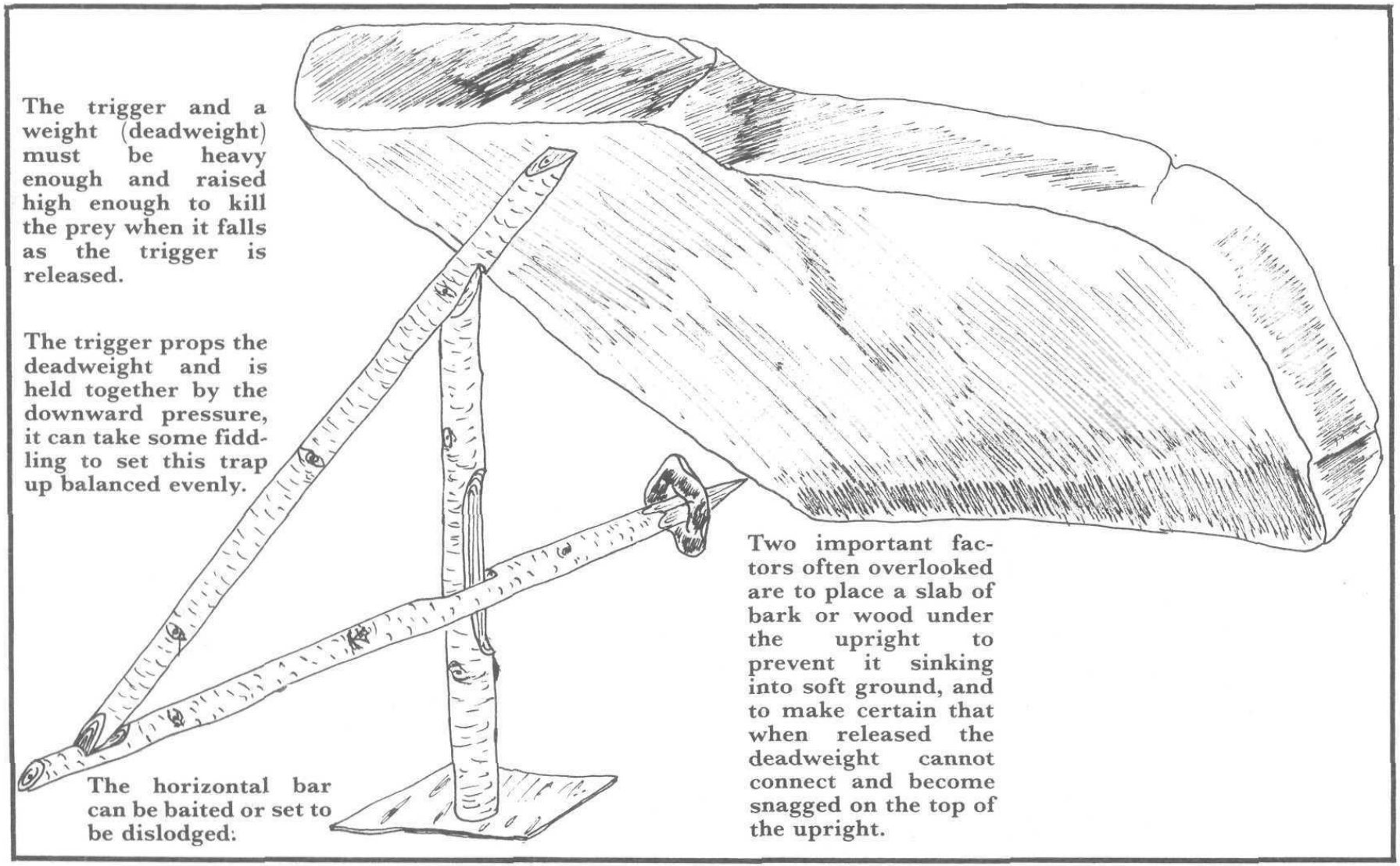
The toggle stick is restrained by a pressure bar.

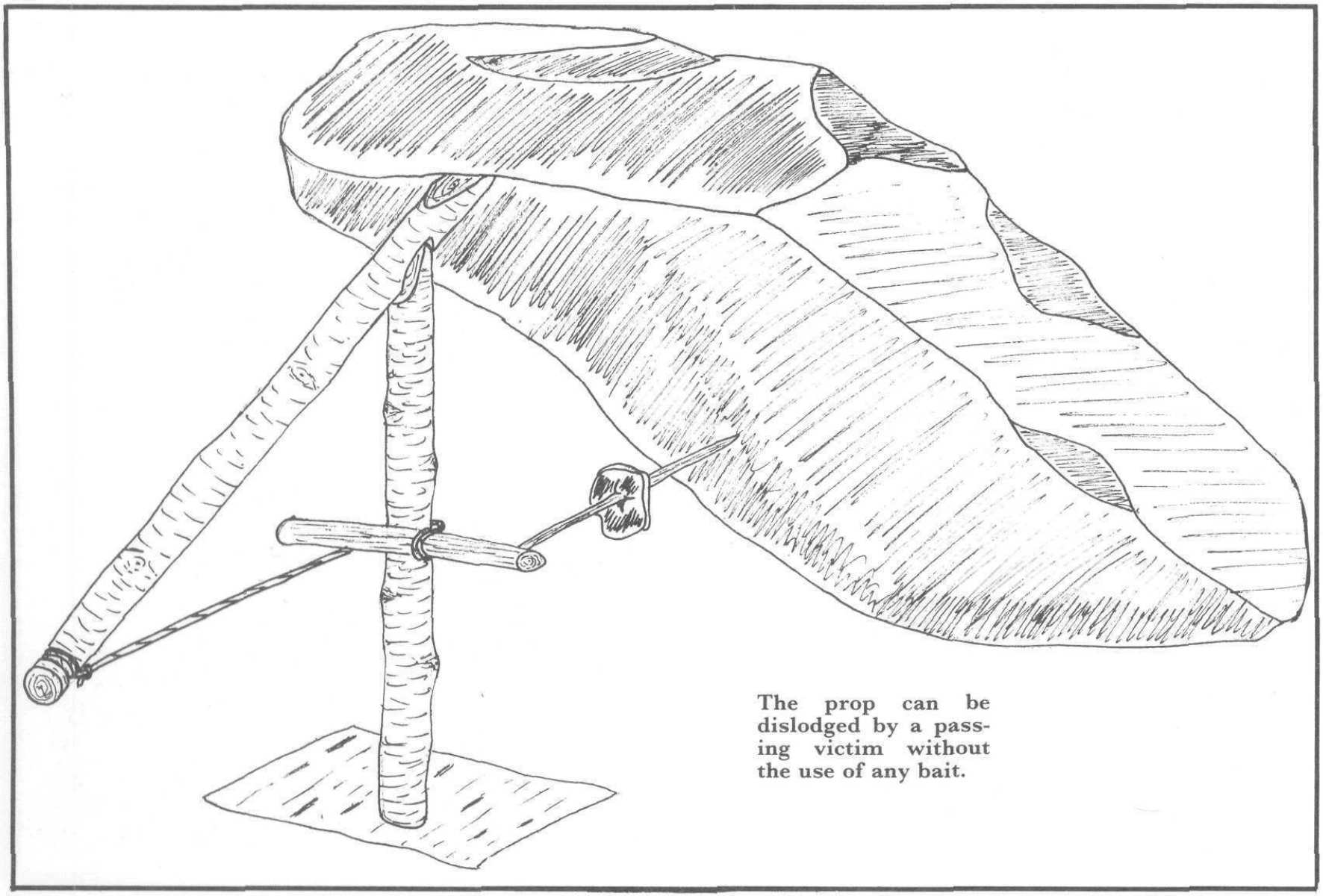
To release the toggle stick the pressure bar needs to be depressed by pressure from the treadle upon which the snare rests. This trap is suitable for bounding animals such as rabbits that will land upon the trigger with some force.



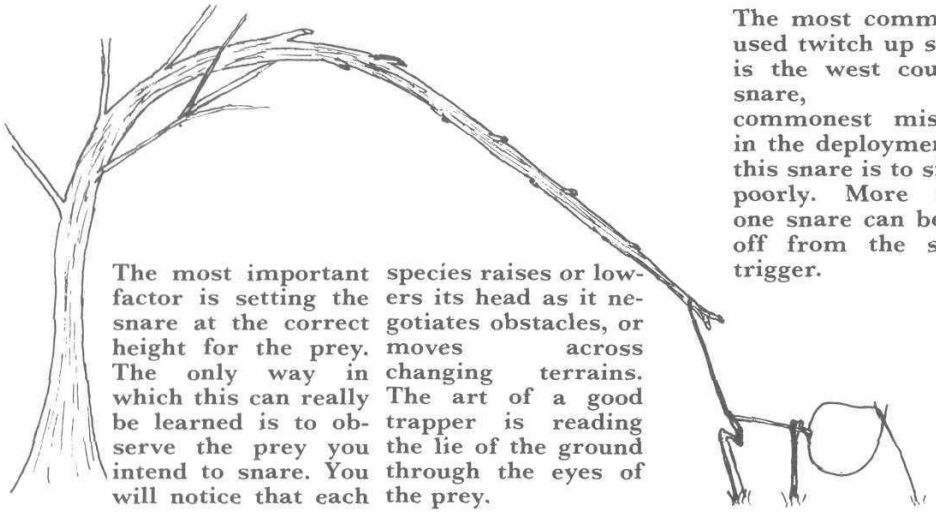
A more elaborate leg hold where again the snare needs to be raised.

More slow-moving animals must have their foot through the snare before the trigger is released, otherwise the snare simply pulls through under their foot. To achieve this the trigger can be recessed slightly into the ground with the snare above ground or as in the variation of the leg hold above or left the snare can be simply propped up.


The trigger and a weight (deadweight) must be heavy enough and raised high enough to kill the prey when it falls as the trigger is released.
The trigger props the deadweight and is held together by the downward pressure, it can take some fiddling to set this trap up balanced evenly.
The horizontal bar can be baited or set to be dislodged.
Two important factors often overlooked are to place a slab of bark or wood under the upright to prevent it sinking into soft ground, and to make certain that when released the deadweight cannot connect and become snagged on the top of the upright.

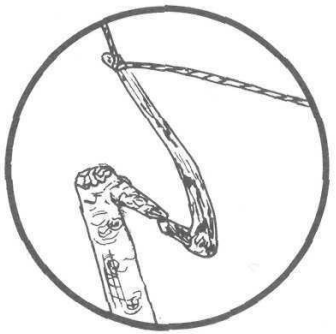


The prop can be dislodged by a passing victim without the use of any bait.



The most important factor is setting the snare at the correct height for the prey. The only way in which this can really be learned is to observe the prey you intend to snare. You will notice that each species raises or lowers its head as it negotiates obstacles, or moves across changing terrains. The art of a good trapper is reading the lie of the ground through the eyes of the prey.

The most commonly used twitch up snare is the west country snare, the commonest mistake in the deployment of this snare is to site it poorly. More than one snare can be led off from the same trigger.



West-country snare

The keeper's strangle snare operates with a loosely-set slip knot for the trigger.

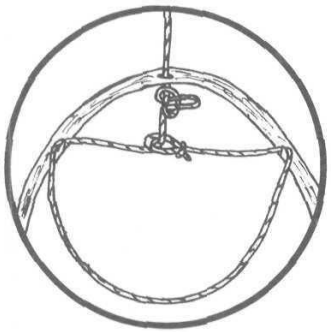
When pulled the slip knot collapses and the snare tightens pulling the prey tight against the top of the hoop.

The poacher's snare was designed for quick setting, usually using an already cut stump in coppice woodland for the trigger post. With the prey carried high above the ground there remains no evidence of any trapping having taken place.

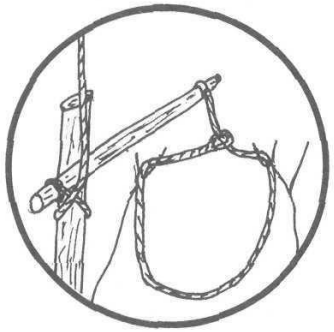
The pencil snare is a very simple toggle principle snare.

The rolling snare has a restraining bar set between two uprights. The snare noose is wrapped around this stick a couple of times.

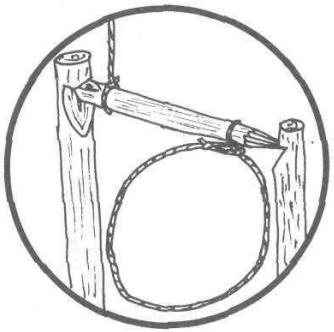
When the prey's head passes through the noose and pulls on the snare, the restraining bar rolls out of place.



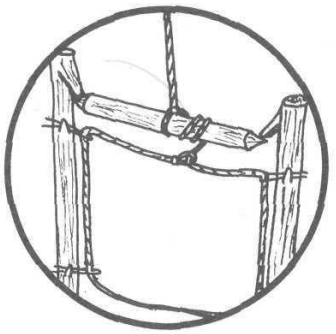
keeper's strangle snare



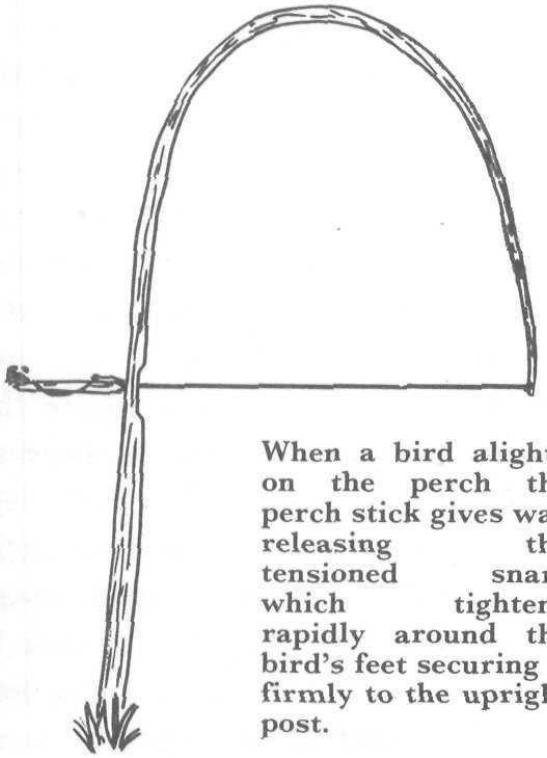
poacher's snare



pencil snare

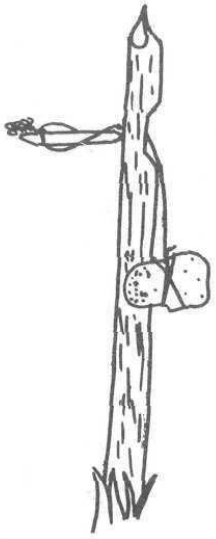


rolling snare

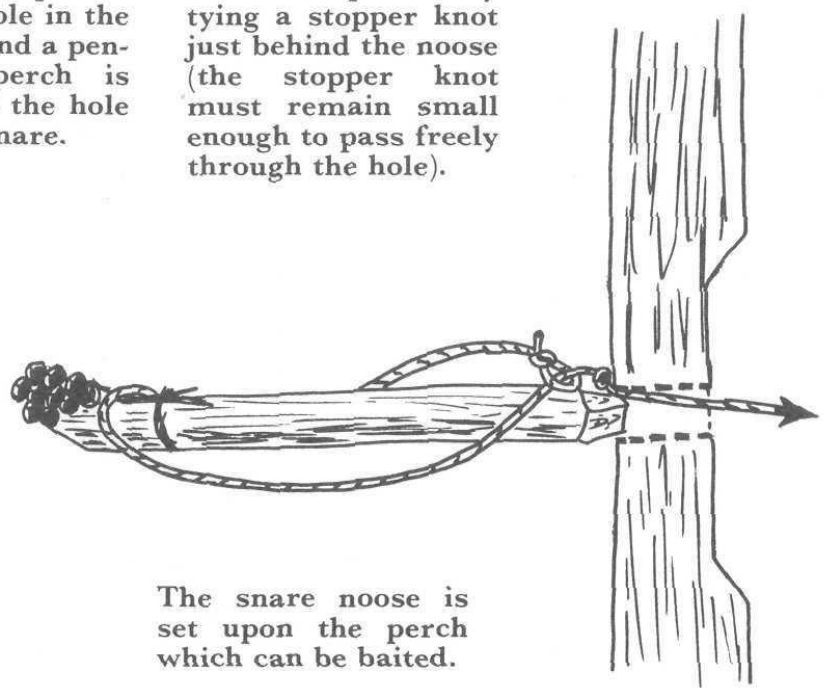


When a bird alights on the perch the perch stick gives way releasing the tensioned snare which tightens rapidly around the bird's feet securing it firmly to the upright post.

The snare passes through a hole in the snare post and a pencil sized perch is wedged into the hole to jam the snare.



This is improved by tying a stopper knot just behind the noose (the stopper knot must remain small enough to pass freely through the hole).



The snare noose is set upon the perch which can be baited.