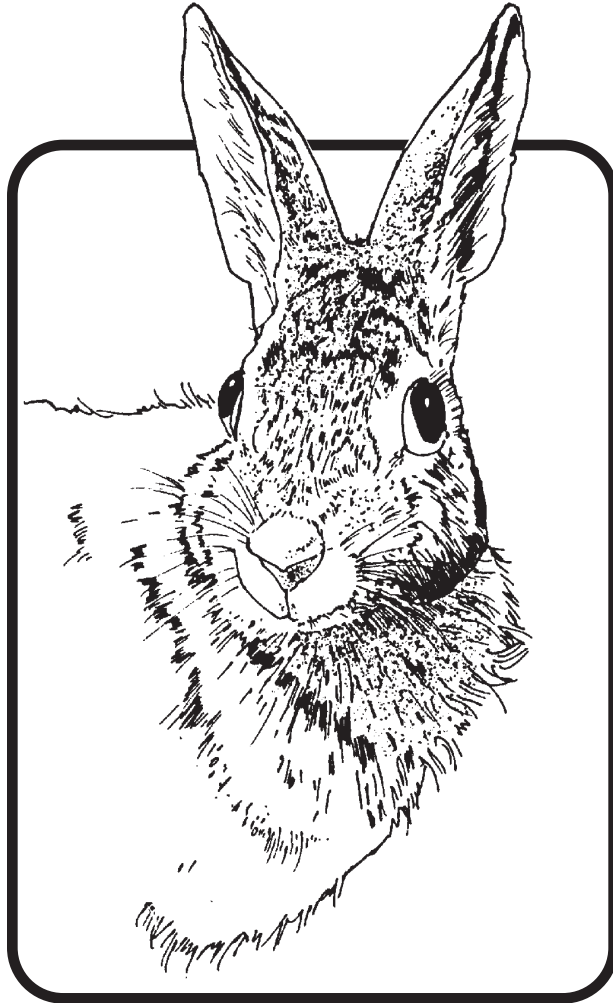


Build a Live-Trap for Rabbits

by Keith Sutton



Catching rabbits is easy with a simple-to-make live-trap

“We’ve got one here,” Vernon Baker shouts excitedly from the thicket. “It’s a nice swamp rabbit, too.”

We’re checking live-traps he’s set around Poor Boy Duck Club.

“This old boy will make a dandy stew,” he says, holding up the six-pound rabbit.

Baker, a retired construction engineer, hails from North Little Rock, Arkansas, but he and friends stay at their club near Humnoke most of duck season. When not hunting mallards in pin-oak flats, Baker tends his traps.

“It’s another fun way to relax and enjoy the outdoors,” he says. “I get a lot of satisfaction making the boxes and seeing what I can catch.” During one recent season, Baker and fellow club member Pete Krievans tallied 30 swamp rabbits and eight cottontails with 12 traps.

In years past, rabbit live-traps were called “gums,” as most were constructed from hollow sweet-gum logs. Baker makes

traps from cypress boards using an unusual yet simple design.

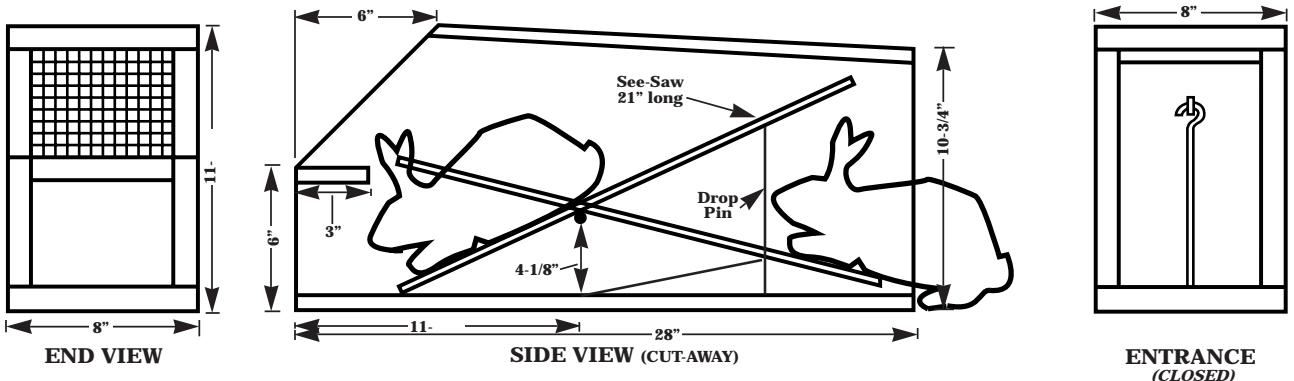
“Pete’s father provided the plans,” says Baker. “He used boxes like this to catch foxes in Latvia. We modified the plans for rabbits.

“The principle is simple,” he continues. “Inside the box is a board that pivots up and down like a seesaw. The rod on which the board pivots—the fulcrum if you will—is placed off-center a little so the board is heavier on the entry side. This keeps the board down until a rabbit enters the trap.

“When a rabbit enters and passes the pivot point, he becomes a counterweight, and the board drops, just like a child crawling from one end of a seesaw to the other. This causes a pin beneath the board at the entrance to drop and catch. The trap is then locked. The board won’t come back down, and the rabbit can’t get out.”

The rear of each box is covered with hardware cloth to encourage rabbits to enter.

“If the box is sealed and dark inside, rabbits are hesitant to enter,” Baker says. “The hardware cloth puts them at ease, because



they can see through it. They know there's not a predator inside."

Baker's catch rate skyrocketed when he tried a new bait.

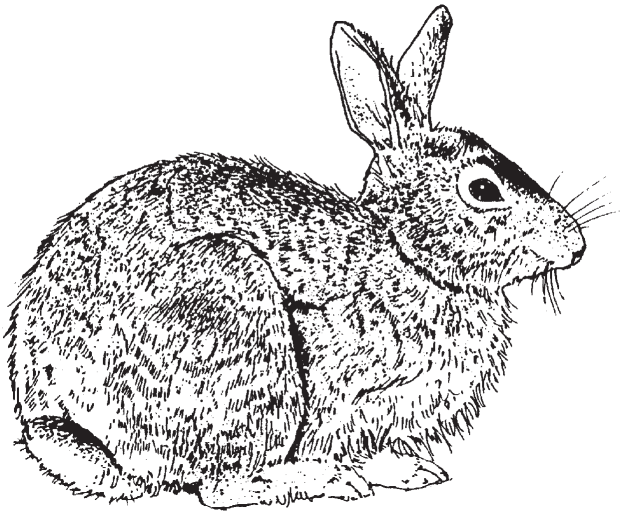
"I used apples at first," he says. "But I never caught many swamp rabbits. A friend said if I wanted to catch swampers, I should soak cottonballs in vanilla and use that for bait. It worked, not only on swamp rabbits but cottontails, too."

Baker offers these tips to increase your success.

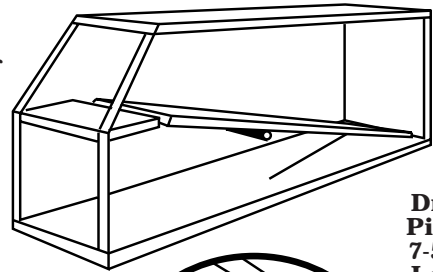
■ "Place your traps in rabbit runs, distinct little trails you'll find in grassy thickets and briar patches."

■ "Don't expect to catch rabbits the first few days. It takes a few nights for your scent to wear off. Then you'll catch a rabbit. Its scent in the box will help you catch more."

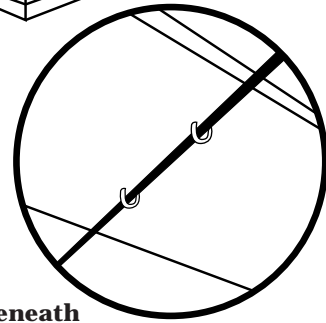
■ "To remove rabbits, turn the box on its wide end, entrance up, then open it, reach in and get the rabbit by the hind legs. Hold on tight. Dispatch the rabbit with a sharp blow to the head."



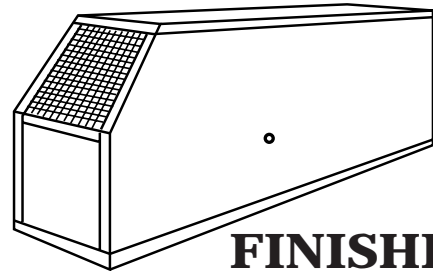
Bait Shelf



Drop Pin is 7-5/8" Long



Pivot rod beneath see-saw is attached with staples.



FINISHED TRAP



Arkansas Game & Fish Commission
2 Natural Resources Drive
Little Rock, Arkansas 72205

(January 1998)