

THE USE OF MAGNETS FOR TRAP CLOSURE

By Dr. C. Brooke Worth

Even modern bird-banders equipped with Japanese mist nets may have occasion to revert for special studies to some of the earlier types of bird trap that depend on moving parts activated by hand or by triggers. In all such devices there are two cardinal principles of function: a sensitive trigger and a secure method of closure. As to the latter, I remember how rubber bands gradually lose their elasticity, home-fashioned springs are difficult to place and regulate, and locking mechanisms habitually get out of plumb and fail to engage.

Recently our organization has been devising various kinds of mosquito traps, and one of my colleagues noticed that his 1961 refrigerator had a magnetic door-lock, an item that not only worked well and obviated breakdowns of complex and difficultly-replaced parts, but incidentally removed the hazard of imprisoning children. Although it appeared unlikely that a child would ever get caught in a mosquito trap, my friend appreciated the other merits of such a locking system and has just adapted it to a model that promises to be successful.

It occurs to me that magnetic locks might provide good service in a variety of simple bird traps, those in which one moving part, after being released, falls downward through gravity to join another. Even swinging trapdoor entrances balanced against a counterweight might be adjusted to greater serviceability by the use of accessory light-weight paired magnets.

Magnets are very cheap and can be cut to sizes and shapes to fit the design of almost any trap. Perhaps they would be useful on gathering or holding cages also. Magnets exert maximum force when approximated and thus work oppositely to rubber bands or springs which are under greatest tension when the trap is in the open or "set" position. I should love to see Jeff Gill sink his teeth into this metallic proposition, although I hereby declare myself not responsible for his dental bills.

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PICTURE CONTEST

The winner this time is Ralph K. Bell, of Clarksville, Pa., for his photograph of a banded Red-tailed Hawk which appears on the front cover of this issue. The prize, 2 nets, is being forwarded to him.

The Editors wish to urge banders again to send pictures - photographs or drawings - for the contest. Pictures must be suitable for printing in EBBA NEWS - and we hasten to say that illustrations in connection with articles and notes are always very welcome, and earnestly desired!