

A NEW TYPE OF RAPTOR TRAP

by

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A new device for trapping raptors has been developed. It consists of a multi-branched stick with nylon monofilament nooses attached and a lure animal, such as a mouse, tethered beneath. The trap uses the same principle as the bal-chatri, i.e., entangling the raptor's toes or feet in the nooses supported above a lure animal. The trap is unique, however, in that the branched stick is so "un-trap-like" (Fig. 1); it should enable researchers to capture wary raptors where conventional traps might fail. I have used this trap successfully on Red-tailed Hawks (*Buteo jamaicensis*) and, in one instance, trapped an individual that the standard wire cage bal-chatri had failed to trap.

Although the trap is mobile and can be delivered in the same fashion as a bal-chatri, it does have certain drawbacks. The most obvious disadvantage is that the lure animal is exposed and vulnerable. Particular care is also required to drop the trap in the field from a moving vehicle so as to have the trap land upright.

Some important considerations in assembling the trap include:

(1) The stick used must be flexible, yet tough. Shrubbery, such as Barberry (*Berberis* sp.) or Greenbriar (*Smilax* sp.), are recommended.

(2) The mouse, tethered beneath the prongs of the stick, will foul the loops unless the prongs are bowed upward.

(3) A drag weight, preferably camouflaged, *must* be attached to the stick trap.

(4) The size of the branch used must guarantee that the raptor trapped cannot break it.

This is a preliminary report, and I would appreciate knowing what results are obtained by anyone who attempts to use this type of trap. I would also like to extend my appreciation to Mr. G. Robert Ganis for his assistance in the initial field of trials of this trap and for the photograph included.

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Figure 1. A new type of raptor trap.