

to sweep snow off their cars in winter. You should also, and use it to wipe away your tracks. Avoid wide sweeping moves that are obvious on the ground. Use the tip of the broom to wipe away each track one at a time, both around the trap set and on your trail as you walk backwards out of the area and back to your vehicle. You won't be able to both work fast (which is important) and eliminate all signs, so concentrate on eliminating prints that can be traced back to you.

Accompanied by your pet dog, you can claim, if caught, that you were just freeing your dog from a trap. Act extremely irate that someone would do that to your dog.

Learn to use the weather to your advantage. Going out just before, or in the early part of a snow storm may mean a blanket of fresh snow will hide your activity. This is not a substitute for wiping away your footprints, just an added advantage. Follow weather reports closely and learn by studying local weather patterns in the area where you operate.

If operating on foot in snow, have two or three pairs of winter boots (cheap moon boots are good), each with different soles. After working a trap line, retire the boots you were wearing for a few weeks at least. If that sole print is evident in the snow around your home, tromp around in a different pair of boots to obliterate the prints. A visiting game warden might be

curious about tire tracks and footprints that resemble those found near the scene of sabotage.

If stopped and questioned, be friendly and give your rehearsed cover story. If questioned at home, don't deny traveling around the area to hike/hunt/cut firewood, etc. If more than a day has passed, be vague and uncertain. Tell them you went a lot of places that day. Remember, an investigating officer might consider you a possible helpful witness rather than a suspect. Play the part.

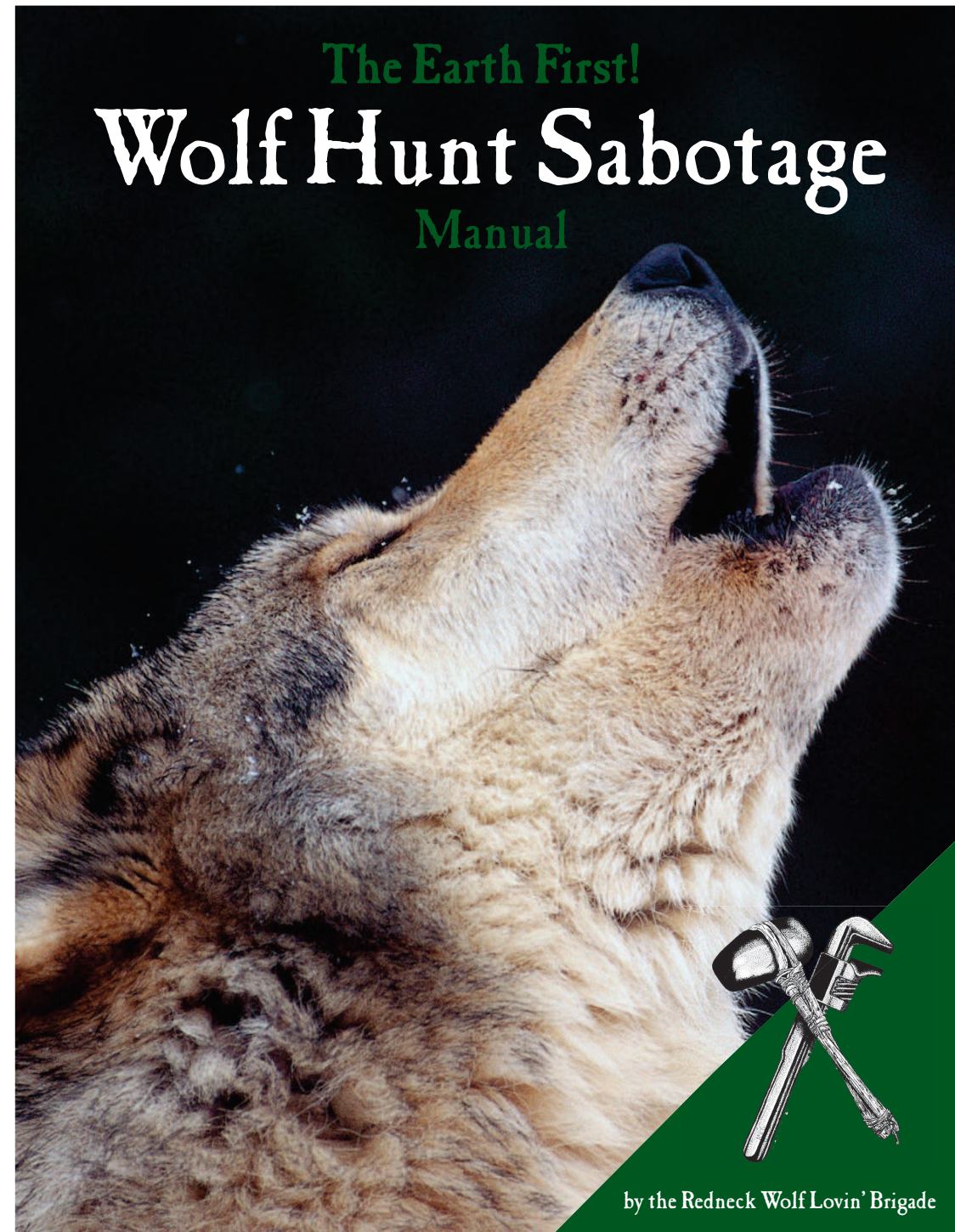
Be aware of ground conditions. Warm weather may leave bare ground that won't take footprints readily. Doing your work early in the morning or during cold snaps may let you do most of your walking on hard frozen ground. South-facing slopes and windblown areas are most likely to have bare ground but watch for mud. It's better to leave tracks in snow that will melt than in soft ground that will only harden and preserve your footprints.

If only trappers use a certain road, consider accidentally dropping nails for their tires (or other tire-flattening methods discussed elsewhere). Do so near a recognizable landmark so you can remove the nails after trapping season.

## So Get Out There You Wolf Liberators.

## The Wild Beckons and Thanks You.

*The Redneck Wolf Lovin' Brigade would like to give a special thanks to Earth First! Media, Earth First! News and the Earth First! Journal for distributing this wolf defense manual. You can always find out more ideas for Earth and animal defense in print through [EARTHFIRSTJOURNAL.ORG](http://EARTHFIRSTJOURNAL.ORG) and online at [NEWSWIRE.EARTHFIRSTJOURNAL.ORG](http://NEWSWIRE.EARTHFIRSTJOURNAL.ORG)*





## Slob “Hunters” Vs Hunters and Wolves: Who We Are

Let’s shoot straight right from the start. We are hunters and proud of it. When it comes down to the choice between industrial agriculture, factory farm meat packed in cellophane or hunting healthy populations of wild animals for our sustenance, we’ll choose the latter. Feral hogs beware.

But we aren’t proud of what passes for hunting these days and especially for what passes as “sportsman” hunting. Somehow, the National Rifle Association, yuppie trophy hunters, cattle barons, and the Obama Administration are in cahoots in an effort that promises to wipe wolves clean off the planet. And in that case, we choose to be saboteurs for the wild.

No upstanding redneck with the grit to call themselves a hunter would ever join in on a campaign to exterminate wolves, which almost happened in the lower 48 in the 20th century. Wolves have only lately witnessed a small comeback. Wolves are apex hunters and any attempt to wipe them out is an attempt to kill the true hunter spirit.

Luckily, slob “hunters” most often travel by pickup, snowmobile, ATV or some other lazy hunting contraption which means we can take the wheels right out from under them, rendering them helpless. If you are careful, you can also follow them with air horns to scare away wolves before the shooting begins or you can find their traps and dismantle them.

In the following manual we provide some tried and true tips for stopping these despicable and sinister “hunters” before they further disrupt the important population balance of our carnivorous furbearing kin.

But be surely aware! These goons are armed and have the law and government on their side. We don’t want to find you’ve been shot by a hunter or sent to Guantanamo. Lets all stay wild and free.

## Background

Long ago, before market driven “hunters,” a federal extermination program, a rapacious and land grabbing cattle industry and the spread of suburban culture, gray wolves howled from coast to coast in North America.

But by the middle of the 20th century, wolves were exterminated from every region in the contiguous United States save for a few small pockets in Minnesota.

When wolves received protections under an early predecessor to the Endangered Species Act in the 1960s there were very few left to save. However, by 2011, wolf populations in the lower 48 reached some 6,000 individuals spread out in isolated regions in the Great Lakes area, the Rocky Mountains, and tiny, highly unstable populations exist in Oregon, Washington, Arizona and New Mexico.

Following regional delistings of wolves in 2011 in the Rockies and the Great Lakes, which was followed by the first wolf hunting seasons in decades, more than 1600 wolves have been hunted, trapped and killed.

Adding insult to injury, on June 7, 2013, the Obama administration announced intentions to stip protections from gray wolves across the lower 48. The old days of wolf genocide are upon us and we find Democrats, Republicans, the NRA and so-called “hunters” lining up for the bloodbath.

the release. If the animal struggles, you may have to cut off its air by tightening the noose. The animal will pass out and go limp. Loosen the noose immediately, but only slightly, to permit the unconscious animal to breathe again. The animal will recover in a few minutes, after you have removed the trap. Remember, though, that they may revive at any time.

When actually loosening the trap by stepping on the springs, you may find that a previously docile animal begins to struggle. Sometimes the trap cuts off circulation, eventually deadening the pain. As the pressure of the trap jaws is released, the revitalizing blood flow can cause extreme pain in a paw that is swollen, cut, or broken. Be prepared for an animal to suddenly struggle or attempt to bite (even pet dogs often react this way and bite their people). Before releasing an animal from the noose pole, make sure it has a clear escape route away from you.

An additional aid for releasing trapped animals is a heavy coat or tarpaulin (see page 7 and 8).

## The Trap Line In Snow

The winter trap line environment often presents a special danger in the form of snow. It is difficult to conceal your tracks in snow and hide the evidence of your work. Trappers are often sensitive to tracks because they use them as a guide to animal travel and trap set locations. A number of tactics can minimize this liability and even turn it to your advantage. (Many of these points apply in other seasons, too.)

Follow the same roads the trapper uses. When walking, stay in the tire tracks so passing vehicles later will wipe away your prints. If driving, use a suitable winter vehicle equipped to get you unstuck. Scout your routes ahead of time to memorize the layout and become aware of road hazards that might leave you stranded.

Always have a good cover story for being in the area. Rehearse. Firewood cutting, and hunting (with rifle, license, and knowledge of what’s in season) are good covers, but don’t pretend to be another trapper. Trappers are the biggest “trap thieves” and are always suspect.

You don’t want to drive past the scene of an animal release/sabotage on your way out. Have your vehicle pointed to exit, not enter, the area.

Stop your vehicle on hard ground to minimize sign of entering and exiting. On narrow one-way roads, pull past the target a short distance and walk back. If the trapper shows up while you’re working, you may hear him stop and get out of his vehicle before he walks up on you.

Minimize footprints and disturbed ground by walking the same path in and out. This is especially important in snow.

Keep any equipment accessible, yet hidden, inside your vehicle.

If you don’t want to carry a noose pole to free trapped animals, consider a short heavy stick about four feet long with a fork on one end just deep enough to pin a small animal neck to the ground. Pin down the animal’s head and neck as far from the trap as possible. If the trap chain is taut, the animal’s trapped leg pulled straight, and the head pinned as far away as possible, the chances of being bitten or scratched are minimized. (The same principle of pulling the animal tight away from the trap applies to noose-pole releases.) With the forked end of the stick pinning the animal’s neck, lodge the other end into the front of your shoulder and use your body weight to hold the animal down. This frees both hands the open the trap.

If there are two of you, the one securing the animal’s head doubles as lookout.

Never carry the trap away with you. Toss it as far as you can into trees or dense brush, down hillsides, into water, or the like.

If you use bolt cutters to cut trap chains, remember they may leave tool marks on the cut surface. Take care of this problem by cutting the link completely free of the rest of the chain and tossing it in a different direction. The chances of a search turning up a single cut chain link are very small. Even if the trap is recovered, the cut link bearing tool marks will be missing.

Many people carry a broom (sometimes shortened)

in less than an hour with materials found easily and inexpensively.

All the materials can be bought at any hardware store, but to avoid suspicion, spread your business around to different stores.

Materials: One length of 1/2 inch (internal diameter) Schedule 40 (thick, not thin-walled) PVC pipe (you will use only 3- feet). One end cap for pipe (Illustration A). Two or three screw coupler sets (Illustration D). Four feet of 1/8 inch braided steel cable. One cable “stop” for the above (Illustration B). One cable “ferrule” for the above (Illustration C). Four or more feet of 1/4 inch braided nylon rope. PVC solvent and cement (for assembling pipe pieces).

As you can see from the diagram, the end cap is drilled with two holes to pass the noose cable through (A). Before gluing the cap to the end of the pipe, place the cable stop (B) on one end (crimp it to the cable with a couple of hammer blows), and crimp the other end into the ferrule, along with one end of the nylon rope (C). Pulling on the rope will tighten the noose.

Cut the PVC pipe into the lengths you require. Think about this first. If you plan to carry it inside a small pack or under a car seat, measure the space first. Then size your individual segments accordingly. If the sections are longer, you may want to go with three pieces; if shorter, try four segments. Don't be surprised if they don't screw together completely and some thread shows.

Into the end of the last section cut two notches about an inch deep to accommodate the nylon rope (E). Tie knots into the end of the rope at intervals of about one-and-a-half inches. When the rope is slipped into the notch in the pipe, the knot will not pass through and will lock the noose tight around the neck of the animal you are rescuing.

A sturdier, heavier, and only slightly more costly version of this noose pole can be made by substituting galvanized pipe for the PVC. Look for the less-conspicuous black-finish galvanized pipe. Have it cut and threaded at the store where you buy it.

A simple noose pole can be improvised from a shock-corded aluminum tent pole. Also see the illustration

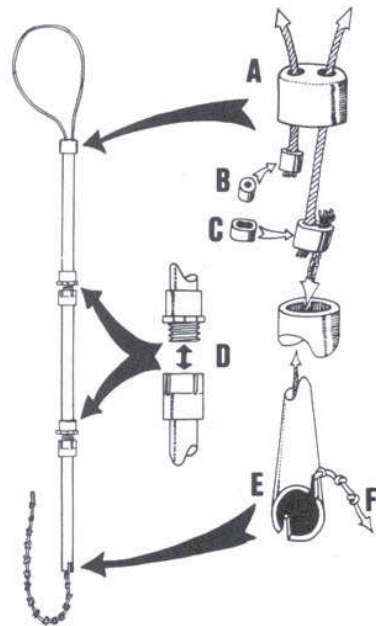
for Simple Noose Sticks.

The lightweight PVC noose pole will bend and flex if an animal struggles. Do not use brute strength to subdue. Keep your distance and wait for the animal to calm down. See instructions for tightening the noose until animal is unconscious, but take such extreme measures only if really necessary.

Store your noose pole in a cloth bag to keep your fingerprints off and to keep dirt and grit from fouling the pipe threads. If confronted, say you carry it because you've had to release your pet dogs from traps before.

### Using The Noose Pole:

Approach the animal slowly with your noose pole extended to the front. If the animal is agitated, softly talking to it or quietly humming can have a calming effect. Some animals will sit still, paralyzed with fear, while others will struggle and try to pull away. Tighten the noose around its neck, then restrain the animal to prevent it from injuring itself by struggling. Usually you can push the animal's head to the ground and step on the trap springs with your feet to effect



### Hunt Sabs Preliminaries:

While it might be easy to slack off on your laptop and sign and “share” petitions to “Save Wolves Now” as a form of “taking action,” that empty feeling you get when you stop lying to yourself about internet activism just won't let up. So what can you do? Why not try direct action?

Hunt sabotage, also known as hunt sabs, has a long and glorious history in the United States and elsewhere. Hunt sabs are an effective tactic at stopping, inhibiting or drawing attention to the massacre of wildlife. Hunt sabs most often include direct intervention and are meant to disrupt a hunt. Actions can take the form of a blockade comprised of dozens of people at the office where wolf hunting permits are sold, or along roadways where hunters are engaging in hunts. But it also includes powerful propaganda, such as flyer-ing communities before a hunt, or sharing this manual at your local NRA meeting and outside permit offices.

However, hunt sabs are but one tool in the process to effectively ending the hunting of wolves. It is an important tool for saving individual wolves and drawing attention to the atrocity of wolf genocide to the public through media and other means. Along with hunt sabs, grassroots movements must push for the end to genocidal hunts.

### Risk

It's important to consider what sort of hunt sab you are willing to do. If you will be working with another person (which is all you should work with for clandestine missions) or with a group (which is good for public protests and blockades) you need to be comfortable with your and the group's risk level. Will you be attempting to find traps and disable them? What if there is a wolf trapped (which we'll

explain how to free further on)? Will you walk ahead of hunters with blaze orange jackets and blow airhorns to scare off wolves? Will you lock your body to a vile wildlife agency's doors?

### Research and Essential Preparation

Every state where wolf hunting is allowed (Idaho, Wyoming, Montana, Wisconsin, Minnesota, and probably more soon) has a state agency that publishes regulations for their wolf hunting season that includes the opening and closing of the season. The regulations can be found at Wal-Mart, small hardware stores, local libraries, and, if you aren't worried about security, online.

Get maps of the area and scout the land beforehand.

For overt actions prepare for a media blitz. Assign a spokesperson, write press-releases, prepare soundbites.

Bring along photo and video cameras, which will provide documentation and ward off aggressive hunters.

Prepare a grab-bag of fun including: noisemakers, smoke-bombs, compressed-air horns, trumpets, whistles.

Find a lawyer sympathetic to wilderness defense and/or animal defense. Seek pro bono support. Be sure everyone has this lawyer's number. Disrupting a “legal” hunt is “illegal” and charges range from trespassing, to resisting arrest and criminal conspiracy. Many states have “hunter harassment” laws to deter hunt sabs.

For info on how to destroy wolf traps, release trapped wolves and other covert wolf defense ideas please turn the page.



## Taking Out Traps

One of the most widespread assaults upon the Earth and its creatures is trapping. Trappers kill wolves, mountain lions, bobcats, coyotes and just about anything that will bring in the dollars. Regulation by state game departments masquerades as “scientific management,” when in reality no reliable population figures and no significant studies of the impact of trapping on wolves are available, and trapping regulations in the field are seldom enforced due to the scattered and widespread nature of this destructive activity.

**How does wolf trapping work?** First, you must realize that the great majority of licensed trappers are amateurs, assholes, and part-timers whose techniques are crude. Consider, however, a typical wolf’s experience with a professional trapper of considerable ability.

The wolf’s first sign of danger is the snap of steel jaws as the leg-hold trap seizes a toe, foot, or leg. Filled with pain and fear, the wolf tries to flee. If the trap is chained to a stake, her attempted escape is short-lived. If the trap is attached to a drag (a hook or anchor-like device on the end of a short chain), the wolf instinctively runs for shelter, dragging the trap until the hook snags in brush to hold her fast.

At this point, the actions of a trapped wolf vary widely. Some lie down and quietly await death. Although most states require periodic checking of traps, there is no realistic way of enforcing such rules in the backcountry. It is not unusual for a trapped animal to spend two or more days locked in the grip of a leg-hold trap. When bad weather sets in, as it often does in the prime winter trapping season, the wait

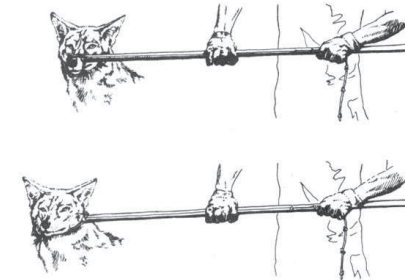
grows longer. Trapping authorities often recommend leaving the animals to freeze to death while trapped, which eliminates the need for killing by gun or club and thereby insures an undamaged pelt for market.

Most trapped animals fight the trap to some extent. “Wring-off” is a trappers’ term used to describe the animal whose twisting, biting, tugging, rolling, and chewing causes them to sever or amputate the toes, foot, or leg held in the trap. Although some animals crippled by their escape live to hobble around for many years, most die of infection or from starvation due to impaired hunting ability.

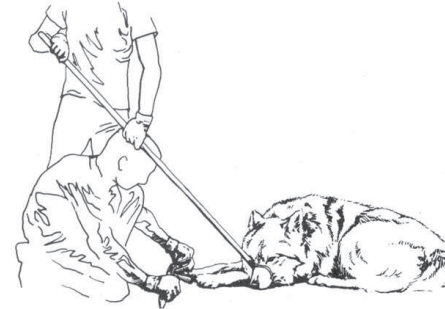
The wolf who remains in the grip of the trap until the trapper’s arrival will usually be killed in one of two ways. If only a couple of toes are caught in the trap, the professional will use a .22 rifle to make the kill so that his approach does not frighten the animal into pulling free. Unfortunately for the trapper, this method can damage the pelt.

The most popular method of killing involves beating the wolves in the head with a long stick or club. Although some trappers beat the animal to death in this manner, the professional strives to merely stun the animal or knock it unconscious. He will then stomp on the rib cage or kneel on it in order to crush the chest cavity and cause death by internal bleeding (the blood often fills the lungs and causes death by suffocation).

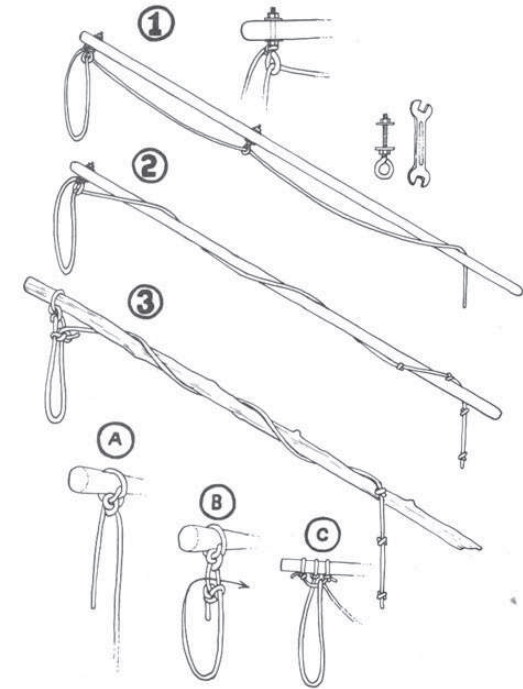
**The photo below shows one Josh Bransford, who works for the U.S. Forest Service, kneeling in front of a wolf in a foot-hold trap in northern Idaho. It’s a poor quality image but the darker patch between the grinning yuppie slob “hunter” and the trapped wolf is blood.**



Two ways of using noose stick to immobilize trapped animals.



Team of two using noose stick to release trapped wolf.



should focus on restraining the animal while the other effects the release from the trap. Once the animal is free of the trap step back, holding a sturdy defensive weapon such as a long stick and allow it to run out from under the coat.

### Simple Noose Sticks (pictured above)

1. Hardwood walking stick with two inconspicuous holes drilled in shaft to accommodate eye-bolt hardware. Carry hardware, rope and wrench in pack or pocket. Can be assembled in two minutes. Walking stick can also be used to probe for traps.
2. Variation of #1 using only one eye-bolt. In place of second eye-bolt guide, wrap rope loosely around shaft. Knots on cord allow for sure grip.
3. Field expedient noose stick. Be sure to select a strong and relatively straight stick or branch.

- A. Tie one knot leaving several inches free on end.
- B. Tie second knot to long cord which then loops back through.

C. Variation using a short cord to make a loop guide for noose.

The best way to release the trapped animal is with the aid of a “noose pole” to restrain the animal and protect you from bites. Commercially manufactured noose poles are available through veterinary supply houses that advertise in dog magazines. They come in various lengths, starting at three feet. One good pole is the “Snarem”. The Cadillac of noose poles is the Ketch-All which sells a nifty five-footer. These can be purchased, or at least researched, online. If you need something inexpensive or compact, make your own noose pole:

### The Earth First! Deluxe DIY Pole

To meet the need to conceal an anti-trapping noose pole in a small car or a backpack, this collapsible noose pole was designed. Made of thick-walled PVC pipe, it is extremely lightweight and can be assembled



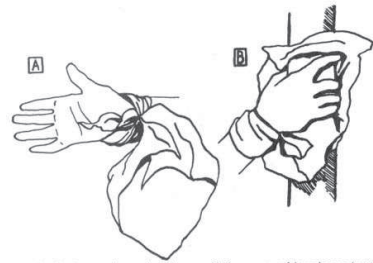
more illegal than simply tripping them and leaving them intact. Although no tools are necessary, a pair of “linesman’s” pliers, with their dual plier/wire cutter head, is handy for cutting traps off chains or pulling out trap stakes. Do not carry them in plain view, of course.

Only removal or destruction of a trap will insure that it is not used again. Removing all the traps could have the added benefit of financially crippling the trapper.

Rather than destroying a trap by loud hammering or pounding, quietly disposing of it is safer. Traps can be gathered and buried in well-hidden locations. After removing the trap from its set, restore the area to its exact appearance before your arrival. Remember that experienced trappers can follow your tracks and recognize disturbed ground. Carefully brush out your footprints at a trap set. Practice walking without leaving obvious traces. Study your own and other people’s tracks to learn what types of surfaces show signs clearly, and learn to use rocks, logs, pine needles, clumps of grass, etc., to avoid leaving tracks. Wear soft soled moccasins for the approach. Learn to walk slowly and carefully, applying your weight evenly to the whole sole to avoid leaving deep toe or heel impressions. Tracking pursuers can be thrown off by frequent and irregular changes of direction. When you first start back to home or to safety, walk in an entirely different direction and gradually zigzag back. Small deviations to one side or another of an obvious path of travel will fool no one. Think like a tracker. Also, make sure you know the area well enough or have a map and compass to avoid getting lost in the woods. If you know that you left distinctive tracks around the trap line (perhaps before you first discovered a trap) avoid wearing the same footwear in that area again.

Unearthed and tripped traps can be disposed of by tossing them into ponds or streams where they won’t be visible from the bank. Or they can be thrown into heavy brush far away from the trap line. Remember not to leave fingerprints on a trap. If you don’t have gloves with you, use a bandanna, handkerchief, or even some toilet paper to handle the trap. See the illustration showing how to make a bandanna into a field expedient glove.

Keep in mind that where you find one trap, there are probably more. Always be alert for the trapper



Improvised gloves using a bandanna: A) tie corner of bandanna to wrist; B) gripping an object to avoid leaving fingerprints.

checking his line. Take cover if you hear a vehicle or person approaching. Remember that some trappers check their lines from afar using binoculars.

Because many trappers run their trap lines along primitive roads, disabling tires is effective. See *EcoDefense: A Field Guide to Monekywrenching* for all kinds of great vehicular disabling methods at: [NEWSWIRE.EARTHFIRSTJOURNAL.ORG](http://NEWSWIRE.EARTHFIRSTJOURNAL.ORG)

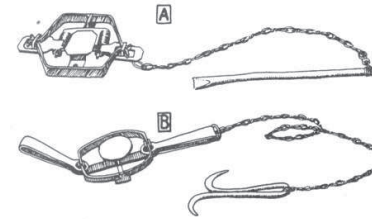
## Handling and Releasing a Trapped Wolf

A simple walk through the forest might someday lead you to an encounter with a trapped wolf. Naturally, trap line sabotage missions greatly increases the odds.

In some states, it is a felony to free an animal from a trap, although we know of no person being convicted of releasing a trapped animal for humane reasons. Visit a state game department office (in a distant city to better protect your identity) for a free copy of your state’s trapping regulations and laws.

There are several ways to release a trapped wolf, but we cannot recommend a method without a warning, an obvious warning, that all wolves, and trapped wolves in particular, are dangerous. In most cases you should never attempt to deal with a live wolf. It could hurt and even kill you. However, we’ve done it and if you are interested, here is how we did it.

One release method involves throwing a very heavy coat or strong tarp over the wolf’s head to calm it down and put a barrier between its jaws and the trapped limb. If two people are working together, one



A) Coil spring-type trap attached to stake.  
B) Long spring-type trap attached to hook-type drag. Drags are also made from scrap metal, heavy rocks or combinations of all.

## Where to Find Traps and Trap Lines

Locating trap lines usually requires patience and practice. Many states have regulations that prohibit setting traps in areas where the public is likely to witness the cruelty. The authors of *Fur Trapping*, published by Winchester Press, advise that “the trapper would be well advised to stay away from roads. This generates a massive amount of bad publicity against all trappers.” In addition, “Public campgrounds are also an area that the trapper would do well to avoid ... many of the campers have small children who might become caught in a trap and injured.”

Begin your search with a trip to the local office of your state game department or online to obtain a free copy of the trapping regulations. This will give you an idea of where traps are set (for example: not within 25 yards of a public road or highway), when to find most of them (trapping season dates), and guidelines on the frequency with which the trapper must check his traps. If your state, for example, requires trap checks once every 48 hours, this may indicate the frequency with which the typical trapper takes to the field (an important security consideration).

Since most trappers prefer to drive instead of walk, many trap lines are found along rural roads, powerline easement roads, ranch roads, and roads that dead-end at abandoned mines and such. In tall timber, old logging roads and firebreak roads are favorites. Because of this, you should be suspicious of any slow vehicles cruising these types of roads.

Favorite trapper vehicles include pickup trucks, assorted four-wheel drives, and station wagons. All of these provide a space to haul equipment and animal

carcasses. Sometimes a peek into the back of a camper shell will reveal traps, chains, and other indicators. Some trappers don’t bother to clean off the telltale bloodstains on the backs of their vehicles.

Most trappers who work along roads observe their trap sites from their vehicle, sometimes with the aid of binoculars. Therefore be alert for any sight or sound of approaching cars and trucks.

In more densely-populated areas, like the Eastern states, a trapper is more likely to park his vehicle and make a walking circuit to check his traps. Some also use horses, dirt bikes, and the three- and four-wheeled all-terrain vehicles. Look for signs of a large pack or trap basket used to carry equipment and hides.

In the north country, many trappers use snowmobiles, often setting their traps near snowmobile trails.

Because the vast majority of trappers work their lines on a part-time basis, they often check their traps before going to work in the morning (this also limits the loss to trap thieves who steal the trapped animals).

A hand-held spotlight can allow them to check their traps in the pre-dawn darkness. Trappers are most active on weekends and holidays. Be extremely cautious at these times.

Trappers range in age from 10-year-olds to senior citizen pensioners. Most live in rural areas and small towns. In many areas, state wildlife officers are among the most avid trappers, cashing in on their job-related knowledge of wildlife habits and locations.

Some of the most lucrative trapping areas are around the boundaries of National Parks and Monuments, Wildlife Refuges, Wilderness Areas, Indian reservations and military lands. Within the so-called “wildlife refuges,” trapping is often hidden from public view behind signs reading “Public Not Permitted Beyond This Point.”

## Typical Trap Sets

- Bait set using small animal or piece of meat suspended from tree limb.

- Set near where animal path crosses dirt road. Also used where culverts cross under roads.
- Traps set near where two streams or arroyos meet.
- Trap set on trail. Sharp rocks and sticks placed on trail force animal to step on clear spot where trap is hidden.
- Hole dug to simulate an animal's digging. Bait or lure placed inside hole. Large rock is sometimes placed on top to keep animal from digging after bait from above.
- A favorite. Trap(s) set at scent post (indicated by scratch marks left in dirt around bush, rock, stump, etc.).
- Lure or scent sprayed under cow chip or flat rock propped up with stick. This keeps rain from washing away scent.
- Trap set at fence corner
- Multiple sets used around dead animal (horse, cow, deer, etc.). Scent or lure also sprayed on nearby scent posts.

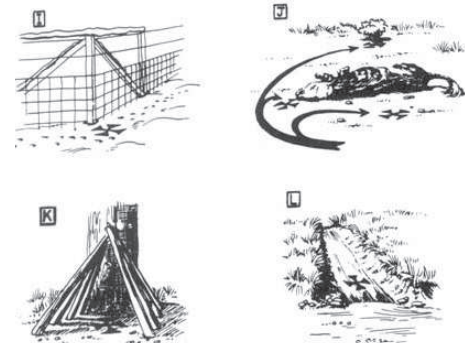
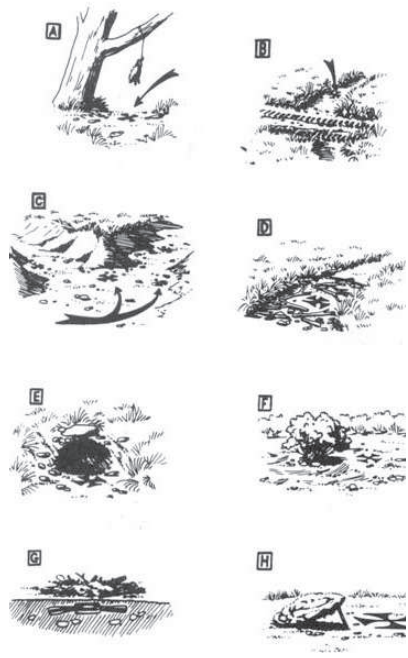
Be suspicious of any small markers like strips of cloth, plastic flagging, or wire twist-ties that you find attached to barbed-wire fences or tree limbs alongside roads. These markers are used to sight along by trappers whose sets are back away from the road.

Experienced trappers favor trap sets near natural animal pathways like deer trails, cow paths, streambeds, fence lines, and high observation points.

Where other wildlife or livestock use the paths, the trap will be set off to the side to prevent deer and cattle from ruining the set. Small clearings, holes, and bare patches of dirt on snow-covered ground are ideal for traps.

Sometimes a small piece of cloth or strip of light-colored fur will be hung above a trap to lure in the curious predator. Some trappers carry animal droppings and set them near the trap as an additional lure.

After a trap is buried, the surface will be restored to its normal appearance, making it difficult to spot. Use your foot inside heavy boots (not running shoes!) to probe suspicious areas like slight depressions, small clear spots surrounded by twigs and rocks (designed to make the animal step on the attractive clear ground), or around holes (any hole — animal or man-made). Many traps are set beside a “backing” like a rock, bush, clump of grass, or



embankment to ensure that the animal approaches the bait or scent lure from one side only.

Trap line saboteurs have also used leashed dogs and metal detectors to locate buried traps.

Where you find one trap, you will usually find more. Traps are commonly set by twos and threes within a small area. As many as ten can sometimes be found within a 100-yard radius.

Trap line saboteurs can walk or drive through suspected areas. Cross-country skis can be used to quietly prowl along snowmobile paths. In snow, consider carrying a white bed sheet in your pack to use as quick camouflage if you hear a snowmobile approach from afar.

Motorized road patrolling is best done with two people, one to remain with the car or truck as a lookout. A cheap plastic whistle can make a good warning signal. Always have a good reason to give for being in the area. Props like binoculars, cameras, bird books, and the like make it more convincing. One trap line saboteur carries a partial roll of toilet paper as a prop to explain what he's doing back in the weeds off the roadside.

Mountain bikes, or just an old clunker from the Goodwill store, provide a silent way of prowling roads while keeping an ear cocked for the sound of an approaching engine. To avoid leaving telltale tracks, ride only in the other tire tracks so that the next passing vehicle will erase signs of your passing. If you wish to stop and check an area more closely, do not ride off the road. Stop in the track, pick up your bike and carry it into the brush, stepping carefully on rocks, twigs, and clumps of grass to avoid leaving obvious footprints. Soft soled moccasins leave a minimum of footprint, and you can quickly change into boots when you've found an area likely to contain traps.

You can determine trap locations by careful surveillance of suspected trappers. Observe from a safe distance to see where the driver slows, stops, or uses a spotlight to observe trap locations. If the trapper checks his traps every morning, or on weekends, find an observation post on high ground and use binoculars and a note pad to chart his movements.

If you know where a trapper lives, you can piece together his route. Follow him a short distance when he goes out. Next time, pick him up again where you left off last time and follow another short distance. In this way you can gradually determine his trap line route without betraying your interest.

Trappers' home addresses can be determined in many ways. Some states require the trapper to put his name and address on a plate on every trap. An inflammatory anti-trapping letter in the local newspaper or on Facebook may draw trappers out of the woodwork with their defensive responses. Telephone inquiries can reveal who is buying furs in your area. Sometimes these brokers will visit an area for a few days and purchase furs at a prescribed meeting point. These fur sales and meetings of trapper clubs are good places to obtain license plate numbers for further research.

Also, don't ignore the fur business infrastructure. There are about 30,000 “country collectors” operating in the U.S. who buy directly from the trappers. They in turn sell to a broker or auction company. (In many small towns in the rural West, the visit of the “fur buyer” is announced in advance in the local newspaper or on community bulletin boards and is an event of major social importance.) Once you have located these smaller buyers, call them to obtain the names of the brokers or auction companies to which they sell. You could pretend to be an exclusive clothing shop owner or a clothing designer looking for a volume dealer. The “pretext” phone call is a tremendously valuable intelligence-gathering technique, so practice in advance to sound convincing. Also, infiltrate a fur auction or the pre-arranged gatherings where trappers sell their goods. Pretend to be a novice trapper and keep your ears and eyes open.

## Trap Line Sabotage

Locating a trap with your boot or a stick will trip it and thus render it ineffective until the trapper comes around next. This method is not effective for long, and if repeated regularly, may cause the trapper or state game agents to put the trap line under surveillance.

Furthermore, any type of trap line interference is illegal, so you might as well do a thorough job and totally dispose of any traps you find, as this is no