

RELEASING A DOG FROM A TRAP

LACK OF KNOWLEDGE

Most who come from the cities, towns, and urban areas do not have a rural background, so they lack any real knowledge about trapping. Today's traps are far superior and safer than those in the past. The dog is scared and afraid and as a result, it may very well bite the hand that feeds it. That is a normal reaction by the dog and the dog should never be punished for that. A dog or its owner should not be injured if they properly remove the dog safely from a trap.

THE LAW

It is against the law in the State of Maine to disturb a trap or an animal in one that belongs to another. If caught you will be prosecuted, which can result in losing hunting, fishing, and trapping privileges.

With that said, trappers want you to safely remove your hunting dog from a trap and any trapper should be more than willing to help you remove yours from their or another's trap. They have the knowledge to do it safely and correctly.

REMOVING A DOG FROM A TRAP

Trappers use what is called a catch pole for removing animals unharmed from a trap. Catch poles are either manufactured or hand made. They are also used by your town animal control officer to handle and restrain animals, so you could contact them to show you how one is used. Trappers use catch poles for releasing non-targeted animals and to take captured animals for relocation by state and federal agencies.

A forked stick may also be used to pin the dog to the ground by its neck while you release it. Another way is to throw a coat over the dog's head (securing its head inside) and pinning the animal to the ground.

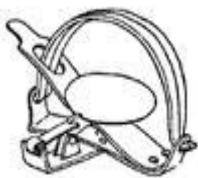
SAFETY

Your safety is the primary issue during removal of the trap. That is why a catch pole, forked stick, or a coat is used to restrain the dog (keeping its mouth away from you) and pinning it to the ground so you can remove the trap. The secondary reason is to keep the animal from thrashing around and possibly injuring itself.

It is important to keep the angle of the dog's foot and the trap right so as not to hurt or injure the dog while compressing the springs.

TRAP DESIGNS

Most foothold land traps used today are coil springs, while a few long spring or jump style traps may be utilized.



Jump Trap



Coil Spring Trap



Double Long Spring Trap

- The jump trap is opened by depressing the single lever shown on the left in the above illustration.
- The coil spring trap is opened by depressing the levers on both sides at the same time.
- The double long spring is opened by depressing the two springs on each side at the same time.

The average man should be able to depress these springs with his bare hands allowing the dogs foot to be freed. Another way to do it is to kneel on the ground and place the bottom of the trap against your knee while depressing the springs. All of this is made much simpler by two people, one to keep the dog pinned down while another removes the trap.

HELP IS AVAILABLE

If you (or a group) want further instruction on the safe removal of dogs from traps go to <http://www.mainetrappers.com/chapters.html> to locate a contact near you or go to <http://www.mainetrappers.com/contactus.html> and ask for help.