

Contraption

"I think one died this summer," the rancher said to me as he showed me the half-acre pond where beavers were causing him problems.

"I think there are more left," he finished, as we walked across the dam.

The few trees that were growing on the dam had been decimated, except for a couple which were sure to go if the beaver weren't removed. The rest of the pond shoreline was bare of any trees. This pond was several miles away from any major water source and I was impressed the beavers would travel this distance and want to call this small pond home.

When I set for nuisance beaver, I am usually confident that I can remove all or most if I locate the lodge. The lodge here was right on the face of the dam, so that wouldn't be a problem. I will set every run I can find coming out of a lodge with 330s. In the past, I have set four or five traps at a lodge the first day and caught four or five beavers the second day. I then check the third day, skip the fourth day, and pull the fifth day. Now, this is the best-case scenario, and it often doesn't go this way.

Due to prior commitments, I only wanted to check here twice. I waded into the water off the face of the dam. I was looking for the runs to set and was figuring on two. When looking for runs, I always go slow and am cautious of any drop-offs. I was in hip deep water and my foot felt the side of the run. I lowered one foot into the run to check the depth and bottom solidness. With the water at the top of my chest waders and my foot stretched out, I could just barely touch the bottom.

I was again impressed because the run was cut about three feet into a solid bottom. There was only one run, but I started to have delusions of grandeur. With the depth of the run, I thought there had to be more than one beaver left. My next thought was about how to set it up. Any beaver caught in the run would surely be noticed by other beaver and possibly cause them to shy away. So I wanted to catch as many the first night as possible. I decided to stack two 330s on top of each other using a H-stand. I called this setup my contraption. I was confident the first catch would be in the bottom 330 and I tried to space them so the first beaver would get caught and a second would come in, go over the captured beaver, and get caught in the second trap. There was a good chance that the second 330 would be fired from the commotion of the first captured beaver, but I was hoping for the best. The top of the stacked 330s was level with the top of the run.

It was getting dark and this was the last stop of the day. I was about ready to leave when delusions of grandeur hit



Scot with his con'trap'tion.

again. I had another H-stand and two more 330s in the truck. I thought the traps were not going to do me any good in the back of the truck, so what the hay, I rigged up another contraption and placed it about five feet from the first one, further away from the lodge. I chuckled to myself as I drove home. I was glad no other trapper was around to watch me make the sets.

The next day as I approached the pond, delusions of grandeur ran wild. I arrived thinking about a four beaver catch. Reality hit when the first contraption close to the lodge was undisturbed. My mind switched to thinking that the only beaver that had been here was the one that died during the summer. I felt for the second contraption. It had moved. I started bringing it to the surface to find the top 330 sprung with nothing in it. As I lifted higher I could feel weight and pulled a beaver to the surface. I was relieved that my contraptions had at least made a catch. I reset.

I checked the next day and found the sets undisturbed. I decided to leave them there for two more days and pull them on the fifth day. I pulled them with no other visitors.

During the five days that I set and checked the contraptions, they were the highlight of my day. They were a change of pace from the sometime monotonous checking of the same type of sets. I recommend that anyone who needs a change of pace on the line try something out of the ordinary. This brings a whole new meaning to the word con'trap'tion.

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