Non-lethal Snaring

The old fashioned spring pole snare was intentionally designed and rigged to dispatch any animal that got in it. The modern cable snare does not have to be used in this manner because it is made of better and stronger materials. It can be used as a non-lethal capture device. If an animal detained in a snare is given some freedom of movement, it is very unlikely that the animal can or will pull hard enough on the snare to asphyxiate itself. Here, the animal behaves much in the same manner as a pet dog that is leashed with a choker chain. However, under certain conditions and in certain situations, a cable snare can become a lethal device.

Whether or not a snare is lethal is not so much a function of the snare itself, but it is more a matter of where the snare is placed. If an animal captured in a snare gets itself in a position where its feet cannot touch the ground, the results would be much the same as if it were pulled up by a spring pole. It could succumb to asphyxiation.

This can happen if an animal gets tangled up in something at a set and cannot get its feet back on the ground. This situation is commonly known as entanglement. By avoiding entanglement situations, you can be relatively certain that your snares will function in a non-lethal manner.

A classic entanglement situation can be found where a snare is set under a fence. An animal captured in this snare could possibly climb through or jump over the fence and become entangled. A similar situation exists where a snare is set in a patch of brush. An animal could get the snare tangled up in the brush, be suspended, and asphyxiate.

Another, less obvious entanglement situation can occur if there is a very small sapling tree in the vicinity of the snare. An animal could get tangled around the sapling, and as the animal struggles the snare could ride up on the sapling bending it over. At this point, the sapling acts like a spring, constantly pulling upward on the snare. This creates a situation very similar to the old-fashioned spring pole and could dispatch the animal.

A large tree, on the other hand, does not create an entanglement situation. An animal cannot bend over a large tree, and in most instances the animal will not get tangled up on the tree because it cannot circle the tree with the snare any more than once or twice.

If you were snaring strictly in a wilderness area where you would encounter only wild animals, entanglement would not be of such great concern. However, there is no wilderness in Ohio, and we have a fairly dense human population. This means the chance of encountering a domestic animal is always present. For this reason, you should avoid entanglement with your snares.

When you get ready to place a snare, examine the area for entanglement. It is a good idea to extend the snare in its closed position and circle it around from its fastening point to make sure an animal cannot reach anything on which it can get tangled up. In avoiding entanglement, it is often helpful to use shorter snares. This obviously gives the animal less opportunity to get tangled up.

If you encounter a good set near entanglement, such as a fence, fasten your snare as far as possible away from the entanglement and place the loop in the trail leading to or coming from the entanglement. Just make sure the animal cannot reach the entanglement when it is captured in the snare.

Entanglement Situations

Snares placed in entanglement situations can be lethal. Avoid entanglement situations when there is any chance that a domestic animal might encounter your snare.

Fences are very likely to create entanglement for a snare. An animal captured in the snare may climb over and through the fence wire and be suspended off the ground.

Brush can create an entanglement situation for an animal almost in the same manner as a fence. If an animal climbs into the brush it could get the snare tangled up and not be able to get its feet back on the ground.

A small tree or sapling within reach of the snare can also create a lethal situation. If an animal gets the snare around the sapling and bends it over, the sapling will pull up on the snare cable and could asphyxiate the animal. You can see that this is almost like the old fashioned spring pole snare.

Avoiding Entanglement

It is easy to avoid entanglement. Simply place your snares in clear areas where there is nothing substantial for the animal to tangle up in.

A large tree does not create an entanglement situation. The animal can hardly make more than one revolution around the tree and does not get tangled up. When fastening to trees, keep the wire low on the tree. This helps ensure that the animal can keep its feet on the ground.

When placing a snare where entanglement is nearby, stake or fasten the snare away from the entanglement. Then reach out with the closed snare and circle it around the fastener to make sure the animal cannot reach the entanglement.