Trapping yards for kangaroos

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PORTABLE WALLABY
TRAPPING SEGMENTS

Projection of base to form hook and hinges.

Segment viewed end-on.

2" gap to allow funnel to lift upwards as wallaby enters.

Ground level.

METHOD OF ERECTION

3/4" Galv. piping.

Hook of 1/2" rod.

Squre corners.

Constricting annexe.

Lead-out.

Funnel.

Trough.

Segments hooked together to form circle.

Constructing annexe.

Writing in every fourth segment.

Covered with 2" link mesh.

Hole and support.

Eyelet of 3/4" piping.

1/2" piping.

1/2 rod. — 4" centres.

1 1/3" 2" 8' 0" 4' 4 1/6 4' 4 1/6 4' 1/2 Galv. piping.
MARKED increases in the kangaroo and wallaby populations over large sections of Western Australia’s pastoral areas have produced many inquiries for some type of trapping yard which would give good results if erected at wells and other water supplies.

It is not claimed that the traps described in this article are new in principle as they are merely a modification of the old type of water trap which has been used for catching rabbits probably ever since that pestilential rodent appeared in plague form.

The traps which are pictured and described here were primarily designed for the capture of sandy wallabies, in the Kimberleys, for purposes of research. These wallabies only reach a stature of between 2 and 3 ft., and weigh on the average about 20 to 25 lb. If the same type of trap is to be used for the larger kangaroo species such as the euro (biggada) or marloo (red kangaroo), then appropriate alterations will have to be made in the specifications. The sizes given proved entirely satisfactory for the sandy wallaby which constitutes a serious problem in the Kimberleys.

The essentials for successful trapping are:

1. Thirsty animals (this means that traps are most effective during hot weather).
2. A supply of water which can be easily fenced off.
3. A strong enclosure.
(4) Funnels leading into this enclosure which permit of fairly easy entry but which prevent exit from the yard.

The enclosure when erected around the water must be left open to stock during the day time and then closed off again at night-fall. The presence of other water supplies at the trapping site will prevent successful trapping, and these must either be drained or covered each evening and opened again next morning.

DESCRIPTION

The possibilities of this type of trapping were first recognised when a temporary structure was erected at Quanbun Station, in the Derby hinterland, to obtain animals for experimental purposes. This was a makeshift structure made from steel standards, a roll of link mesh and two improvised funnels. This trap served its purpose and showed how the design could be further improved.

Later, a set of portable frames were made. These consisted of gate-like segments made from \( \frac{3}{4} \) in. piping and covered with 2 in. link mesh. The segments were fitted with hooks or hinges which fitted into "eyes," which consisted of short lengths of \( \frac{3}{4} \) in. piping, welded to the ends of the frames to permit rapid assembly and dismantling. Some of the segments had semi-circular openings cut in the centre of the lower portions, and these holes were framed with \( \frac{1}{2} \) in. piping. Funnels made from \( \frac{1}{2} \) in. mild steel rod were fitted on the inner side of the hole (see specifications).

The great advantage of the improved type of enclosure is the readily portable nature of the component parts and the ease of erection at a new site. From the economic angle, this is of utmost importance as labour costs play an important part in the economics of pest control.
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Another refinement which was added to the portable yard was the provision of a lead-out funnel, made from the frames, which permitted the wallabies to move out of the main yard into a small crush pen. Once in this small enclosure, the wallabies cannot jump around nor injure themselves and can be destroyed without difficulty.
PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS

It will be realised that a fairly large expenditure of labour will be involved in opening up and closing of water supplies and this work is an important factor in successful trapping.

The time required to successfully eradicate the kangaroos visiting a mill, and the expense of equipping each mill with a water trap would be much greater than would be required to obtain similar results by water poisoning. Some indication of the time it takes to clean up a mill may be gained from these figures of catches obtained at Quanbun Station on successive days. On the first day 35 wallabies were caught and these were followed by catches of 30, 22, 2, 23, 19, 16 and 10, making a total of 157 spread over eight days. The fourth day's catch of only 2 animals was due to the presence of an exposed pool of water left under an adjacent trough. This was located and fully utilised by the wallabies.

It will be seen that at the end of eight days we were still catching about one-third of our initial take. Many of these were probably wallabies which habitually moved from mill to mill but possibly some would be animals which had been deterred from entering the funnels on previous nights and had moved to other mills and later returned to the original mill trough. This would suggest the necessity of trapping large numbers of mills simultaneously so as to pick up these wanderers.

It has been suggested that control by means of water traps would have special attraction for kangaroo shooters hunting for skins, as they would be assured of good catches at each mill.

In this connection however it should be remembered that the best trapping period would be during the summer months when skin prices are usually at a low level.

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