

Wildlife Materials International, Inc.

DROP NETS for CAPTURE of WILDLIFE

USAGE with BLASTING CAPS:

The drop netting method for capture of wildlife became available in 1966; since then numerous improvements, based on our clients' field experience, have been made by Wildlife Materials International, Inc.

Drop Nets from WMI are custom-made, usually in square sizes, i.e., 50' x 50' or 60' x 60', 80' x 80' or 100' x 100'. The mesh size may be 2", 4" or 6" square, depending on the animal to be captured. All nets can be treated, at your request, with a petroleum-base net coating to withstand inclement weather. Deer nets are made of 600 lb. knotted, twisted nylon; turkey nets are made of 60 lb. test knotless knitted nylon. Nets can also be made, at your request, with a 6" metal ring at the center so the net can be dropped down a pole. All nets have thimbles at each corner for tying to outside poles, trees, etc. No shroud lines or anchor lines are included. Customers should allow 5 weeks for delivery.

Prior to dropping a net, the operator needs the following equipment: net, 4 eight foot poles, 100 feet of standard nylon ski rope, 4 blasting caps, 3 come-alongs (block & tackle or other stretching device), 8 three foot iron tie poles, 1 twelve foot center pole (optional), corn or other bait, at least 48 feet of lead-in wire that connects blasting caps with underground power wire, electrical tape, and at least 300 feet of No. 14-2 (or larger) insulated power source wire. To determine the length of lead-in wire and power source wire, consider **how** you plan to connect the blasting caps' wire leads with the underground power wire going to the blind. (See SETTING UP the NET, steps 7-9, and illustration.)

The following procedure for netting and handling of wildlife will aid your efficient usage of the capture system.

SELECTION of SITE:

Of prime importance is the choice of a netting site. Field observation will reveal areas of wildlife concentration. Then consider the proximity of adequate cover for animals; sites within 50-75 yards of good cover seem most productive. Research has shown that deer, for instance, tend to come out to feed earlier in the afternoon and stay out later in the morning when cover is nearby. Openings in woods also work well. When capturing waterfowl, choose a location near water that birds regularly use as a loafing area. Avoid rocks or stumps where a net will be dropped; this will prevent injury to animals when they fall to the ground. In areas where there is a threat of forest fires, mow the grass closely; some experienced operators have also dug up the grass where the net will drop a few weeks beforehand.

Placement of the blind from which the net is to be fired should also be considered when selecting a launching site. Check prevailing wind direction; people should stay out of the path of wind so that human scent will not carry to the netting area. When animals are at bait site, the distance of the blind from bait area, as well as height of the blind above ground and ease of human entry into it, become important. The ideal blind is downwind of the bait site, 100-150 yards away from it, 15 feet or more above ground level and possibly in a tree, with good access that avoids disturbing animals at the bait site. From the blind, operators should be able to see the whole net; this view tells where animals are in relation to the net and will help operators gauge the timing of a shot. Realistically, all of these criteria are difficult to achieve, but adherence to them when possible will enhance your trapping success.

TIME of YEAR:

Best netting success occurs when dead grass is on the ground; animals will be searching for food at this time, and will come more readily to bait.

PRE-BAITING for ANIMAL OBSERVATION:

Once a site has been chosen, begin to pre-bait the area with feed to be used in trapping; shelled yellow corn has produced good success. Place bait at the center of the netting area.

Feed should be available constantly and baiting should continue until the animals to be trapped are using the area regularly; this usually takes one to two weeks. The wilder the animal, the longer your pre-baiting time will need to be. During the pre-baiting period, observations will indicate the best time for trapping. Research has shown that early morning and late afternoon work well, with the latter being most productive for a number of species.

In areas where animals come to bait only after dark, special techniques must be employed. Periodic illumination of the bait area with a spotlight will provide observation time as well as help animals adjust.

SETTING UP the NET (see illustration):

1. After choosing an open area that is larger than needed for net setup, clear all debris that might harm netted animals and prevent the net from resting flat on the ground. Besides stumps, limbs, and stones, any crop stubble or tree seedlings that could freeze into hard knife-like objects should be removed.
2. Lay the net flat on the ground in the selected area. Place the four corners in position where you can stretch the net tight. If you are using a net without a center ring, you will want to tighten net sufficiently to get the center drag out of it.
3. Place the pre-cut 8-foot posts under each corner; this will allow space for animals the size of white-tailed deer to clear the net with their antlers. Consider the size of animal you plan to net; an elk requires 10-feet of headroom, so your poles would need to be that high. If your net has a center ring, place a less-than-6-inch-diameter 12-foot pole in the middle.
4. Tie one end of a standard sized 15-foot long ski rope to the thimble at each net corner; attach the other end to each corner pole. The space between attachments will be used for intertwining blasting caps in ski rope (see step # 7)
5. To brace corner poles, drive stakes for tie-down ropes at both sides of each corner pole; anchor the tie-down ropes to the stakes. The tie-downs can also be attached to trees.
6. Use a come-a-long, block & tackle, or any type of stretching device, attached to the ski rope, to take up the slack in the net. With one corner rope anchored securely to pole, ratchet the other 3 corner ropes in order to remove drag from the net.
7. At 6 to 8 inches from the net end of the nylon ski rope, intertwine a blasting cap (with 12 foot or longer wire leads) into the ski rope.
8. Run a coated insulated power wire (size 14-2 electrical wire works well) from the net to the location of your 12v battery (standard car or truck type) or detonator. This may involve several hundred feet, as the blasting caps intertwined in ski rope at each corner will need to be connected in series. The connective power wire may be buried in the ground (see illustration); if you use this method, be sure your power wire has **underground type insulation**; if the netting site will be permanent, be sure the insulated wire is good for long-term usage. The power wire may also be woven around the edge of the net. Whatever your method, be sure that, in the vicinity of the net, the power wire is **out of the reach of any animal** so that an accidental disconnection will not occur.
9. Connect each of the 4 electronic blasting caps' 12-foot wire leads **in series** with the power wire coming from the battery location. Tape the connections.

NETTING PROCEDURE:

1. Three to five people constitute a normal netting crew; however, if larger catches are anticipated, a bigger crew is desirable. Crews should arrive at the trapping site well before animals are expected. Getting to and from the netting site unnoticed and undetected is a must! Make a final check to insure that the lead-in wires are well secured to the power wire, and that the power wire is well secured to the battery or detonator.
2. When feasible, one person should get inside the blind for net projection; others should remain a short distance away and out of sight and sound of the bait area (i.e., in a vehicle). However, under favorable downwind conditions and in large blinds off the ground, more than one person may get into the blind.
3. When to shoot the net is problematic; the crew's decision will usually be determined by their desired composition of a catch and how readily animals are coming to bait. Keep in mind your observation of the animals' feeding patterns; for instance, deer will probably move on and off the bait site several times, feeding for 10-15 minutes at a time, unless they are disturbed or forced off by a more dominant member of the herd.

With patience as the key factor, a work crew can select the ideal time to drop the net so that most, if not all, of a group can be netted. For best results, shoot the net when animals are near the center of the net and have their heads down feeding.

In the blind before a netting attempt, a crew member should connect one main electrical firing line to a battery terminal, then study animal activity along the net; **TO SET OFF THE CHARGE**, touch the other lead to the other battery terminal. It is possible to set off the charge without looking at the battery terminal; rather, keep an eye on the net as it drops. If a detonator is used, a flip of the switch sets off the blasting caps and drops the net.

4. **Handle netted animals with care.** It is important to get to the captured animals as quickly as possible after the net has dropped over them. Netted animals will thrash, possibly injuring themselves; therefore a rapid, quiet approach by crew members is desirable. Animals near the edge of the net require immediate restraint to prevent their escape. Check animals to insure that the net is not damaging their teeth, gums, wings or other parts of the body.
 - A. The best method of restraint for big game animals, if an animal is still on its feet, is an approach from its side. Place one hand on the animal's back near the hips and another hand near the shoulders (or the antlers of bucks); give a quick, hard jerk, pulling the animal over, its feet pointing away from the trapper. In capturing waterfowl or turkeys, get a good hold at the back near the wings; **DO NOT GRAB WING TIPS** as injury might result. Check the ground to make sure the animal is not lying on anything that could scratch, puncture (stones or small stumps), or burn (blasting cap debris) the animal.
 - B. For big game, apply restraining pressure by placing a forearm across an animal's neck; with that same hand, grab the animal's foreleg that is closest to the ground and pull up on it, toward the trapper. A knee on the flank and the other hand on the animal's hip will hold it down. Be aware of flailing hooves. For waterfowl and turkeys, calm the wings, grasp the bird's neck from beneath its abdomen with your hand, and tuck the bird under your arm.
 - C. Quiet the animals as quickly as possible. For instance, after big game have been restrained, they must be blindfolded. A piece of dark material (wool works well) about 8 inches wide and 3 feet long is sufficient. The blindfold can be put over the face, crossed under the throat, brought up around the neck and tied at the back of the neck. While the capturer does not blindfold waterfowl and turkeys, placement of the bird's head back under its wing will serve the same function. The creatures' lack of vision, along with handlers' silence (even talking should be avoided when possible), tends to quiet animals considerably.

- D. Work all of the animal's legs out of the net mesh. Before tying, also remove any additional netting that is wrapped around the upper legs. Then put all legs of an animal through one mesh for easy tying.
- E. Tie the captured animals, using a soft braided nylon rope; for deer, a 1/4inch diameter rope works well. All four legs should be tied. For additional insurance, pull the rope tight (enough that animal can't get leverage and hurt itself, but not so restrictive that circulation is cut) under the animal's belly with a loop over its back to prevent kicking. Be sure to roll a deer up on its brisket to prevent bloating. Again, silence and a firm but gentle touch are in order.
- F. Inject the animals in the hip muscle with a good tranquilizing drug. Aspirate the needle to make sure you are not injecting the drug directly into a vein. This is done by pulling the syringe's plunger out and checking whether blood has been drawn into the syringe with the drug. Blood indicates that a direct injection will be sent through the vein, possibly resulting in a fatal overdose. If blood shows during aspiration, remove the needle and try again. Waterfowl and Turkeys do not require tranquilizing; instead, place them in cages that do not become over stacked.
- G. Collect data quickly so that animals may be released as soon as possible. Deer, for instance, can be held for up to an hour after being tranquilized, provided precautions have been taken to prevent bloat. Most handlers of waterfowl and turkeys prefer to move immediately through the banding process so that birds may be returned to their natural habitat. For successful work with wildlife, it is wise to familiarize oneself with specific behavior of creatures to be captured. Also, for quickest operation, **work up the animals closest to the edge of the net first.**

MAINTENANCE of EQUIPMENT:

1. Each drop of the net will require more ski rope and blasting caps, as these will be destroyed when the blasting caps are set off.
2. Before re-using the net to trap animals, check that twigs have been removed from the rope and net. Also inspect net for burned rope, which will occasionally be caused by a previous drop; repair as needed.

REFERENCES:

Dill, H. H. A Field Guide to Cannon Net Trapping. U. S. Department of the Interior: Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife, 1969. 18 pp.

Hawkins, R. E., L. D. Martoglio, and G. G. Montgomery. "Cannon-netting Deer." Journal of Wildlife Management 32 (January 1968): 191-195.

Wiley, C.B., and Sons, Inc. Exotic Game and Gun Ranch. 7007 Co Rd 2120; Wills Point, TX 75169. Tel. 903/848-7912.

Brochure with drop netting directions available. Course taught in humane usage of capture netting.

NOTE: WMI also manufactures custom-made **wing** or **lead** nets.

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34 Years Manufacturing Experience