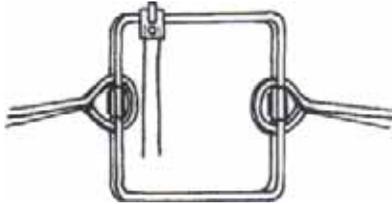


## How to Avoid Capturing Otter When Trapping Beaver

Because otter and beaver often use the same habitat, and harvest regulations often vary by species, there may be times/places when trappers need to avoid capturing otter. While no method can completely eliminate accidental otter captures, there are methods that can help reduce the risk of accidental capture, and considering these methods will improve the ability to manage both beaver and otter populations. The following ideas are offered as a guide to improving selectivity, recognizing that each may have advantages/disadvantages depending on the situation and location. There may be other methods equally (or more) useful and trappers are encouraged to use whatever method seems most effective for the given situation.



Moving the trigger to one side of a bodygrip trap increases the chance an otter can get through

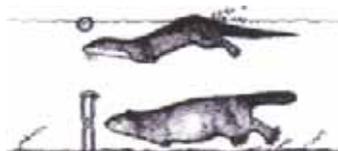


A snare set with a loop of 9 to 10 inches will allow an otter to pass through, but will still catch beaver.

### If you have a beaver permit but do not have an otter permit, consider the following ideas:

- Stay alert for the presence of otter sign on your trap line.
- Be cautious about using trap sets at high probability otter travel-ways (dam crossings, inlets & outlets to ponds/lakes, narrow streams & ditches that connect to other water bodies, crossover trails along shorelines, dikes & culverts and the entrances to inactive beaver bank dens or lodges).
- Use baited beaver sets where possible.
- Avoid using beaver lures that may also attract otters to the set.
- Consider using a "side-parallel" position (see image, above) for the trigger wires on beaver bodygrip traps. Also consider the use of tension-adjustable triggers, using two "side-parallel" triggers (one on each side), and two-way triggers only (those that don't spring when pushed sideways).
- Offset the trigger to one side on a bodygrip trap and place a stick in the mud directly in front of the trigger (make sure the stick is outside the closing radius of the trap). Otters will typically swim around the stick and avoid the trigger.
- When using cable devices, use a 9-10 inch loop. Make sure your snares have "stops" to prevent the loop from closing tighter than a four inch diameter. Place the bottom of the loop close to the ground. Also consider positioning the lock farther back from top-center to decrease the sensitivity of the device. Do not "load" snares; this will further reduce sensitivity.
- Gang-set active beaver areas (set an equal number of traps for the anticipated number of beavers). Catch beaver as fast as possible, and pull traps. Avoid leaving traps set for extended periods trying to catch the last beaver.
- When trapping under ice, make baited sets between active lodges/dens and food caches/piles.
- For more information on otter avoidance and proper trigger configurations to use for bodygrip traps to capture beaver, see the Trapper Education Student Manual: A Guide for Trappers in the United States published by the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies at [http://www.fishwildlife.org/furbearer\\_resources.html](http://www.fishwildlife.org/furbearer_resources.html).

Always check New Jersey's trapping regulations for guidance, specific restrictions or prohibitions related to otter trapping. If you happen to capture an otter incidentally, please contact Joseph Garris at either (908) 735-7040 or (609) 306-4545 or Andrew Burnett at either (609) 748-2058 or (609) 273-3439.



Setting bodygrip traps deep under water may allow an otter to go over the top of the trap, while most beaver will dive to the bottom and be caught.