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To Catch a Woodpecker

Tom Mutchler

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Tom Mutchler

Take 1 one-celled Potter trap

Attach it — I used $\frac{1}{2}$ " staples — to a $\frac{1}{2}$ -1" thick board twice the length of the bottom of the Potter trap.

Straighten the release bar and attach to the board. Fasten a suet bag of brightly colored mesh, i.e. onion or turkey bag, to what is normally the back of the trap (now, the top), suspended from the center of the trap so the suet cannot be reached from the outside. (A)

Attach, to the bottom of the gate, a pull string long enough to reach the point of operation, passing it through staple or eyelet guides. (B)

Attach board, with the gate side down, to a window side, tree, or wherever the woodpeckers frequent.

This is a selective trap. If the bird is banded, one can let it dine. If it is not banded, simply pull the string quickly. It is excellent for trapping suet-eating birds.

Our traps are mounted beside a window. We can see the traps from another window. The trap string is pulled through a partially opened window. The traps can be emptied through the window and reset by hand.

Banding results, first 4 days of operation: 9 Downy Woodpeckers, 5 Red-breasted Nuthatches, and 3 Hairy Woodpeckers — even though we had other suet bags in the open.

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