

of the walls should be made of 3 in. chain-link netting, through which they can escape.

This type of trap has caught Eider, Mute and Whooper Swans, Tufted Duck, Scaup, Goldeneye, Mallard and a Pochard.

Goldeneye are extremely difficult to retain in a trap for any length of time. Plastic rods, of  $\frac{1}{8}$  in. diameter, protruding at an angle into the funnel (see sketch) greatly decrease the proportion of escapes. These rods are also valuable in the other types of traps described here.

#### The Ythan-Abberton trap (Figure 3)

The basic 12 ft. Abberton trap has been modified to catch Tufted Duck, Scaup and Goldeneye in the estuary. The major

changes are: (1) elimination of all funnels except those pointing landwards; (2) bisection of the trap with an internal wall parallel to the entrance side, this wall being provided with one funnel not directly opposite the outer entrance; (3) provision of an escape space, as in the Swan trap.

#### Bait

In Aberdeenshire by far the most effective bait for all traps is barley, with wheat as second choice.

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## Shelduck trapping methods

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On the Ythan estuary in Aberdeenshire, Common Shelducks (*Tadorna tadorna* (L.)) are trapped for ringing in a specially designed baited trap as they return from the wintering grounds in the early spring. During the last two years over 200 Shelducks have been successfully ringed in this area. The techniques used in trapping Shelducks are slightly different from the usual duck trapping methods. In the first place, Shelducks are usually found in large numbers only on tidal water so that special 'anti-drowning' modifications are required on the traps; and secondly, the extreme wariness of the birds makes it necessary to work well out on the tidal mud flats, often in extreme current and ice conditions.

On the Ythan the trap is situated near the outer edge of a very broad mud flat (Sleek of Tarty) where it has to withstand complete submergence in 13 ft. tides and,

as was the case during the recent severe winters, the ravages of ice floes. The actual position of the trap is extremely important. It must be placed where the birds congregate naturally to feed but preferably not in a spot which will ultimately be occupied as a feeding territory.

The trap itself is illustrated in the accompanying diagram. The special features are: the extra wide outer funnel (Shelducks abhor narrow funnels), the chain link mesh on the inner chamber which prevents the Shelducks from damaging their bills and also allows the smaller waders to escape, and most important of all, the 'anti-drowning' modification in the roof. The last feature prevents the birds from flying out but does provide an emergency escape hatch in the event of very high tides. Barley is used as bait.

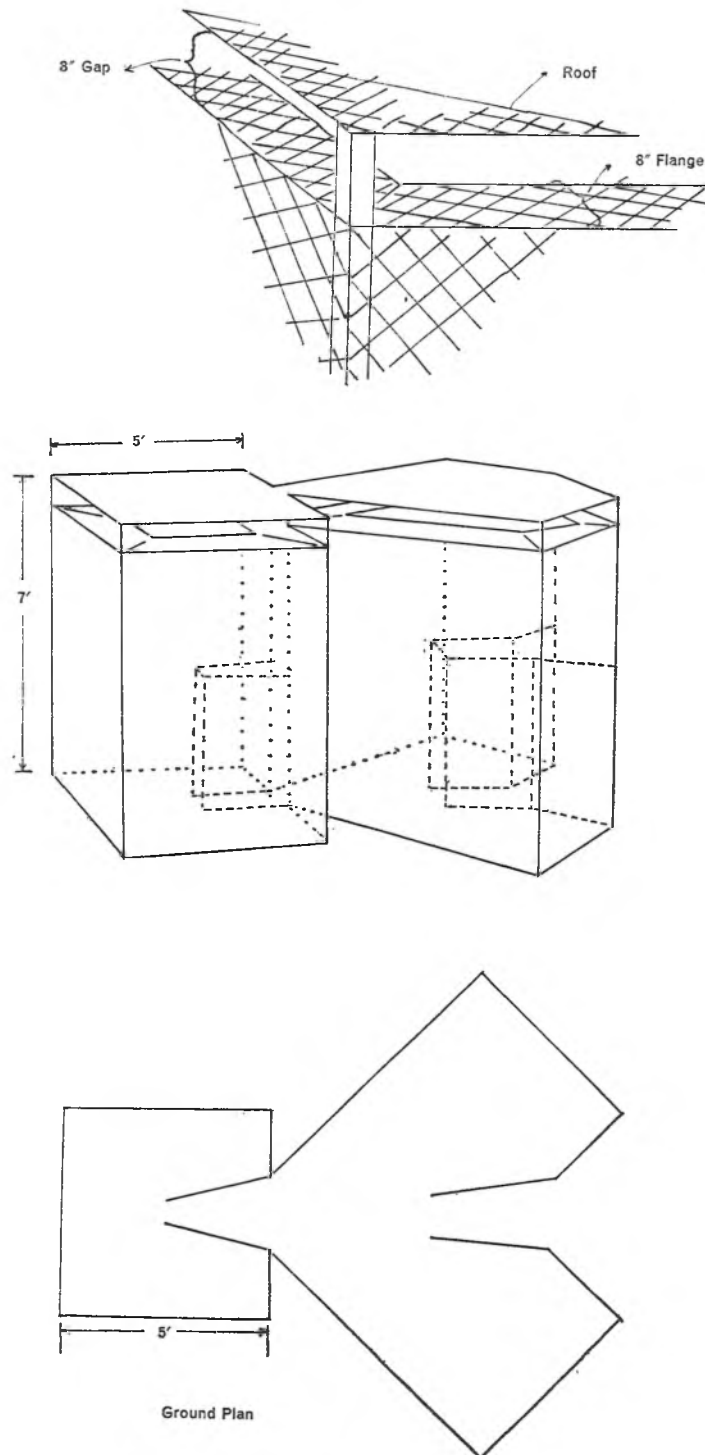


Figure 1. Plan and dimensions of a trap for Shelducks.