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The C120 Magnum Trap for Marten

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During the last 60 years, the wildlife profession has witnessed a growing societal concern regarding the issue of humaneness in wildlife trapping. Also, Proulx and Barrett (1991) pointed out that trapping devices (legholds Nos. 3 and 4, Conibears 120 and 160) commonly used by trappers did not have the capability to humanely kill marten (*Martes americana*) by consistently rendering them unconscious in ≤ 3 min. They recommended the C120 Magnum as an alternative trap on the basis of the following findings (Barrett et al. 1989):

- the C120 Magnum generates high levels of energy. Its striking and clamping forces are more than double those of the Conibear 120;
- when equipped with a pitchfork trigger, the C120 Magnum consistently strikes martens in the head-neck region (single strikes) or in the head-neck and thorax regions (double strikes);
- the C120 Magnum can be expected, at a 95% level of confidence, to render $\geq 70\%$ of all martens captured on traplines irreversibly unconscious in ≤ 3 min;
- on traplines, the C120 Magnum will capture as many martens as the trapping devices commonly used by trappers;
- the C120 Magnum does not damage pelts;
- the C120 Magnum can be safely handled. Quick-links or regular spring safety hooks with an elastic band can be used to keep the springs cocked while setting the trap.

The qualities of the C120 Magnum have been recognized by trappers (Blackwell 1992) and government agencies (Anonymous 1992, Currie and Robertson 1992). Also, thousands of them are sold every year (Gougeon 1992). Unfortunately there are trappers who are altering the trap (its trigger system, springs...) or its recommended set and are getting unexpected results. Also, some unscrupulous trap manufacturers are selling sub-standard devices as the C120 Magnum trap. It is therefore necessary to review the characteristics of the trap and its set.

The C120 Magnum (manufactured by Les Pieges du Quebec Enr., St-Hyacinthe, Que.) consists of two 12.4 x 12.4 cm frames (0.5 cm wire diameter) with four 0.3 cm thick x 1.1 cm wide x 7.8 cm long clamping bars and two 16.5 cm springs (0.6 wire diameter). It is equipped with a one-way 4-pronged trigger that fires only by pushing on it (Fig. 1).

The trap should be boiled, dyed, and waxed. It should be set in a 35 x 17 x 17 cm wooden box with slotted sides and one end closed by a 2.5 cm wire mesh. The cocked springs should be kept 10 cm away from the back of the side slots so the trap cannot jump forward when fired. The trap should be secured in the box by joining spring loops with a flexible branch. The bait should be secured on the floor of the box, 10 cm behind the centre of the trap. The cubby box should be placed on a horizontal pole affixed between trees, approximately 1.5 m above ground level. The trap should be wired to this crosspole. Finally, a running pole should be leaned on the horizontal pole.

As wildlife professionals, we must promote more humane trapping activities and phase out trapping devices for which efficient and more humane alternatives exist. The C120 Magnum is a humane alternative to harvest marten.

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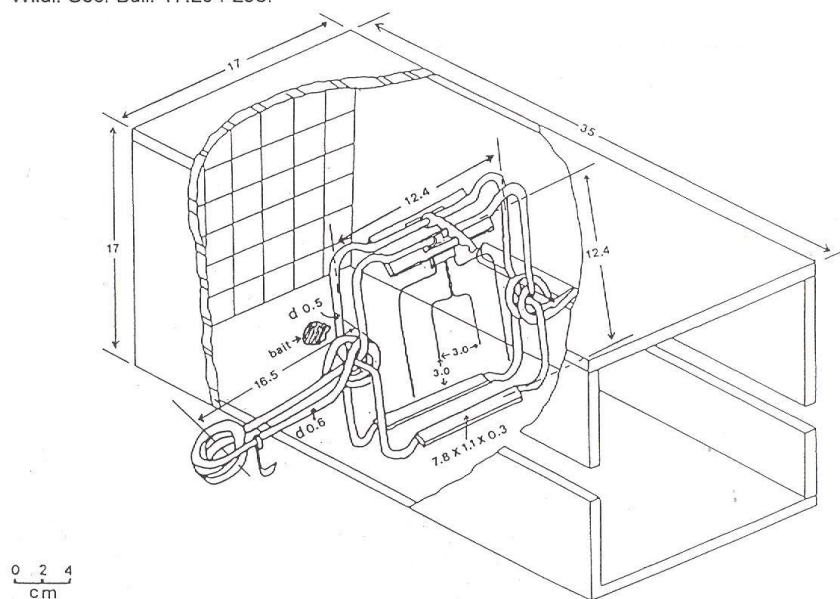


Figure 1. The C120 Magnum trap in its cubby box for marten.