

Anchor for an elephant – Securing the Ram power snare

by Wrangler Hamm, November 2018

When the discussion turns to snaring, in particular the Ram power snare, a topic that seems to have quite a bit of variance is the anchoring. While there are no regulations specific to anchoring, here are some tips to minimize losses and put more fur in your shed.



Anchor for an elephant. I can't stress this enough. The Ram power snare is a very effective tool, and when used properly can result in large numbers. When trappers are fixing their anchor cable to the coil, or "eye" of the ram, they are increasing the potential for losses. Many will argue that this method is acceptable and will hold coyotes but it does not allow the Ram to do the job it's supposed to.

In order to provide an example, I went out with a Ram power snare, a cable, a retired snare, and a 80lb luggage scale. I fixed the anchor cable through the coil of the ram, then secured to the tree.



stretched the ram as if it had fired. The result I found was exactly as I expected. It was only a 15lb pull required to gain one inch of cable from the Ram. This pull would be similar to walking someone's untrained Boston Terrier, who is trying to pull you down the block. It was very little effort and if a coyote was to turn it's shoulder into the ram I suspect they would have the opportunity to chew.

*Left: A Ram power snare, anchored to a tree through the eye of the coil.
An easy pull of 15lbs gained 1 inch of the snare.*

At a 20lb pull I managed to gain approximately 12 + inches from the Ram. This task is easily accomplished with a large mature coyote. Repetitive lunges will again provide the opportunity to fray and escape or the ability to turn and chew.

Right: 20lb pull while anchored through the coil allows approximately 12 + inches of snare.

Below: Anchoring to the back arm of the Ram power snare allowed the writer to pull past the 80lb limit of the scale while it continued to apply constant force for a quick and humane kill.



It was when I connected my anchor cable to the back arm, using a quick link to act as a slide that I found the results I expected. Once the Ram fires, it uses the spring force to lock the snare in place. If the anchor cable is able to slide along the back arm, it will then create a solid connection with no give – regardless of how hard you pull. No ability to gain on the snare cable results in higher catch rates and faster death. This should be the standard in all Ram sets.

Selecting areas to target coyote, priority is given to anything that has natural cover (tall grass, brush, trees, etc). The difficulty you face in southern Saskatchewan is finding a way to secure your Ram to a solid anchor point. Attempting to drive a stake into frozen ground is not even a consideration and your nearest tree may be 10 feet away. Lengthening my anchor cables was necessary, and I found a nice fit at six feet, made from 3/32, 7x7. When trees are further away, I will add a second cable by using a quick link.

It was Wilkes Parsonage, a cowboy and well respected trapper from the southwest corner of Saskatchewan who encouraged me to start considering other options. He pointed out that many of the small brush and willow trees will secure a Ram just as good as any tree out there. Healthy brush and shrubs are rooted deep into the earth to handle our dry prairie summers. The question is “how do we do it?”

The risk you take is the potential for your cable to slide off. Unlike a solid tree where you can loop the cable around, it is necessary to fasten the anchor by

doubling up 12g wire, wrapping once around the base, and twisting with a set of pliers to secure the wire in place. The anchor can now be fastened to the remainder of the wire and you're set. I fasten to green suckers and shrubs as narrow as my thumb.

To prove my point, I went outside once again with some 12g wire, and a 80lb luggage scale. Unfortunately the scale limited at 80lbs pull, but even with multiple attacks, it never phased the anchor point.



Left: Anchored at base of a small lilac tree proved to hold strong past the 80lb limit of the scale, even with countless attempts to break free.

When I change into waders and start trudging through the ponds after beaver, I have always taken a liking to the anchor system in place on the Savageau body grip traps. A small yet innovative idea that allows the trapper to pull the cable through the lock, wrap around a branch, and secure back into place with a keyhole slot. No wires, no mess, no fuss.

Last year I decided to try something different. I modified some of my ram anchor cables to be equipped with the same locking system. I left $\frac{1}{4}$ inch of cable past the single ferrule, to monitor any slippage that may occur. So far I am very impressed with the results. These locks will tighten up at the base of smaller brush and release easily with one hand. As your catches come in, you will notice a small bend in the cable where the lock was sitting. I expect that over time you will need to remove this small length of the cable and shorten it by 6 inches (give or take). A small price to pay to leave the wire in the truck.



Please note: I believe Jim Gibb had a previous article discussing the similar topic in the past.

If there's one thing we can do, it's continued learning and growth as a trapper. We can always improve on our skills for the respect of our industry and the animals we harvest. Safe trapping.