

sight must be used. Opossums cannot be skinned while warm without destroying the fur. The least pressure while the body is warm brings the fur out in handfuls, and the writer has had several skins damaged while shooting them, in this way: by the animal falling on to a log or root when shot and knocking out enough fur to make a large bare spot on the skin. When shot they should be hung up by the tail and left till next morning, when they will be stone-cold and can be skinned without injury to the fur.

2. The most successful method I ever adopted of taking opossums was by catching them in a noose made of four strands of fine copper wire twisted together. In an opossum bush the animals sleep by day in the forks of the larger trees. They favour those trees which have large bunches of kiekie growing in their forks, and if these trees are examined the marks of their claws can be seen on their trunks. Sometimes a regular track is worn up the trunk. A tree showing such well-worn tracks is selected; a straight green sapling about 3 in. through and 10 ft. long is cut and leaned against the tree at an angle of about 60 degrees, the top of the sapling being propped against a track. Into the underneath part of the sapling, about 6 ft. or 7 ft. from the ground, a stout staple is driven. The snare, which is made exactly like a rabbit-snare, is attached to this staple by a stout piece of twine. If the end of the snare is attached directly to the staple, when the animal is caught in it his struggles twist the wire and it is apt to break, but the twine will twist without breaking. The snare is set up on the top side of the sapling and at right angles to it. The loop should be about 4 in. or 4½ in. in diameter and round in shape, and about 1 in. from the sapling. It should be placed so that an opossum running along the sapling will thrust his head through it. His momentum draws the loop tight round his neck and jerks him off the sapling, from which he hangs to the staple and is very quickly killed. On the first occasion on which the writer tried this method he spent an afternoon in the bush and set twenty-five snares. The next morning, on visiting the snares, he found twenty opossums hanging dead, neatly caught round the neck, with no mark of violence on them and the skins in perfect condition. Moreover, every animal was stone-cold and could be skinned at once, thus showing that they had been caught early the previous evening. The snares were reset at the same trees without moving the poles, and next morning again there were fourteen dead opossums. We never tried them for the third night, as our leave was up. But the snares can be reset at least once with fair prospects of success. One of the snares had been set rather low, and the animal caught in it on the second night had, apparently while still warm, been clawed by another opossum from the ground, and its skin had consequently been ruined. The snares should be set so that the lowest part of the animal when hanging will not be less than at least 3 ft. or 3½ ft. from the ground.

This method was found far more successful than ordinary rabbit-traps. It is also far less cruel, and far cheaper. One of the disadvantages of the rabbit-traps is that when the opossum is found in it in the morning it is alive, and must be killed, but it cannot be then skinned, and a further visit is required when it has grown cold, to recover the skin.

APPENDIX C.

PROPOSED REGULATIONS, OTAGO ACCLIMATIZATION SOCIETY, 28TH MARCH, 1912.

1. Licenses to take or kill opossum in the Otago Acclimatization District shall be issued by the secretary of the said society subject to its approval of the applicant.
2. This license authorizes only the holder thereof to take or kill opossums by means of shooting or trapping only.
3. No right of entry upon any property in pursuit of opossum is conferred by this license without the permission of the owner or occupier thereof.
4. All opossum-skins taken in terms of this license may be sold only through registered dealers, who shall keep a register of all skins purchased, with the number and name of holder of the license from which the skins are purchased.
5. Any person may be registered as a dealer in opossum-skins upon application to the secretary of the Otago Acclimatization Society, without charge other than the obligation to keep a register as above provided for, which register shall at all reasonable times be open for inspection by every ranger, police officer, and officer of the Otago Acclimatization Society; and every registered dealer shall, within fourteen days after the close of the season on the 31st July, forward to the Hon. the Minister of Internal Affairs, with a copy to the Otago Acclimatization Society, a return of the names of license-holders from whom purchases have been made and the number of skins purchased by them.
6. Every person who shall take or kill opossums without having first taken out a license as hereinbefore provided shall upon conviction be liable to a penalty of not exceeding £20 and not less than £5; and every dealer failing to register and comply with these regulations shall be liable on conviction to a fine of not less than £2 and not any more than £20.

Any property-holder destroying opossums on his or her property by reason of their being a nuisance in terms of section 34 of the Animals Protection Act, 1908, or amendments thereof, shall not be authorized to dispose of the bodies and [or] the skins of opossums so destroyed without first having taken out a license at the aforesaid fee of £3; and no person acting under appointment of any *bona fide* occupier of any lands in terms of regulation per *Gazette*, 1904, Vol. i, p. 1248, shall be authorized to dispose of the bodies and [or] skins of opossums so taken without first having taken out a license as aforesaid at a fee of £3, subject to the penalty provided for in clause 6 of these regulations.

Approximate Cost of Paper.—Preparation, not given; printing (600 copies), £16.