

Fine tune Bethel Rhodes mink trap

By Stephen Mace



Generally Bethel Rhodes mink traps are good and will work fine straight off the shelf, however I like to fine tune them and make them slightly more user friendly for our volunteers. Also I would recommend checking any trap when you first get them no matter the brand to make sure you are happy with them and nothing is wrong with trigger mechanism.

The first part I start with is the treadle plate, I move it forward one square closer to the door. As shown in the image below, from the mesh where the red line is to the mesh where the green line is. With this style of trap it is very simple, use a flat headed screw driver and prize the tabs open, move it forward one square and then with a pair of pliers squeeze the tabs closed.





Once you have done that it is **VERY** important that you check to see if there is any movement where you just closed the tabs, as in forward and back movement as shown in the image below. If there is, and a mink steps onto the treadle plate the trap may not trigger because the downward action of its weight was taken up by this movement in the tabs. It needs to be just right so that there is no forward and back movement and the treadle plate can move freely in its normal movement, i.e. tabs not over tightened so you need to apply force to push it down (when trap not set).



Since the treadle plate has now been moved forward, the bar that holds the door open now needs to be shortened since it will be too long and the door will not close. When I do this I also cut a small notch in the end of the bar for the door to rest in when set, this acts as a guide and to make sure the trap is set sensitive enough for those who do not have experience with setting traps.

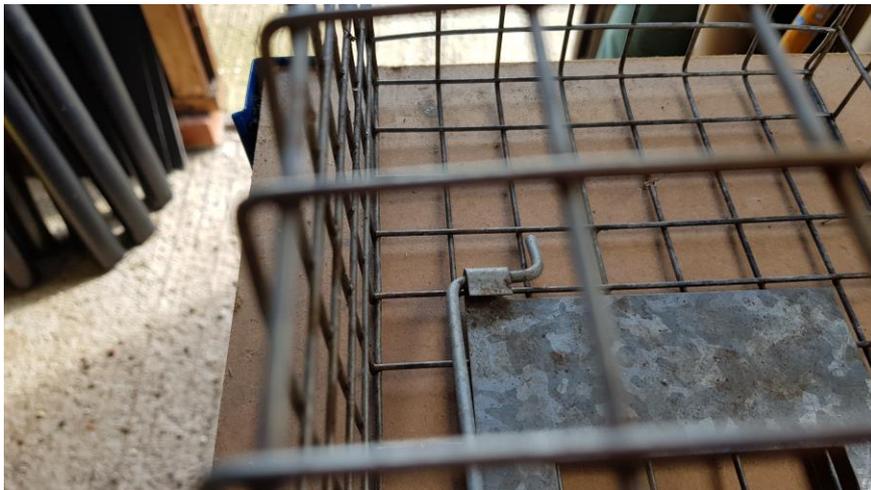
Firstly, open the door and set the bar under, this can be tricky since it's longer but you can push it under from the side of the trap/door. Now position the treadle plate at a good height, you want it fairly flat, maybe 1cm - 2cm up from the floor of the trap like shown below.



Now with a pencil, mark close to the door where you want to cut the bar.



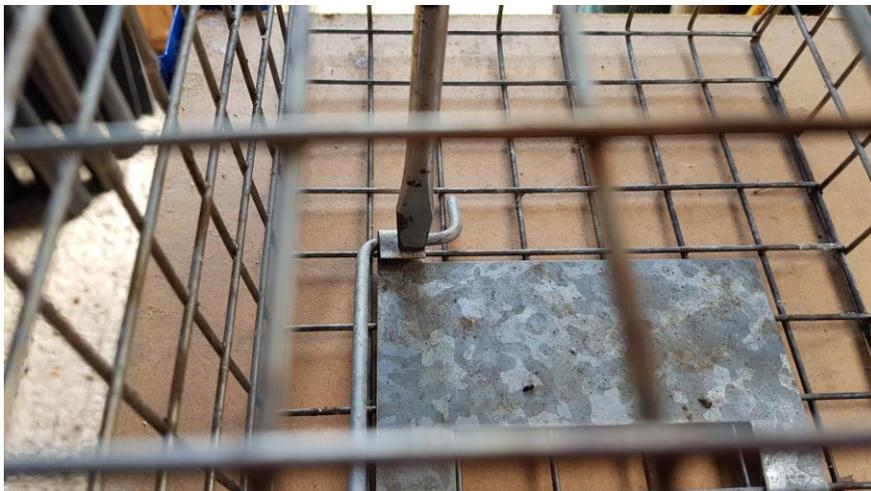
Take the bar off and out of the trap completely, do this the same way by opening the tab on the treadle plate.



With the bar out, cut it to length. If you are experienced with setting traps you don't have to add the notch, however I do recommend it. Use a grinder or metal file to cut a notch about 3 - 4mm back, and about half the diameter of the bar deep.



Put the bar back into the trap, making sure you go through the hanging ring first before setting it into the tab. Close the tab with a screwdriver or something similar, push and hammer it closed. As with the other tabs, make sure there is little to no forward and back movement.



Hopefully with that done the trap will close and work perfectly, but if the door is not closing like shown below, you may need to adjust one of two things.



First check the tab on the treadle plate, when closing the tab on the bar it may have bent forward like show below, especially if using a hammer to close it.



Simply reach into the trap and bend it back flat like this below. Now there should be enough clearance for the door to close.



If the door does not close still, and the tab on the treadle plate is flat you will need to remove the bar again and shorten it slightly. If you set a notch, just cut it a few mm longer and then cut a couple of mm of the end.

The trap should now be nicely fine-tuned, sensitive and user friendly. Images below with the trap set and a nice treadle plate height.



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