

## Making an Eel Trap

Contributed by fish (the other one)

Eels, delicious and trappable. fish (the other one) shows you how...

I decided to make a trap of only natural materials without the use of string or wire. I have in the past made eel traps of hazel but I found it not pliable enough for the fine work needed, and as there are no willows around here I wondered what our ancestors would have used, and what was abundant around here at the source of the river Wyle in the shadow of the White Sheet neolithic camp. I have from time to time found beautiful flint tools around here whilst out walking or shooting.

After some thought I decided to try, of all things, brambles! I gathered a load of them and I found that a good pair of welding gloves helped with the thorns. Some of the bramble runners were nearly 20 feet long.

Having gathered enough for the job, I decided that a former, i.e. something to use to weave over, would help in keeping the trap a good symmetrical and even shape. I'm sure a log would have done the trick but I cheated and used a length of drainage pipe. Having gathered the ends together it was just a matter of spreading the upright sticks evenly. In order to facilitate an easy job and avoid hands full of thorns I used a 4000 year old flint 'thumb scraper' to scrape the thorns off. It worked really well.

Next job was to start the weave, which really was easy once I had worked out that the brambles bent so much easier having been twisted! Here's a pic:

and here's a pic of the body of the trap at 3/4 completion!

and here my trusty assistant Jack holds the completed body of the trap!

"But how to get the eels to stay trapped eh?" I hear you say! Well, next is to fabricate a funnel with a hole in it to sit in the entrance of the trap. This way the eels can enter but cannot get out. Here's a pic of the funnel:

Next I needed a way to affix a peg or weight to keep the trap in place so a simple loop was woven into the body of the trap and then two more loops were added to facilitate keeping the cone in place!

Once the loops were added the cone was fitted and a stick simply pushed through:

And here it is, the completed eel trap! Took about 6 hours to make in all and cost nothing at all and is I believe the answer to a problem of how to catch eels, crayfish and fish in the same way as our ancestors would have done! Hope you are inspired to have a go! If you have any questions or suggestions about this article, please raise them on our forum.