

ground, or the gun will burst. The paunch of a rabbit is sometimes placed at the mouth of the hole, and the strong smell thereof entices the missing animal within reach.

Bells for ferrets are useless; they get clogged up in a very few minutes with dirt and the fir off the dead rabbits.

Ferrets should, as a rule, be carried in boxes with plenty of holes to admit fresh air. If bags are used, plenty of ventilation should be provided by the insertion in the side of the bag of a small piece of wire netting. If this precaution is neglected, on taking the ferrets out of the bag they will be found in a dull and sleepy state, from which they will not recover for some minutes.

Ferrets will drive cats, stoats, or weasels out of their holes, but whether they would actually kill them if they had a chance is doubtful.

In handling a ferret never snatch at it, or it is long odds that it will bite you. Put your hand quietly down, giving the ferret time to smell and see what it is that approaches it, and then take hold of it gently round the neck.

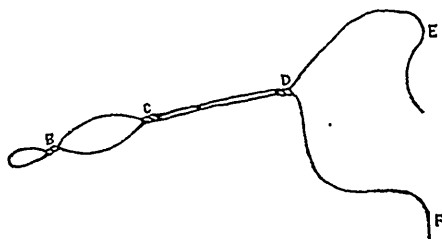


PLATE 1.*

There are different ways of muzzling ferrets—with a leather muzzle, as sold by most saddlers, which is practically useless, as it is almost impossible to keep it fixed in its place—and with a thin cord the usual way. In using the cord muzzle great care must be taken to have the part going round the neck well at the back of the skull, the edge of which is easily felt. If this precaution is neglected the muzzle is sure to slip off ultimately, even though it remains in its place for the first hour or two. There is a cruel way of muzzling by the use of a needle and thread passed through the upper and lower lips of the ferret; also by the use of four small rings, two of which are passed through each lip, and then tied together with cord. The commonest and nearly the only way of muzzling a ferret and without pain to the animal itself, is as follows: Take about twelve inches of thin but strong cord—fishing line does best—double it in half, tie three knots in it as shown in Fig. 2, B, C, D. The loop B to C goes over the fer-

rets nose; the double cord, C D, runs from its nose to the back of the animal's skull, the sharp edge of which can easily be felt. E and F fastened together form a loop, D E F, which encircles the ferrets neck. The length from B to C and C to D of course depends on the size of the ferret to be muzzled. Having knotted the cord, as shown in Fig. 2, pass the ends E and F round the ferret's neck at the base of its skull, knot D being on the upper side of its neck. Tie E F as tight as you

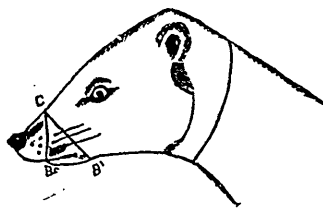


FIG. 2

can without cutting the ferret's neck. When tied, take hold of B and C, and pull them forward towards the ferret's nose. If the loop D E F does not slip over the ears then it is properly tied. If it slips you must unfasten it and tie it tighter.—Having made D E F secure, pass the loop B C over the ferret's nose, the loop also taking in the lower jaw. Take the ends E and F, pass one through the loop B, tie securely, and the muzzling is completed.

The knot D ought to be exactly in the middle of the ferret's neck. C D will therefore run down the centre of the animal's forehead and nose. Take care that C D is not slack, or the loop B C will slip over the nose. Fig. 3 shows the muzzle tied together as in use. It will be observed that C B slopes back; this is to take in as much as possible of the ferret's lower jaw, which is much further back than the top one. Fig. 2 shows the ferret's head with the muzzle on. C to B 1 is the muzzle in the right position with the jaw firmly enclosed. C to B 2 shows the muzzle too far forward, leaving the lower jaw at liberty; to avoid this be careful to tie B, F and E (Fig. 1.) as short as possible.

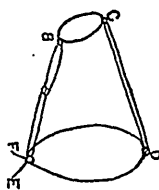


FIG. 3.

Having muzzled your ferret put him down on the ground; if he opens his eyes and moves about you have been successful. On the other hand, if he keeps his eyes shut and either remains still, or rolls over and over on his back, the muzzle is too tight, and it must be cut off and a fresh one substituted. With practice ferrets can be muzzled with string in a very short space of time, and once muzzled nothing but the string breaking or fraying will release the animal's jaws. Muzzle savage ferrets with gloves on, or your fingers will suffer.

If a ferret is left out all night the holes of the burrow should be well stopped up, and a little

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