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LETTER

HOOK AND LOOP TABS FOR ATTACHING A DHO-GAZA

The dho-gaza has been used for capturing raptors and other birds for hundreds of years (R.L. Meredith 1943, Methods, ancient, medieval, and modern, for the capture of falcons and other birds of prey. Pages 433–449 *in* C.A. Woods and F.M. Fyfe [EDS.], The art of falconry. Stanford Univ. Press, Stanford, CA U.S.A.). Each set typically consists of a small net usually not larger than 3 × 3 m. Netting may consist of a fine mist net or a heavier type net which will break away from or slide down its supporting poles when hit by a passing bird (P.H. Bloom 1987, Capturing and handling raptors. Pages 99–123 *in* B.A. Giron Pendleton, B.A. Millsap, K.W. Cline and D.M. Bird [EDS.], Raptor management techniques manual. Natl. Wildl. Fed., Washington, DC U.S.A.; H. Bub 1991, Bird trapping and bird banding. Cornell Univ. Press, Ithaca, NY U.S.A.). Cellophane tape and clothes pins (P.H. Bloom 1987, Capturing and handling raptors. Pages 99–123 *in* B.A. Giron Pendleton, B.A. Millsap, K.W. Cline and D.M. Bird [EDS.], Raptor management techniques manual. Natl. Wildl. Fed., Washington, DC U.S.A.; H. Bub 1991, Bird trapping and bird banding. Cornell Univ. Press, Ithaca, NY U.S.A.) or small wires (F. Hamerstrom 1963, The use of great horned owls in catching marsh hawks. *Proc. Int. Ornithol. Congr.* 13:866–869) are the most common methods of attaching a net to the poles.

We found fabric hook and loop fasteners, such as Velcro®, to be superior to the more commonly used methods of suspension (Fig. 1). At each corner of the net, a 1.3 × 6 cm strip of the loop side of self-adhesive Velcro is folded in half around the trammel line forming a tab 3 cm long (Fig. 1). We then attached 10-cm strips of the corresponding hook side of the Velcro to each pole at the approximate positions necessary for hanging the net (Fig. 1). In a recent article by D. Rasmussen (1991, *Hawk Chalk* 30:60–64), a Velcro tab is mentioned as a means of anchoring a dho-gaza release line, but not for attaching the net to the poles.

Attaching the loop side of the Velcro to the net, rather than the pole, minimizes entanglement with the net. Once the poles are anchored in place, attachment of the net is simple and expedient. After numerous uses, Velcro may need to be replaced because it may lose its tensile strength or become fouled with debris.

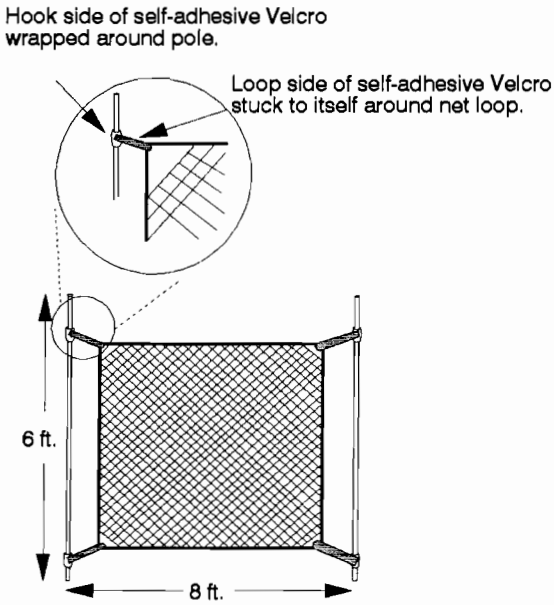

Figure 1. Dho-gaza set showing use of Velcro tabs as restraints for net to poles.

The Velcro tabs allow for simple adjustments to wind and trapping conditions by varying the amount of surface contact between the net tabs and the tabs on the poles. The net can also be firmly attached to the poles for cleaning and damage repair. We have used this method to capture several species of birds including common ravens (*Corvus corax*), northern harriers (*Circus cyaneus*), and Cooper's hawks (*Accipiter cooperii*).

The modification of this raptor capture device was a small part of a research project funded by the United States Department of Defense, U.S. Naval Surface Forces, Pacific Command, on behalf of the Assault Craft Unit-Five and the Landing Craft Air Cushion Program at Camp Pendleton Marine Base, California.—**C. Edward Knittle, USDA/ Denver Wildlife Research Center, Building 16, Federal Center, Denver, CO 80225 U.S.A. and Mark A. Pavelka, United States Fish and Wildlife Service, 2730 Loker Avenue West, Carlsbad, CA 92008 U.S.A.**

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