



Occasional writings on managing moles in the genus *Scapanus*

By Dave Pehling, WSU Extension Snohomish Co. 11/09 (modified 12/26/09) Vol. 2, No. 1

Due to increased work load I've been lax in my mole work but with the coming of the Fall rains and an increase in mole activity, I wanted to get at least ONE issue of the "Gazette" out this year, so here it is!

### ***More on Mole Traps***

As mentioned in the last issue, I built a crude prototype "Rube Goldberg" mole live-trap last spring but have not yet tested it. In the meantime, though, I've learned about a commercial mole trapper, Bob Jameson, who seems to have good success with a modification of the "tube-traps" mentioned in the last issue. This gentleman traps Eastern moles in tube-traps he makes out of galvanized hardware cloth and pads the swinging door with felt on the assumption that moles will be less likely to be repelled by a padded entrance. You can see Bob's trap and read about how he uses it at



<http://www.trapperman.com/forum/ubbthreads.php/topics/202120.html> . In the same Forum there is an entry by a mole trapper in the U.K. who says he has not had any luck with the commercial tube-traps available there....of course, he is trapping *Talpa europea* rather than Bob's *Scalopus aquaticus*, which may make a difference.

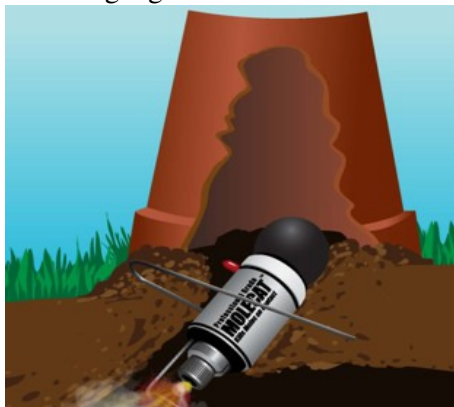
### ***Mole Legislation 2009***

Once again in 2009 there were bills presented that would have made effective mole trapping legal but, once again, they were tabled. You can read about the latest bill regarding mole trapping at <http://apps.leg.wa.gov/billinfo/summary.aspx?year=2009&bill=5123>

It MAY be brought up again in the next legislative session..... but I wouldn't hold my breath.

### ***A New Mole Control Device***

The latest gadget in the field of mole management is an ingenious device called the "MoleCat". This unit is



basically a take off of the old-time "mole gun" but, unlike those devices that were powered by a 12 gauge shotgun shell (and, therefore, an illegal "set-gun" by Federal law), the MoleCat uses a .27 caliber blank cartridge which kills the animal by concussion. Since it does not grip the body, it is not prohibited by I-713. We have not yet tested one of these units, as they run in the neighborhood of \$100 each but I see no reason why they would not work. The trigger is similar to that used in the "Cinch Trap", which is an effective lethal trap we used to legally use before I-713. You might want to check your local laws before trying one of these and remember that even devices that only fire blanks CAN be dangerous! You can see the on line advertisement for the

"MoleCat" at <http://www.molecat.com/Index.htm>

***Addendum - added 12/26/09***

Here is an e-mail we received (and that I forgot to add) from Washington State Dept. of Fish and Wildlife regarding their position on the "Mole Cat" device:

From: Carrell, Sean O (DFW) [mailto:Sean.Carrell@dfw.wa.gov]  
Sent: Friday, April 24, 2009 10:39 AM  
To: Daniels, Catherine  
Subject: Mole cat

Hello –

David Heimer passed on your inquiry regarding the molecat device to eliminate moles. There are very few tools, that are legal, that are available to remove moles. Baits, smoke bombs, and flooding tunnels with water, do very little to control moles. There are a number of traps, however a majority of those are in violation of I-713 because they are “body gripping.” Although it was never the intent of the initiative, the fact remains that they are considered body-gripping and therefore cannot be used by interpretation of the law by the Attorney General’s Office of Washington State. After numerous attempts by the agency to rectify this problem, still nothing has changed some 8 years later.

I’ve looked at the statutes, but was unable to locate anything that relates to the device. The one concern that WDFW would have recommending this device are the dangers to other animals, such as pets, or livestock, and humans as well. A .27 caliber blank round used in this device is lethal and placement in the ground could cause serious risks to the applicator. Although I don’t see anything regarding the use, I feel that it necessary to advise you that because of the risks involved, I’m not sure WDFW would give a seal of “approval” for general use by the public because of the safety issues and it would be up to the individual to accept the responsibility.

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*Mole-fully yours,*  
*dave.....*



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