

Crayfish Newsletter for July 2008



The CRAYFISH TALE By TRAPPER ARNE

TRAPPER ARNE 5 YEARS OLD

On April 1 five years ago I opened my website to the crayfish trap buying public. This became my second financial venture since I retired as a computer programmer at Motorola. (My first was raising and selling organic produce.) Both my wife and I had lukewarm expectations for this new plunge into the abyss of cyberspace.

For years I had caught crayfish using traps my brother sent from Sweden. A dozen Jackpots that I still use after 35 years. Then, on the Internet, I located some websites that sold crayfish traps. Some of the trap designs I saw intrigued me, and I started making traps in my garage. Some of these traps worked so well I decided that, maybe, I could also make traps and sell them on a dot-com website.

A crayfish trap specialist in Washington state named Bullard encouraged me to take the plunge. And plunge I did. Bullard, after years of catching and selling crayfish, had then recently started making traps for sale but assured me that there was plenty of space for one more trap seller. He turned out to be right. He also became my first customer, starting a long line of trap buyers who clambered to buy my crayfish traps. My testimonials include one from him that I prize highly, as I consider him my mentor and advisor.

NEW TRANS-ATLANTIC SHIPMENT OF TRAPPYS

A new shipment of my most popular crayfish trap, the Trappy, arrived in May after a transatlantic voyage from its manufacturer in Sweden. Previous shipments have come via Los Angeles thru the Panama canal to Phoenix and up to Payson in Arizona. This year, we figured, sending them via Houston should be both faster and possibly cheaper. Well, all shipping has gone up since last year and the dollar has gone down. Neither factor in my favor, so the new arrivals turned up at almost three dollars more per trap.

But my decision to import this cleverly designed trap has paid off. It soon became the most popular trap as many testimonials verify. But maybe best of all, I have now become somewhat relieved of having to sit and hand-make the original Trapper Arne traps, the Jumbo and the Trapper.

INTRODUCING THE CRAY SHACK

With the shipment of Trappy crayfish traps this spring came also a newcomer. Swedes call this trap the KRÄFTSTUGA (crayfish cabin). We call it the CRAY SHACK. As soon as the website summer rush for

crayfish traps slows down, I will introduce this newcomer to my website viewers. It is an unusual looking contraption that looks a bit like a little house. With a flat bottom, sloping four sides and two entry funnels, it has become popular in several countries. I tried out a sample last summer and was impressed with its ability to lure in crayfish and to keep them in. My granddaughter became enthused with it, and she and I will have fun with it again this year during our annual crayfish outing at our favorite crayfish lake on an Indian reservation. (See the CRAY SHACK at www.trappy.com)

TESTIMONIALS

Competition among crayfish trap makers is fierce, so a testimonial is all the more appreciated. If you have had some exciting experience using Trapper Arne traps, please consider writing a testimonial. A photo would be appreciated too.

JUNE SALES THRU THE ROOF

Sales during the spring were hard and heavy with an increase over previous year of over 30%. Then came June. So far, and there are some days left as of this writing, the sales have soared by 70%. Fortunately, most of the sales are for the Trappy, but a fair amount kept me sitting handcrafting the Trapper and the Jumbo until the wee hours. Any sniggering five years ago about the success of a crayfish trap dot-com voiced by family members and doubting friends has since petered out. And personally I still wonder how big this market is. Have Americans finally learned what a delightful food source this crustacean really is?

SHIPPING RATES ON THE MOVE – UPWARDS

There was a time when I sent all my trap orders using the Post Office Priority Mail. Then the powers that be in the Post Office realized that they were losing money on certain routes. Now I can only afford to send priority mail to zones 1 thru 4; in other words only to those zones that are near Arizona. Priority mail to zones 5 thru 8 is extremely high now, and packages have to go either parcel post or UPS. The website PayPal program that calculates the shipping for a TrapperArne order is a marvel of clever programming. Still it can't, or won't, calculate the shipping cost based on both weight, distance and size of box. Until they will, the shipping cost calculation is a compromise based on a percentage of the cost of the article shipped.

FIELD AND STREAM

An article about backpacking in this well established outdoorsy magazine helped spur the sales of my Jackpot trap, the collapsible net trap also made in Sweden. The article suggested that a collapsible trap like the Trapper Arne JACKPOT is the one to use for catching either bait crayfish or for augmenting the backpacker's food supply. Both the TrapperArne.com name and my phone number were listed. Doubtful practice about the phone number. Some people on the east coast don't seem to realize there is a time difference. A few interested callers woke me before the sun was up in Arizona.

Trapper Arne