STOP WISHIN' AND GO FISHIN'



Gerard Lacz / Animals Animals

Make this minnow trap for catching free bait.

You're ready for fishing. You've got everything...but bait. And no cash to buy any.

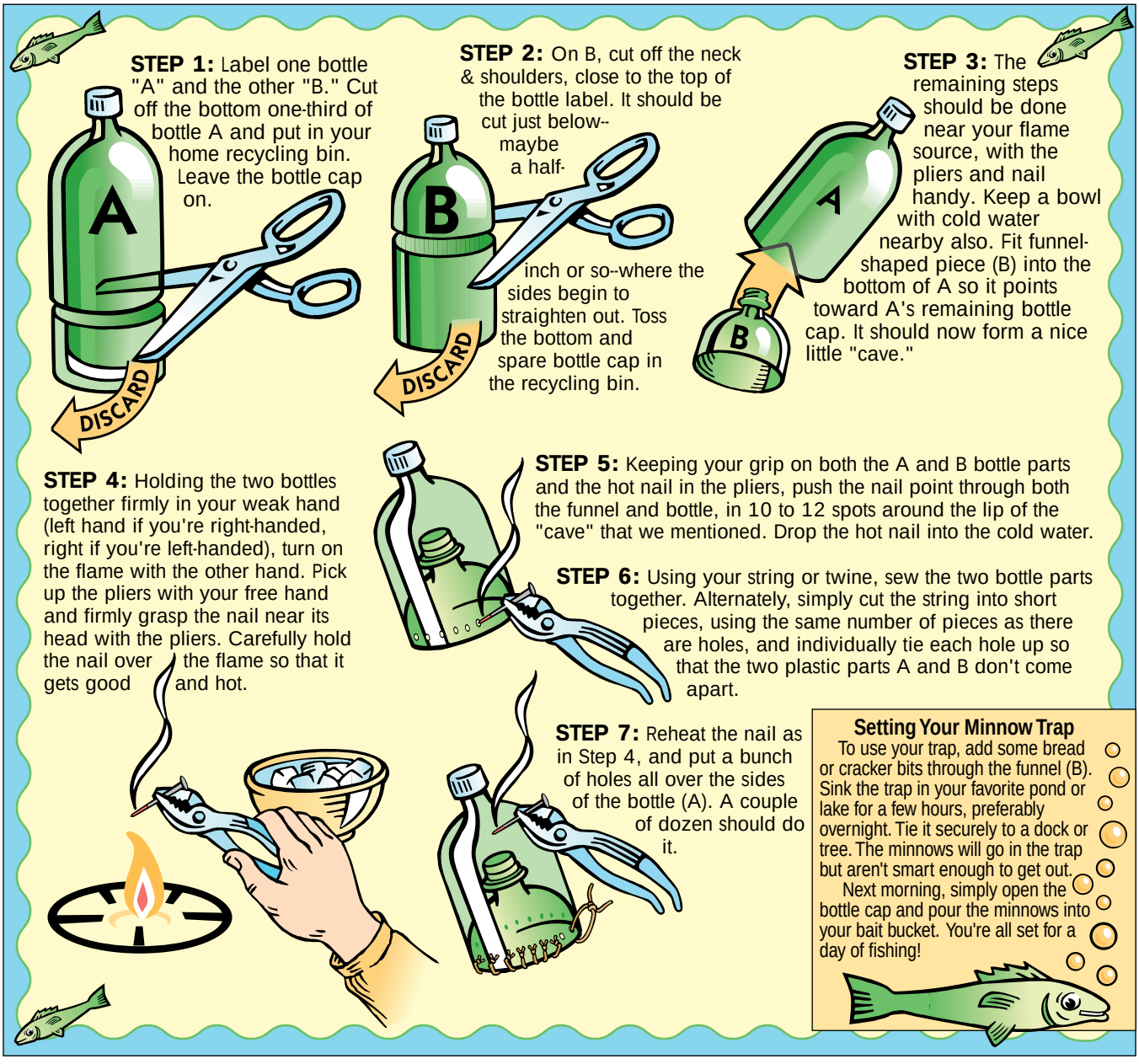
Well, forget throwing money at minnows. Gather your own! It's simple with this easy-to-make trap. Here's how:

—Oliver Shapiro

You'll Need:

- Two plastic soda pop bottles. The three-liter size is best, but two-liter will do.
- One woodworking nail, about 6-penny size (the exact size is unimportant).
- Some twine, kite string or something similar.
- Adult permission and/or help.

For tools, scrounge up a pair of sturdy scissors and locking pliers (such as Vise-Grip) or common slip-joint pliers. A utility knife can help with initial cuts but isn't necessary. You'll also need a controllable flame source—the kitchen stove is perfect.



STEP 1: Label one bottle "A" and the other "B." Cut off the bottom one-third of bottle A and put in your home recycling bin. Leave the bottle cap on.

STEP 2: On B, cut off the neck & shoulders, close to the top of the bottle label. It should be cut just below--maybe a half-inch or so--where the sides begin to straighten out. Toss the bottom and spare bottle cap in the recycling bin.

STEP 3: The remaining steps should be done near your flame source, with the pliers and nail handy. Keep a bowl with cold water nearby also. Fit funnel-shaped piece (B) into the bottom of A so it points toward A's remaining bottle cap. It should now form a nice little "cave."

STEP 4: Holding the two bottles together firmly in your weak hand (left hand if you're right-handed, right if you're left-handed), turn on the flame with the other hand. Pick up the pliers with your free hand and firmly grasp the nail near its head with the pliers. Carefully hold the nail over the flame so that it gets good and hot.

STEP 5: Keeping your grip on both the A and B bottle parts and the hot nail in the pliers, push the nail point through both the funnel and bottle, in 10 to 12 spots around the lip of the "cave" that we mentioned. Drop the hot nail into the cold water.

STEP 6: Using your string or twine, sew the two bottle parts together. Alternately, simply cut the string into short pieces, using the same number of pieces as there are holes, and individually tie each hole up so that the two plastic parts A and B don't come apart.

STEP 7: Reheat the nail as in Step 4, and put a bunch of holes all over the sides of the bottle (A). A couple of dozen should do it.

Setting Your Minnow Trap

To use your trap, add some bread or cracker bits through the funnel (B). Sink the trap in your favorite pond or lake for a few hours, preferably overnight. Tie it securely to a dock or tree. The minnows will go in the trap but aren't smart enough to get out.

Next morning, simply open the bottle cap and pour the minnows into your bait bucket. You're all set for a day of fishing!

Amy Bryant