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How Clarence Barrett Trapped the Fox clarence Barrett. Park Warden: A couple of years ago some people showed up at the Cheticamp Visitor Centre inquiring where the fox den was located at the Macintosh Brook campground. Since the park doesn't keep a registry of fox dwellings, the attendants were unable to oblige with an answer, but the visitors persisted, wondering if there might be someone else available who could tell them. The attendant wondered why they wished to know the whereabouts of the den. Pointing to his stockinged feet, one of the visitors replied, "Because he's got our shoes!" The unsuspecting campers had left their shoes on a picnic table overnight and a fox had reportedly run off with them. It wasn't the first complaint park staff had received about pilfering foxes, nor the last. The following summer a lady appeared at my door--I was stationed across the highway from the campground--to tell me that the fox had run off with her little boy's boot. (The child was not inside the boot at the time.) I went over to look for the boot in the woods adjacent to the campground and found the previous year's collection of Nikes and Birkenstocks scattered amongst the trees. A fox with a footwear fetish. This fox had been hanging around the area for over a year, attracted by handouts from campers and just about every tour bus that made a pit stop there. I'd sometimes find him sitting on my back step, ever hopeful that I'd break down and give him something to eat. After numerous reports from visitors, and complaints from anxious parents, it was decided that it would be in the fox's best interest to change his address. So I set up a cage that we had used to capture coyotes--about a meter tall and wide, and two meters long. It had a trap door that worked like a guillotine, triggered by a wire attached to a baited clip inside the cage. I set the trap in my back yard beside a trail the fox was accustomed to taking through the grass, but--no luck. He'd walk by it with a look on his face as much as to say, "Do you think I just fell off the tourist truck?" One-nothing for the fox. After a week of this I dragged the cage across the highway to the campground and set it up there. The fox had just had a scoff of Cheesies and sandwiches and goodness knows what else from a crowd of tourists who seemed oblivious to a very large sign which forbade the feeding of wildlife. I waited for the bus to go, knowing that as sure as there's poop in a cat something would go awry if I tried anything with anyone around--Murphy's Corollary, you know: "The probability of something going wrong is inversely proportional to its desirability." I got a bunch of wieners and tied them in an onion bag and hung it from the clip in the cage. The fox sat down a few feet away, watching with half-closed eyes. When I finished rigging it up, I walked away a little piece and waited. The fox yawned with an air of disdain, and lay down. Eventually I was able to coax him as far as the cage door but he still wouldn't go in. So I thought I'd try spreading pieces of food along the floor of the cage to see if he'd follow them right to the trigger. I crawled into the cage to get some wieners off the clip. (You know what's coming.) I pulled too hard on the bait bag, the door came down behind me. I was inside the cage, and the fox was outside looking in. And there was no way to open the door from the inside. Two-nothing for



the fox. I tried to reach a twig that was lying on the ground a few inches away so that I could lift the latch. No matter how hard I pushed my fingers through the mesh I couldn't reach it, and the fox stood there licking the hot-dog grease off my fingers. I prayed, "Please don't let a tour bus come by now." I thought of what I was going to say if anyone pulled in. "It's a new concept in wildlife management, folks, a little too technical to explain, but we're on the cutting edge of animal behaviour research here, and it's essential that we

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Front Cover Photograph: Capt. Michael A. Tobin, North Sydney. Pictured behind him is the S.S. Glencoe. • Thanks to Ted Bartlett, Public Relations, and to Charles Bachman, Historical Researcher Coordinator, Maritime Atlantic Centennial, for the photos of the ships. Article edited from visits with Capt. and Mrs. Tobin by Ed Binns and Cape Breton's Magazine. Photo on page 1 by Kenneth Olsen.