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(54) **CLEATED BOOT ATTACHMENT SYSTEM FOR STALKING GAME AND/OR FOR TRAVELING TO A FIXED POSITION TO AWAIT GAME FOR USE WITH HUNTING BOOTS**

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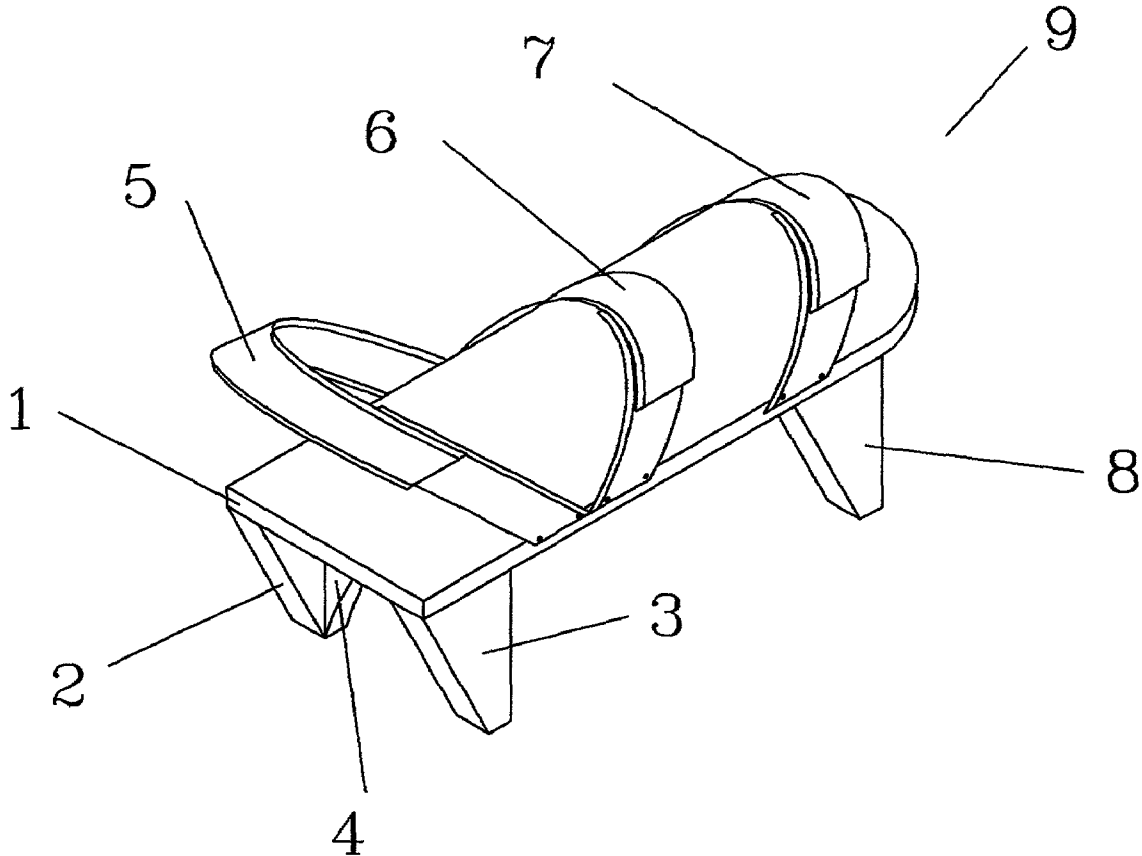
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(57) **ABSTRACT**

A cleated boot attachment system for stalking game and/or for traveling to a fixed position to await game for use with hunting boots.

A new and improved cleated boot attachment for stalking game and/or for traveling to a fixed position to await game adapted for use with hunting boots, the apparatus including at least two attachments, each comprising: a platform generally in the shape of a shoe sole, with one shaped for a left foot and one shaped for a right foot, with the topside of each platform flat and unencumbered to facilitate attachment to the bottom of the hunting boot. The bottom side of the platform is fitted with at least one cleat element in the heel sector and at least one cleat element in the toe sector, with the cleat elements being attached, integrated, or otherwise incorporated into the platform, the cleat elements being of sufficient height to raise the sole of the hunting boot above the earth, with adjustable straps affixed to the apparatus to secure the apparatus to the boot.



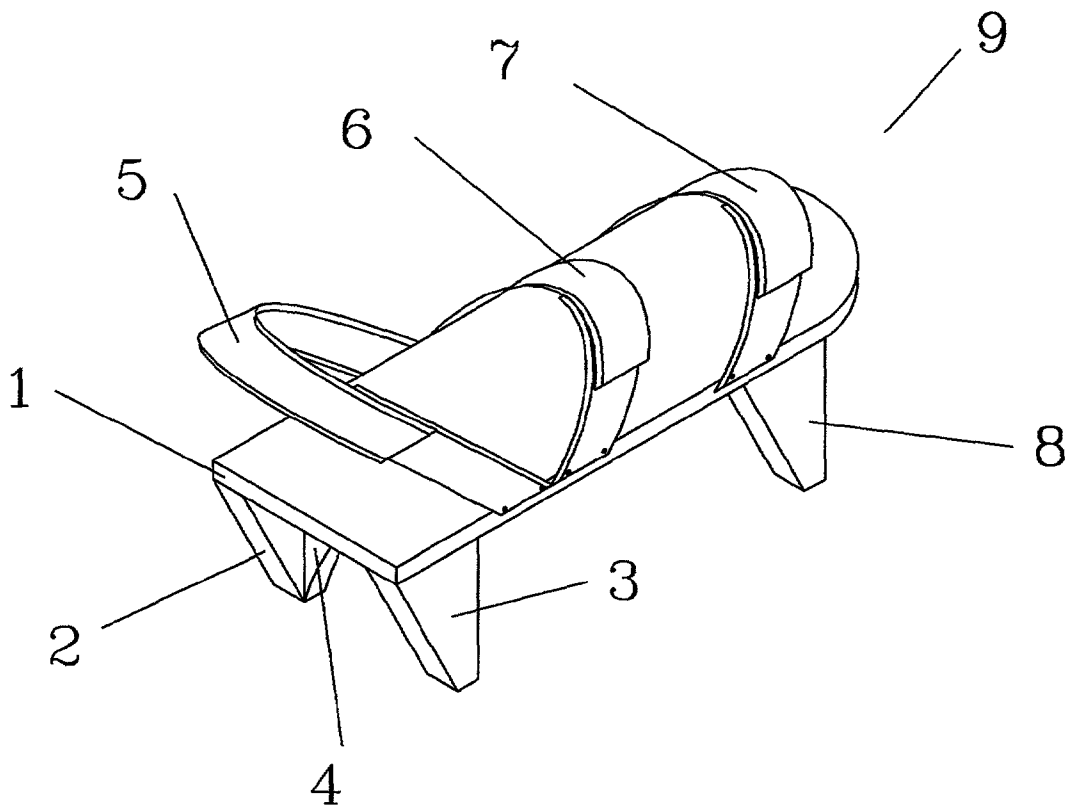


FIG.1

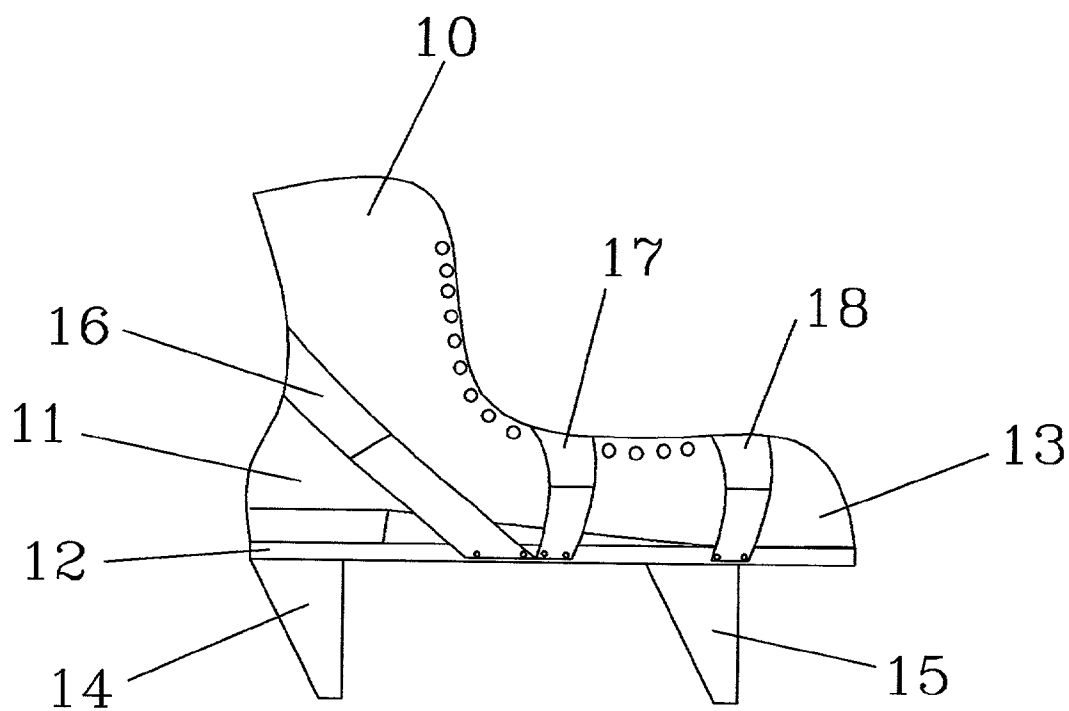


FIG.2

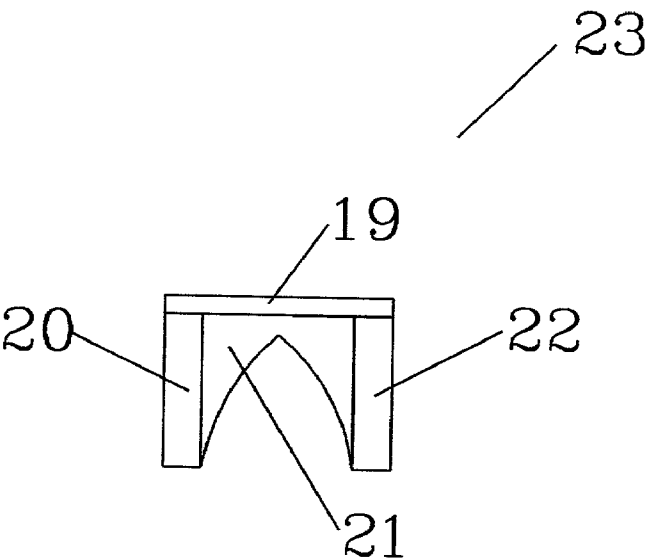


FIG.3

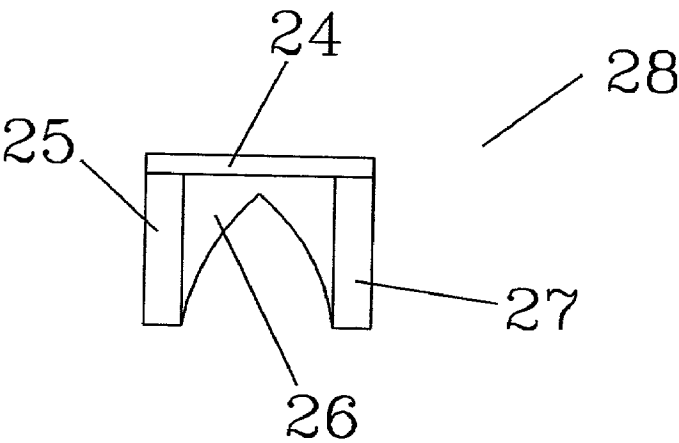


FIG.4

**CLEATED BOOT ATTACHMENT SYSTEM FOR
STALKING GAME AND/OR FOR TRAVELING TO
A FIXED POSITION TO AWAIT GAME FOR USE
WITH HUNTING BOOTS**

**CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED
APPLICATIONS**

[0001] Not Applicable

**STATEMENT REGARDING FEDERALLY
SPONSORED RESEARCH OR DEVELOPMENT**

[0002] Not Applicable

**REFERENCE TO A SEQUENCE LISTING, A
TABLE, OR A COMPUTER LISTING COMPACT
DISK APPENDIX**

[0003] Not Applicable

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0004] 1. Field of the Invention

[0005] The present invention relates to a boot attachment system for stalking game and/or for traveling to a fixed position to await game and more particularly pertains to reducing the sound made by a human being walking and modifying the sound of a human being walking in noisy ground cover such as dry leaves and twigs to resemble that of a quadruped or a bird walking the same ground.

[0006] 2. Description of the Prior Art

[0007] The use of boot accessories is known in the prior art. More specifically, boot accessories heretofore devised and utilized for the purpose of enhancing the utility of boots by attaching various accessories to them are known to consist basically of familiar, expected, and obvious structural configurations, notwithstanding the myriad of designs encompassed by the crowded prior art which has been developed for the fulfillment of countless objectives and requirements.

[0008] 3. By way of example, the prior art discloses U.S. Pat. No. 5,535,529 to Panteah for a cushioned boot attachment.

[0009] 4. U.S. Pat. No. 5,168,643 to Laurain discloses a sound absorbing shoe.

[0010] 5. U.S. Pat. No. 4,896,439 to Morgan discloses a sound-proof cover for soles of sportsmen's shoes and methods for use.

[0011] 6. U.S. Pat. No. 4,893,421 to Folks discloses a hunting shoe noise suppressor.

[0012] 7. In this respect, the boot attachment system for stalking game according to the present invention substantially departs from the conventional concepts and designs of the prior art, and in doing so provides an apparatus for quietly stalking game and/or for traveling to a fixed position to await game that also alters any sound produced to resemble the sound of a quadruped or a bird walking through noisy ground cover, such as dry leaves and twigs, as opposed to the prior art only reducing or muffling the characteristic sound of a human being walking the same noisy ground cover.

[0013] 8. Animals and birds have highly developed auditory systems provided by nature to aid in survival and are therefore capable of discerning and identifying the various sounds of their environment from long distances. Wildlife, therefore, are capable of readily identifying the sound of predatory animals walking, especially the sound of the biped human being, which produces its own very distinctive sound when traveling through leaves and twigs and which those skilled in the art know is immediately recognizable among wildlife as the sound of a dangerous predator and is therefore an alarming sound to wildlife.

[0014] 9. Prior art has consistently sought to effectively reduce the sound produced by a human walking among dry leaves and twigs or other noisy ground cover which can only serve to decrease the distance at which wildlife can hear the sound, but does not effectively change or alter the characteristics of the sound, which means when the sound is eventually heard by wildlife, it is still immediately recognizable as that of a dangerous predatory biped. Those skilled in the art know that human beings make a distinct sound when walking in the wild game environment, especially so in dry leaves and twigs, because the human foot is substantially longer and wider than that of most wild animals and birds and as such makes contact with a greater array of leaves and twigs or other noisy ground cover, coupled with the fact that the natural walking mechanics of a human being is to first place the heel down, followed incrementally by the rest of the foot. The fact that the human foot makes contact with a larger array of dry leaves and twigs or other ground cover than animals or birds do, simply of its relatively larger size, leads to more dry leaves and twigs or other noisy ground cover being crushed, crinkled, and/or snapped, producing a louder step than that of animals or birds, and the fact that the natural mechanics of the human step—heel first, followed incrementally by the rest of the foot—produces a relatively longer duration of sound per step than that of animals or birds, whose entire foot, paw, hoof, etc. makes contact with the ground all at once, thereby producing a very limited duration of sound. It is common knowledge among those skilled in the art that the sound of an indigenous quadruped or a bird walking through leaves and twigs or other ground cover does not unduly alarm wildlife in the area, whereas the readily identifiable sound, as heretofore described, of a human being walking the same ground will immediately alarm wildlife and usually cause it to take flight.

[0015] 10. Therefore, it can be appreciated that there exists a need for a boot attachment system that in addition to reducing the sound produced by a human being walking in leaves and twigs, as does the prior art, also changes, alters, or modifies the sound so that it is not recognizable as the characteristic sound produced by a human being walking, but moreso resembles the relatively short, limited duration of sound as produced by a quadruped or a bird walking.

BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0016] 11. In view of the aforementioned disadvantages of boot accessories present in the prior art, the present invention provides an improved boot attachment system for stalking game and/or for traveling to a fixed position to await game. As such, the general purpose of the present invention, which will subsequently be described in greater detail, is to provide a new and improved boot attachment system for

stalking game and/or for traveling to a fixed position to await game, with all the advantages of the prior art and none of the disadvantages.

[0017] 12. To accomplish this, the present invention essentially comprises a new and improved boot attachment system for stalking game and/or for traveling to a fixed position to await game to be used in association with hunting boots, each boot having a heel and toe, the apparatus having at least two attachments, each comprising, in combination: a generally shoe-sole shaped platform for attaching to the bottom, or sole, of the hunting boot, with the top side of the platform generally flat and unencumbered to facilitate attachment to the bottom, or sole, of said hunting boot. The bottom side of the platform shall have at least one cleat element attached, integrated, or otherwise incorporated into the heel position and at least one cleat element attached, integrated, or otherwise incorporated into the toe position, with the respective cleats diminishing in size from the base of the platform to the lower extremity of the cleat. Each cleat shall be of sufficient length, or height, so that when the apparatus is attached to said hunting boot, the sole of the hunting boot is significantly lifted, raised, or elevated above any existing walking surface, such as leaves and twigs or other ground cover. At least one adjustable strapping system, with buckles, Velcro, snaps, or any similar system to quickly secure the apparatus to the hunting boot for a snug fit, and to quickly detach the apparatus from the hunting boot whenever desired shall be affixed, formed, or otherwise integrated into the apparatus.

[0018] 13. The design, or configuration, of each cleat element incorporated into the heel section and toe section of the described platform shall be such that when snugly attached to the hunting boot, it significantly reduces the area of contact with any existing walking surface normally adaptable to hunting boots, yet still enables the user to walk across such surface very little or no loss of stability and balance. The effect of the significant reduction in surface contact in any wild game environment will be that it significantly reduces the noise level that would normally be generated by the user's hunting boots, thereby allowing the user to get closer to the prey before sound is detected, and it effectively changes, modifies, or alters the sound generated to resemble that of a quadruped or bird walking as opposed to the distinctive sound of a human being walking by significantly reducing the area of ground normally contacted by the human foot which produces the significantly longer duration of unbroken sound with each step and which, as is commonly known by those skilled in wild game stalking, is immediately recognizable by wildlife as the sound of a dangerous predator.

[0019] 14. Thus has been broadly outlined the more important features of the invention in order that the detailed description that follows may be better understood and the present contribution to the art better appreciated. There are, of course, additional features of the invention that will be described hereinafter and which will form the subject matter of the claim appended hereto.

[0020] 15. In this respect, before explaining at least one embodiment of the invention in detail, it is understood that the invention is not limited in its application to the details of construction or configurations of its components as offered in the following description or shown in the drawings. The

invention is certainly capable of other embodiments and of being accomplished in various other ways. Also, it is to be understood that the phraseology and terminology used herein is for the strictly purpose of description and, as such, should not be viewed as limiting.

[0021] 16. Upon disclosure of the invention, those skilled in the art will realize that the basic conception of the invention can be readily utilized to design other structures, methods, and systems for carrying out the several purposes of the present invention. It is important, therefore, that the claim be regarded as including such equivalent constructions insofar as they do not depart from the spirit and scope of the present invention.

[0022] 17. Additionally, the purpose of the foregoing abstract is to enable the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office and the public generally, and especially the scientists, engineers, and practitioners in the art who are not familiar with patent terms or phraseology to determine quickly from a cursory examination the nature and essence of the disclosure of the application. The abstract is neither intended to define the invention of the application, which is measured by the claim, nor is it intended to be limiting as to the scope of the invention in any way.

[0023] 18. It is therefore an object of the present invention to provide new and improved cleated boot attachment system for stalking game and/or for traveling to a fixed position to await game which has all the advantages of the prior art and none of the disadvantages.

[0024] 19. It is also an object of the present invention to provide new and improved cleated boot attachment system for stalking game and/or for traveling to a fixed position to await game which may be easily and efficiently manufactured and marketed.

[0025] 20. It is the further object of the present invention to provide a new and improved cushioned boot attachment system for stalking game and/or for traveling to a fixed position to await game which is of durable and reliable constructions.

[0026] 21. An even further object of the present invention is to provide new and improved boot attachment system for stalking game and/or for traveling to a fixed position to await game which is susceptible of a low cost of manufacture with regard to both materials and labor, and which accordingly is susceptible of low prices of sale to the consuming public, thereby making such cleated boot attachment system for stalking game economically available to the buying public.

[0027] 22. Still another object of the present invention is to provide new and improved cleated boot attachment system for stalking game and/or for traveling to a fixed position to await game by securing the sound reducing and sound altering apparatus to the sole of a hunter's boots.

[0028] 23. Lastly, it is an object of the present invention to provide new and improved cleated boot attachment system for stalking game and/or for traveling to a fixed position to await game for use in association with hunting boots, each boot having a heel and toe, the apparatus including at least two attachments, each comprising: A platform formed in a generally shoe sole-shaped configuration, at least one generally shaped for a left foot and at least one generally shaped for a right foot, with the topside of each platform unencum-

bered with any attachments to facilitate attachment to the bottom, or sole, of the respective left and right hunting boots. The bottom side of the platform is fitted with at least one cleat element in the heel sector and at least one cleat element in the toe sector, with the cleat elements being attached, integrated, or otherwise incorporated into the platform, the cleat elements being of sufficient height, or length, to raise the sole of the hunting boot above the earth and thereby greatly reduce the possibility of the sole of the hunting boot from coming in contact with the earth, with adjustable straps affixed to the apparatus, or buckles, or Velcro, or any similar system to quickly secure the apparatus to the hunting boot for a snug fit, and to quickly detach the apparatus from the hunting boot whenever desired.

[0029] 24. These together, along with other objects of the invention, along with various features of novelty which characterize the invention, are pointed out with particularity in the claims annexed to and forming a part of this disclosure. For a better understanding of the invention, its operating advantages and the specific objects obtained by its uses, reference should be had to the accompanying drawings and descriptive matter in which there is illustrated preferred embodiments of the invention.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF SEVERAL VIEWS OF THE DRAWING

[0030] 25. FIG. 1 is a perspective view of the preferred embodiment of the cleated boot attachment system for stalking game constructed in accordance with the principles of the present invention.

[0031] 26. FIG. 2 is a side view illustration of a hunting boot with the device attached thereto.

[0032] 27. FIG. 3 is a front view of the device showing the preferred embodiment of the heel section platform and cleat element.

[0033] 28. FIG. 4 is a front view of the device showing the preferred embodiment of the toe section platform and cleat element.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

[0034] 29. With reference to the drawings, and in particular to FIG. 1, the detailed description of the new and improved cleated boot attachment system for stalking game and/or for traveling to a fixed position to await game embodying the principles and concepts of the present invention and for the most part designated by the reference number 9 will be described.

[0035] 30. The present invention, the cleated boot attachment system for stalking game 9 is comprised of a number of components. Such components in their broadest context include a platform 1, a heel section left cleat 2, a heel section right cleat 3, a cleat support brace for each cleat 4 (right cleat support brace not shown), a heel strap 5, an ankle strap 6, a toe strap 7, a right toe section cleat 8 (left toe section cleat not shown), and cleat braces for the left and right toe section cleats (not shown). Such components are configured and correlated with respect to each other so as to attain the desired objective.

[0036] 31. More specifically, the new and improved cleated boot attachment system for stalking game is adapted

for use in association with hunting boots FIGS. 2, 10. Each boot has a heel 11 and a toe 13. The apparatus includes a platform 12 for mounting to the hunting boot 10, at least one cleated element 14 under the heel section 11 of the hunting boot 10, and at least one cleated element 15 under the toe section 13 of the hunting boot 10. The apparatus is attached to the hunting boot 10 with at least one heel strap 16, at least one ankle strap 17, and at least one toe strap 18. The attachments may be attached to a number of different types of hunting boots. In alternative embodiments the apparatus is fabricated in a number of colors and sizes to accommodate the varying boot sizes and colors of different users.

[0037] 32. The apparatus includes at least two cleated boot attachments FIGS. 1, 9, one for each foot, to be attached to each hunting boot FIGS. 2, 10. Each boot attachment is formed as a generally shoe sole shaped platform FIGS. 2, 12.

[0038] 33. The apparatus includes at least one cleat element FIGS. 3, 23 attached, integrated, or otherwise incorporated in the heel section. The cleat element 23 includes a platform 19, at least one left cleat 20, at least one right cleat 22, with a cleat support brace element 21.

[0039] 34. The apparatus includes at least one cleat element FIGS. 4, 28 attached, integrated, or otherwise incorporated in the toe section. The cleat element 28 includes a platform 24, at least one left cleat 25, at least one right cleat 27, with a cleat support brace element 26.

[0040] 35. The platform FIGS. 1, 1 is generally flat on top to facilitate attachment to the boot sole. The cleat elements FIGS. 3, 23 and FIGS. 4, 28 diminish in size (area, girth, or volume) from the point where they are attached, integrated, cast, or otherwise incorporated into the bottom side of the platform FIGS. 3, 19 and FIGS. 4, 24 down to their lowest extremity with the reduction in size from the largest area, girth, or volume to the smallest ample to achieve the desired objective. The configuration of the bottom of the smallest section of the cleat element, where it makes contact with the ground, may be of a plurality of geometric designs that achieve the desired objective, which is to significantly reduce the duration and the level of sound when a step is taken by the user by significantly reducing the area of contact the user normally makes with the ground when wearing ordinary hunting boots. By significantly reducing the area of contact made with the ground, the sound produced is of much shorter duration and decibel level, and is therefore similar to the sound produced by a quadruped or a bird, because of the relative smallness in the size of their foot, paw, or hoof to that of the average human being's foot.

[0041] 36. The platforms and cleat elements are formed of materials sturdy enough to withstand the forces applied during use. The platforms and the cleat elements may be fabricated of wood, wood products, natural rubber, synthetic rubber, nylon, polyvinyl chloride, plastic, fiberglass, graphite, metal, or any combination thereof, or any other material suitable to the application.

[0042] 37. The straps in the preferred embodiment are fabricated of a sturdy synthetic material with Velcro incorporated into the straps for fastening for a snug fit. In alternative embodiments, the straps may be fabricated of cloth, leather, or other materials which incorporate buckles, snaps, or other fasteners to cinch the straps for a snug fit. The

straps are of sufficient length to fit over any size hunting boot with sufficient overlap or length to facilitate cinching.

[0043] 38. The attachments are positioned beneath the hunter's boots. They are secured in place by tightly cinching the straps. When properly worn, the attachments cover the sole of the hunting boot, thereby allowing only the heel and toe cleats to come in contact with the ground. This greatly diminishes the area of contact with the ground, thus reducing the decibel level of sound and the duration of any sound produced. When properly worn, the attachments transform the normal heel-then-toe walking movement of the human being user to a simultaneous heel-and-toe contact with the ground to produce the limited duration of sound similar to that of the quadruped or bird. The design of the preferred embodiment is such that all four cleats make contact with the ground simultaneously, producing a relatively limited duration of sound as opposed to the longer duration of sound produced by the heretofore described heel-to-toe mechanics of the natural human step.

[0044] 39. Hunters use scents to cover up human scent and/or to attract or lure game. Hunters may apply cover scents and/or lure scents to the cleat elements. The cleat elements may also be designed to contain scent-dispensing mechanisms.

[0045] 40. Many hunters choose to hunt from tree stands, shooting houses, blinds, or other fixed positions, waiting for the game to come in sight, rather than to stalk the game. Those skilled in the art know that traveling to the fixed position in dry leaves and twigs or other noise-producing ground cover can spook any game within earshot of the hunter as the hunter approaches the fixed position, and alert the game that a dangerous predator is in the vicinity and therefore decrease the odds that game will venture into the area visible to the hunter from the fixed position, for the normal time period the hunter is in position. The present invention effectively eliminates this disadvantage by reducing the decibel level and changing the sound of the hunter walking to resemble that of a quadruped or bird, as previously described, which does not duly alarm any game within earshot, thus preventing, or at least lessening, the possibility that game within earshot of the hunter walking to the fixed position location will hear and recognize the sound as that produced by a dangerous predator, thereby increasing the possibility of game venturing into the hunter's sight following the hunter's arrival at the fixed position.

[0046] 41. Time is an important factor when affixing the attachments to one's boots. When stalking game, one surveys the path one is to take in search of game and begins the stalk, either for yet unseen game, game in sight, or a point ahead in the direction the game is traveling. The preferred embodiment Velcro straps allow for quick and easy attachment of the apparatus to one's hunting boots for a quiet, un-

[0047] 40. Many hunters choose to hunt from tree stands, shooting houses, blinds, or other fixed positions, waiting for the game to come in sight, rather than to stalk the game. Those skilled in the art know that traveling to the fixed position in dry leaves and twigs or other noise-producing ground cover can spook any game within earshot of the hunter as the hunter approaches the fixed position, and alert the game that a dangerous predator is in the vicinity and therefore decrease the odds that game will venture into the area visible to the hunter from the fixed position, for the

normal time period the hunter is in position. The present invention effectively eliminates this disadvantage by reducing the decibel level and changing the sound of the hunter walking to resemble that of a quadruped or bird, as previously described, which does not duly alarm any game within earshot, thus preventing, or at least lessening, the possibility that game within earshot of the hunter walking to the fixed position location will hear and recognize the sound as that produced by a dangerous predator, thereby increasing the possibility of game venturing into the hunter's sight following the hunter's arrival at the fixed position.

[0048] 41. Time is an important factor when affixing the attachments to one's boots. When stalking game, one surveys the path one is to take in search of game and begins the stalk, either for yet unseen game, game in sight, or a point ahead in the direction the game is traveling. The preferred embodiment Velcro straps allow for quick and easy attachment of the apparatus to one's hunting boots for a quiet, unhuman-like sounding stalk. When traveling to a fixed position hunting location, such as a stand, treestand, shooting house, blind, etc. one can quickly and easily attach the apparatus to one's boots for a quiet, un-human-like sounding, trek to the fixed position, and quickly and easily detach the apparatus from one's boots, once in position.

[0049] 42. The terrain encountered in the outdoors while stalking game is often uneven, rock-strewn, hilly, or otherwise more difficult to negotiate than other manmade surfaces designed for foot traffic, such as walking trails, paths, floors, sidewalks, pavement, etc., which is one reason hunters wear boots to negotiate natural terrain. When properly attached to the hunting boots, left and right, the present invention provides a stable platform on which to maneuver in most outdoor terrain and does not lessen the stability and support of hunting boots, to the point that, with a small amount of practice, walking with the invention attached to the hunting boots becomes a relatively unremarkable experience.

[0050] 43. The design of the preferred embodiment is that of a one-piece, self-contained unit for each foot. To facilitate space utilization, transportation, and storage, the boot attachment could be manufactured to consist of any number of separate detachable and/or foldable components, in any of the alternative materials or designs heretofore described.

[0051] 44. As to the manner of usage and operation of the present invention, the same should be apparent from the above description. Accordingly, no further discussion relating to the manner of usage and operation will be provided.

[0052] 45. With respect to the above description then, it is to be realized that the optimum dimensional relationships for the parts of the invention, to include variations in size, materials, shape, form function and manner of operation, assembly and use, are deemed readily apparent and obvious to one skilled in the art, and all equivalent relationships to those illustrated in the drawings and described in the specification are intended to be encompassed by the present invention.

[0053] 46. Therefore, the foregoing is considered illustrative only of the principles of the invention. Further, since numerous modifications and changes will readily occur to those skilled in the art, it is not desired to limit the invention to the exact construction and operation shown and described, and accordingly, all suitable modifications and equivalents may be resorted to, falling within the scope of the invention.

What is claimed as being new and desired to be protected by Letters Patent of the United States is as follows:

1. A new and improved cleated boot attachment for stalking game and/or for traveling to a fixed position to await game adapted for use with hunting boots, each having a heel and toe, the apparatus including at least two attachments, each comprising, in combination: a platform generally in the shape of a shoe sole, with one platform generally shaped for a left foot and one platform generally shaped for a right foot, with the topside of each platform flat and unencumbered to facilitate attachment to the bottom, or sole, of the respective left and right hunting boots. The bottom side of the platform is fitted with at least one cleat element in the heel sector of

the platform and at least one cleat element in the toe sector of the platform, with the cleat elements being attached, integrated, or otherwise incorporated into the platform, the cleat elements being of sufficient height to raise the sole of the hunting boot above the earth, with at least one adjustable heel strap affixed to the apparatus, at least one adjustable ankle strap affixed to the apparatus, and at least one adjustable toe strap affixed to the apparatus to quickly secure the apparatus to the hunting boot for a snug fit, and to quickly detach the apparatus from the hunting boot when desired.

* * * * *