ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A bag, container or the like having a closure associated with an opening therein with the closure incorporating a one-way entrance in the form of a conical member having an open apex depending into the bag, container or the like with the conical member being constructed from a peripherally expandible member to enable the open lower apex thereof to expand when entry from above is desired but remain closed when egress is attempted from the interior of the bag or container.

The present invention generally relates to bags, containers and the like and more particularly a one-way entrance associated with a closure for an opening in such a bag, container or the like.

In many instances, it is desirable to provide a bag, container or the like with an opening therein to provide ready access to the interior thereof. Also, in many instances, it is desirable to prevent egress of material or items from the interior of the container through such an opening. Accordingly, it is an object of the present invention to provide a closure for such an opening which enables ready access to the interior of the bag or container in order to insert material or items into the bag or container but yet prevent egress of such material or items back through the closure for the opening.

The present invention basically includes a conical closure member having an open apex depending into the interior of the container with the conical member being peripherally expandible upon application of downward pressure against the interior surface thereof thus expanding the open apex to provide access to the interior of the bag or container so that items or material may be placed into the container by merely forcing downwardly against the interior of the downwardly tapering conical surface thus spreading and enlarging the open lower apex end thereof. While the device has been illustrated in conjunction with a fishing creel to enable fish to be easily placed into the creel but preventing them from jumping back out of the creel, the structure of the invention is capable of use with various other containers, bags and the like.

A further object of the present invention is to provide a one-way entrance for a bag, container or the like which is simple in construction, easy to incorporate into various containers and relatively inexpensive to manufacture.

These together with other objects and advantages which will become subsequently apparent reside in the details of construction and operation as more fully hereinafter described and claimed, reference being had to the accompanying drawings forming a part hereof, wherein like numerals refer to like parts throughout, and in which:

FIG. 1 is a perspective view of a fishing creel with the present invention incorporated therein;
FIG. 2 is a vertical sectional view taken substantially upon a plane passing along section line 2—2 of FIG. 1 illustrating further structural details of the invention;
FIG. 3 is a partial plan view of the fishing creel illustrating in detail the one-way entrance incorporated therein;
FIG. 4 is a fragmental sectional view similar to a portion of FIG. 2 but illustrating a fish being inserted through the one-way entrance into the fishing creel.

Referring now specifically to the drawings, the numeral 10 generally designates a fishing creel having a one-way entrance assembly incorporating the present invention thereon which is generally designated by the numeral 12. The fishing creel 10 may be of any suitable shape or configuration and, as illustrated, may conveniently be a generally rigid rectangular container of woven straw-like material or the like 14 having any suitable carrying strap or handle 16 attached thereto in any suitable manner.

As a convenience, a ruler or scale 18 may be mounted thereon for measuring fish 20 before they are inserted into the creel to make certain that a fish below a certain size are not put into the creel but rather are thrown back in accordance with various local regulations. The top of the creel is provided with an upstanding cylindrical neck 22 which defines an opening 24 into the creel. The one-way entrance 12 forms a closure for the opening 24 and includes an annular closure member 26 having a hinge structure 28 attached thereto and attached to the neck 22 as by an attaching strap 30 for hingedly attaching the one-way entrance 12 to the neck 22. The opposite side of the annular closure member 26 is provided with a spring clip or latch 32 having a projection 34 received in a socket 35 to releasably retain the one-way entrance 12 in closed position. The particular construction of the hinge and latch may vary and has been illustrated here as an exemplary construction since various types of structures may be employed for securing the one-way entrance in position in relation to the creel.

The closure member 26 is constructed from woven strips of flexible but relatively rigid material such as cane, osiers, reeds or the like used in making baskets, wicker containers and the like. A plurality of relatively wide longitudinal strips 36 are disposed in converging relation to define a conical member. The upper ends of the strips 36 have interconnecting portions 38 which overlap and define the upper edge of the annular closure member, interwoven with the upper ends of the strips 36 are a plurality of peripheral strips 40 to form a conical basket-like structure with the lower ends of the strips 36 converging freely and resiliently into adjacent contacting relation as at 42. The construction of the strips 36 enable the apex 42 to expand, as illustrated in FIG. 4 thus enabling a fish or the like to be readily inserted through the conical closure member 26 from the top thereof by engaging the inner surface of the conical closure member 26 where the surface thereof downwardly converge and forcing the fish downwardly thus expanding the strips 36 and causing the apex 42 to enlarge sufficiently to enable easy passage of the fish 20 down into the creel 10. As soon as the fish 20 passes into the creel 10, the natural resiliency of the strips 36 will cause the strips to resume their natural and normal condition with the apex 42 substantially closed to prevent the fish 20 from coming back out of the opening 24. Thus, even though the fish is quite active and jumps and squirms in the usual manner, there is no danger of the fish escaping from the creel. This device enables successive fish to be inserted into the creel without completely opening the creel as in present-day creel constructions in which it frequently occurs that when the creel is opened to place a subsequent fish into the creel, a previously inserted fish will jump out. With this construction, this problem is completely solved. Yet, when it is desired to remove the fish from the creel, it is only necessary to open the one-way entrance 12 to its open position by releasing the latch 32 and pivoting the annular closure member 26 into an open position as illustrated in broken line in FIG. 2 thereby enabling complete and free access into the inte-
rior of the creel so that the fish may be extracted therefrom when desired.

The shape and configuration of the creel 10 may vary as may the material from which the creel is constructed. In addition to use in combination with a fish creel, the invention is also well adapted for use in conjunction with ladies' handbags and other similar containers. When employed with ladies' handbags it would enable articles to be easily inserted into the handbag but would prevent persons from reaching their hand into the handbag, grabbing an article and extracting the article along with their hand. Thus, this device would materially reduce the possibility of having articles stolen from the handbag which occurs quite frequently by persons merely opening the handbag and extracting articles therefrom. With this construction, the one-way entrance 12 could be securely fastened to the handbag but yet detachable therefrom in a manner that would dissuade pickpockets and the like from tampering with the handbag. If any endeavor is made to reach the hand into the handbag through the one-way entrance 12, removal of objects would be precluded due to the structural nature of the one-way entrance closure.

The one-way entrance is constructed of strips of a flexible waterproof material that are woven into an inverted cone shape with the apex or point disposed downwardly and being open and so constructed that the hole or opening formed thereby will be expandible as lateral force is exerted on the interior surfaces of the conical member. The device permits easy insertion of articles into the container but precludes removal or egress therefrom. The complete closure may be removed in the nature of a basket top, lid or the like when it is desired to remove articles or items from the container opening.

The foregoing is considered as 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 new is as follows:

1. A one-way entrance for a fish creel including an enclosed space defined by a bottom, peripheral wall and top wall, said top wall having an upstanding cylindrical neck defining an entrance opening into the space, said one-way entrance including a tapered member having a vertical length greater than the length of the neck and including a large upper end disposed outermost in relation to the enclosed space and a smaller lower end disposed innermost in relation to the enclosed space, said lower end being disposed below the lower end of the neck and normally substantially closed thus preventing fish from jumping out of the creel, said tapered member being constructed of a plurality of converging strips capable of being expanded to define an opening at the lower end thereof to permit insertion of fish into the enclosed space, said strips being constructed of stiff but flexible and resilient material with the longitudinal edges of a substantial portion of the strips being free to enable expansion of the lower end of the tapered member, said tapered member including a woven annular member at the large upper end thereof with the upper edge thereof being spaced upwardly from the upper end of the neck and having a diameter greater than the diameter of the neck, hinge means supporting said tapered member from the upper edge of the neck for pivotal movement from a position closing the upper end of the neck to a position outside of the confines of the neck to enable unrestricted access to the enclosed space, and releasable latch means interconnecting the neck and tapered member for retaining the tapered member in position closing the neck and the opening in the enclosed space, said tapered member tapering throughout its length with the greater diameter of the annular member as compared with the diameter of the neck defining a guide larger than the upper end of the neck, said hinge means being disposed longitudinally downwardly from the larger upper end of the tapered member, said latch means including a spring member attached to and extending longitudinally downwardly from the annular member, said spring member having a projection thereon, and a socket in the side wall of the neck detachably receiving said projection on the spring member.

References Cited

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>United States Patents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1,489,255 4/1924 Lane</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3,232,000 2/1966 Gale et al.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Foreign Patents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>357,169 10/1905 France</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20,846 1892 Great Britain</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

WARNER H. CAMP, Primary Examiner