Trapping Matters

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOPS
2015-2017
**Trapping Matters: Enhancing Awareness and Communication**

Instructor Adam Vashon, a Wildlife Biologist with USDA Wildlife Services, discusses the selectivity, efficiency and Best Management Practices in the use of foothold traps for the humane capture of wildlife.

**REGULATED TRAPPING CAN BE AMONG THE MOST CONTENTIOUS** and least understood of all programs within an agency’s wildlife responsibilities. Many agencies have some staff unfamiliar with trapping, and as a result avoid discussions about it.

**OUR PROGRAMS WERE EFFECTIVE AND WELL RECEIVED.** Specific achievements included providing nationwide workshops for state agencies, increased awareness of Best Management Practices for regulated trapping, and improvements to the participants’ abilities to understand and explain regulated trapping. Additionally, these workshops were a catalyst to update survey data about attitudes toward trapping and have provided a model for data and program delivery that can be continued. Open discussions and experiential activities made lessons interactive, enjoyable and of high professional value.

**RESULTS FOR 2015-2016 WERE EXTREMELY POSITIVE.** The average ratings among participants of all core competencies for the workshops were “Excellent” (72 percent) or “Very Good” (28 percent). Notably, participants repeatedly cited the value of learning more about the trapping Best Management Practices process and enhancing their understanding of how to effectively explain the role and importance of regulated trapping to others.

**PARTICIPANT COMMENTS**

“For me and others, the human dimension elements were enlightening. The mix of attendees’ backgrounds and the way the instructors engaged the group provided for lively and thought-provoking experience; the messaging tools were both simple and on target. Feedback from staff was unanimously positive!”

**CATHERINE SPARKS**
Assistant Director for Natural Resources in the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management

“Participating in the Trapping Matters Workshop was very beneficial to the work of our Government Affairs Team. By developing a more in-depth understanding of trappers, trapping equipment, methods, and terminology through hands-on activities and in-class discussions, we are now better equipped to discuss trapping as a necessary and effective component of wildlife management and conservation with policymakers.”

**KEITH NORRIS**
The Wildlife Society’s director of Government Affairs & Partnerships
Workshop Curriculum

In our program, we guide participants through ...

- An explanation of important messages and communication strategies related to regulated trapping
- Demonstrations of traps and their use
- A review of existing information resources on trapping
- An overview of Best Management Practices and their use
- Profiles of modern trappers and their motivations
- The role regulated trapping plays in the North American Model of Wildlife Management

Wildlife Biologist Randy Cross shares some perspective in a discussion with other workshop participants in Brewer, Maine.

Wildlife Biologist Cory Mosby, of the Maine Department of Inland Fish and Wildlife, familiarizes workshop participants with regulated trapping methods used in and around lakes and streams for the capture of aquatic mammals.

Susan McCarthy, a Wildlife Biologist with the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife, discusses natural history and the numerous ways furbearers are used by people.
Selected Results

After our workshops, participants reported the following:

**DO YOU FEEL MORE KNOWLEDGABLE ABOUT HOW TO COMMUNICATE ABOUT TRAPPING TO OTHERS?**

- 56% A GREAT DEAL
- 32% MODERATELY
- Somewhat 9% Other 3%

**DO YOU FEEL YOU OVERALL ARE BETTER PREPARED TO DISCUSS TRAPPING WITH THE PUBLIC?**

- 37% A GREAT DEAL
- 36% MODERATELY
- Somewhat 16% Other 11%

**DO YOU FEEL YOU ARE MORE KNOWLEDGABLE ABOUT TECHNICAL ASPECTS OF TRAPPING?**

- 37% A GREAT DEAL
- 34% MODERATELY
- Somewhat 20% Other 9%

**DO YOU FEEL YOU ARE MORE FAMILIAR WITH ISSUES SURROUNDING TRAPPING?**

- 46% A GREAT DEAL
- 41% MODERATELY
- Somewhat 13%

**DO YOU FEEL MORE FAMILIAR WITH THE BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES PROCESS AS IT RELATES TO IMPROVING TRAPPING AND ASSURANCES OF ANIMAL WELFARE?**

- 46% A GREAT DEAL
- 38% MODERATELY
- Somewhat 9% Other 7%

**WHAT DID YOU ENJOY OR FIND MOST HELPFUL ABOUT THE WORKSHOP?**

- Experience of the instructors
- Diversity of understanding and opinion of trapping among participants
- Effective communication of trapping-related subjects
- Hands-on demonstrations
- Networking
- The open discussions
- Human Dimension and Public Opinion survey information

**WHAT INFO WAS MOST HELPFUL IN ADDRESSING YOUR MISCONCEPTIONS?**

- The role of Best Management Practices in improving trapping methods
- Communicating trapping to the public
- Terminology
- Public attitudes/key messages on trapping
- Demographic information/trapper statistics

**AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT**

- Discuss individual topics in greater depth
- Provide additional advanced media and communications training
- Re-evaluate communications strategies in light of social media and emerging trends

**OUR FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS**

- Two additional national surveys were conducted in partnership with the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies. The results of these surveys will be distributed to all participants as an extension of their Trapping Matters workshop experience.
- Due to high demand, more Trapping Matters workshops are planned and will be hosted by state fish and wildlife agencies or The Wildlife Society.
- In addition to delivering its stated goals, these projects provided the catalyst to organize and expand the curriculum and continue to offer workshops to those who have a stated need.
About Our Programming

THESE PROJECTS HAVE BEEN SUPPORTED by Wildlife Restoration funds, through grants administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Division of Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration: Partnering to fund conservation and connecting people with nature.

TRAPPING MATTERS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOPS were initiated in 2003. Since their inception, more than 5,000 wildlife professionals have attended workshops throughout the United States. The Max McGraw Wildlife Foundation, the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, The Wildlife Society, The U.S Fish and Wildlife Service, USDA-APHIS-Wildlife Services, state fish and wildlife agencies, universities and professional organizations partner to deliver workshops related to effective communication and regulated trapping. The fundamental purpose of these professional development workshops is to advance awareness and communication skills related to regulated trapping among agency professionals and to increase understanding of Best Management Practices for regulated trapping in the United States.

WORKSHOP LOCATIONS AND ATTENDANCE

By controlling costs and leveraging partnerships, we exceeded the number of planned workshops. A total of 503 professionals attended fourteen workshops across the United States during 2015-2017. These professionals represented more than 60 entities, including state and federal agencies, nongovernmental organizations and academic institutions.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>LOCATION</th>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>PARTICIPANTS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hadley, Massachusetts</td>
<td>Sept. 2015</td>
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<td>Annapolis, Maryland (NEFWC)</td>
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<td>IHEA Conference, Vermont</td>
<td>May 2016</td>
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<td>Bend, Oregon</td>
<td>July 2016</td>
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<td>Westbrook, Massachussetts</td>
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<td>Asheville, North Carolina</td>
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<td>North Dakota</td>
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<td>Pennsylvania</td>
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