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# State Fish and Wildlife Agency

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# TRAPPING REGULATIONS SURVEY

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**& Best Management Practices**



# Introduction

## TRAPPING IS A HEAVILY REGULATED ACTIVITY IN THE UNITED STATES AND REMAINS AN IMPORTANT TOOL

for managing numerous species of wildlife and habitats, protecting public and private property, protecting endangered and threatened wildlife and restoring extirpated and endangered wildlife populations. In a continuous effort to understand the full scope and breadth of this activity across North America, surveys have intermittently been conducted by the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies. The annual regulated harvest of wild furbearers occurs under the conditions set forth in regulations promulgated within each state. The summary data of furbearer trapping regulations contained in this report were gathered by the

Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies during the summer and fall of 2016 in an effort to examine current laws for the harvest of 26 species of furbearers by regulated trapping throughout the United States. Response rate to the survey was 100%. To see the full report, visit [www.fishwildlife.org](http://www.fishwildlife.org).



KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF FISH & WILDLIFE RESOURCES

State Fish and Wildlife agencies strive to educate and recruit young people into outdoor activities, like regulated trapping, to continue their conservation programs.

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## FOCUS ON: LICENSING

### ***Are trappers required to have a license?***

All states where trapping occurs require a trapping license for residents and non-residents. In some states, resident landowners are not required to have a license when trapping on their own property. States vary in resident and non-resident trapper license age thresholds. Most states require anyone ages 12-64 to have a license.

### ***How much does a trapping license cost, on average?***

A resident license is ~\$30. A non-resident license is ~\$200.

### ***Do states allow nonresident trapping?***

48 states allow nonresidents to trap; the one exception, besides Hawaii where no trapping for fur harvest occurs, is Florida. Minnesota is unique in that only nonresidents who own land in Minnesota may buy a nonresident trapping license. With the nonresident license in Minnesota, trappers may only trap on the property they own. In some other states, harvest may be restricted for non-resident trappers to certain species or quotas, which may not apply to resident trappers.



# Trapper Education

**THE PUBLIC WHO TRAP MUST BE FAMILIAR WITH THE MANY LAWS AND REGULATIONS** that govern trapping, as well as animal behavior, wildlife habitat, types of traps, trap preparation, sets and lures for different animals, and care of pelts. All these elements are taught in state or national trapper education courses.



**North American  
Trapper Education  
Course**

safety  
skill  
ethics  
responsibility

Trapper education is available in every state via the North American Trapper Education Program

developed by the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies. This course is available online ([conservationlearning.org](http://conservationlearning.org)) and via a booklet downloadable at [www.fishwildlife.org](http://www.fishwildlife.org). The AFWA curriculum has been incorporated, at least in part, into ~80% of trapper education programs nationally. Fifteen states use this program exclusively and about 45% of the states were aware (at the time of the survey) that this program had been unanimously recognized by AFWA member states as a reciprocal course for the qualification of state licensing.

## BY THE NUMBERS

# 21

States where trapper education is mandatory for individual licenses.

# 35

States where trapper education is offered through the state agency or a trapper association.

# 50

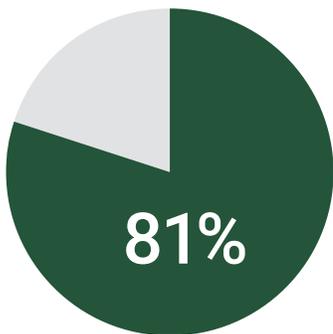
States where the AFWA North American Trapper Education Program is available.

# Best Management Practices

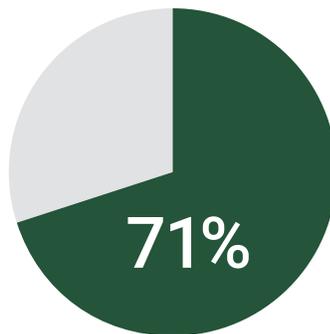
**BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES (BMPS) ARE BASED ON THE MOST EXTENSIVE STUDY OF ANIMAL TRAPS** ever conducted in the United States, combining scientific research and professional experience related to traps and trapping technology. BMPs are based on five elements or criteria related to trap performance: Animal Welfare, Efficiency, Selectivity, Practicality and Safety. Traps are tested, and if they meet benchmark criteria related to these performance elements, they are considered BMP traps.

BMP traps are divided into two types: lethal devices or live restraining devices. BMPs serve as a framework for identifying and documenting trapping methods and equipment that improve trapping. BMPs are intended to complement and enhance trapper education programs, providing technical information to help managers and trappers alike to select the best and most appropriate devices. Eighty-five percent of existing U.S. trapper education programs incorporate BMPs.

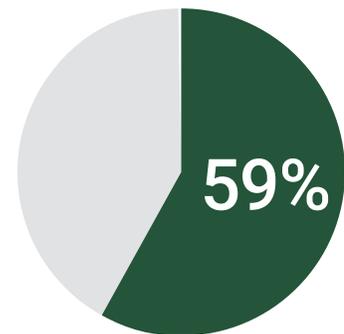
**OVER THE PAST SEVERAL YEARS, HAS YOUR STATE USED BMPs IN MANAGEMENT PROGRAMS OR PROMOTED AND IMPLEMENTED BMPS IN ANY OF THE FOLLOWING WAYS? (TOP 3 RESPONSES)**



At training sessions for external audiences (e.g., NWCO courses, trappers, public)



Media contacts (interviews, articles, etc.)



Legislative actions or Agency Commission actions (use BMP data in talking points for legislators and commissioners)

# General Trapping

THE FOLLOWING SECTION ADDRESSES OTHER MANAGEMENT PROGRAM INFORMATION of interest to wildlife managers. These include questions on the sale and export of wildlife, dispatch methods, public and private lands trapping. Most states require the immediate dispatch or release of furbearers captured alive; however, a few states allow furbearers that are trapped alive to be sold as live animals. Coyotes and foxes are the species most commonly allowed, and are restricted only to be sold within the state of capture.

Trappers make an effort to use all parts of harvested furbearers. As such, the sale of furbearer parts (in addition to the fur) such as glands (including castor and skunk essence) urine, skulls, bones and meat is allowed in most states. A trapping license is required to legally sell these items.



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## WHAT TYPES OF TRAPS ARE ALLOWED?\*

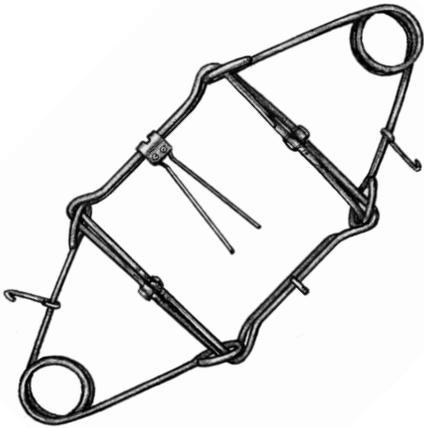
**NOTE:** Regulations change periodically; verification of existing laws is appropriate before setting traps in each state.

STATE	BODYGRIP	FOOTHOLD	SNARE	CAGE/BOX
Alabama	✓	✓	✓	✓
Alaska	✓	✓	✓	✓
Arizona	✓	✓	✓	✓
Arkansas	✓	✓	✓	✓
California	✓		✓	✓
Colorado		✓		✓
Connecticut	✓	✓		✓
Delaware	✓	✓	✓	✓
Florida			✓	✓
Georgia	✓	✓	✓	✓
Hawaii				
Idaho	✓	✓	✓	✓
Illinois	✓	✓	✓	✓
Indiana	✓	✓	✓	✓
Iowa	✓	✓	✓	✓
Kansas	✓	✓	✓	✓
Kentucky	✓	✓	✓	✓
Louisiana	✓	✓	✓	✓
Maine	✓	✓	✓	✓
Maryland	✓	✓	✓	✓
Massachusetts				✓
Michigan	✓	✓	✓	✓
Minnesota	✓	✓	✓	✓
Mississippi	✓	✓	✓	✓
Missouri	✓	✓	✓	✓

STATE	BODYGRIP	FOOTHOLD	SNARE	CAGE/BOX
Montana	✓	✓	✓	✓
Nebraska	✓	✓	✓	✓
Nevada	✓	✓	✓	✓
New Hampshire	✓	✓	✓	✓
New Jersey	✓		✓	✓
New Mexico	✓	✓	✓	✓
New York	✓	✓	✓	✓
North Carolina	✓	✓	✓	✓
North Dakota	✓	✓	✓	✓
Ohio	✓	✓	✓	✓
Oklahoma		✓		✓
Oregon	✓	✓	✓	✓
Pennsylvania	✓	✓	✓	✓
Rhode Island	✓	✓		✓
South Carolina	✓	✓	✓	✓
South Dakota	✓	✓	✓	✓
Tennessee	✓	✓	✓	✓
Texas	✓	✓	✓	✓
Utah	✓	✓	✓	✓
Vermont	✓	✓		✓
Virginia	✓	✓	✓	✓
Washington				✓
West Virginia	✓	✓	✓	✓
Wisconsin	✓	✓	✓	✓
Wyoming	✓	✓	✓	✓

\*Differences may exist in various states between what is allowed for some traps between: 1) Land and water use 2) Take during regulated harvest seasons and trapping for human-wildlife conflict resolution, and 3) Whether a device may be set for lethal or live capture.

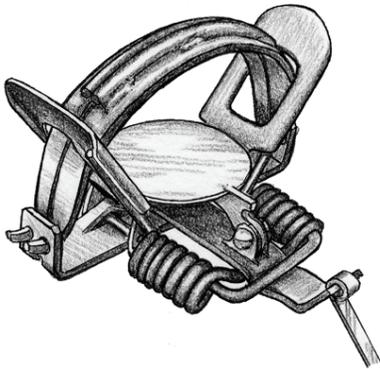
# Trapping Devices



## BODYGRIP TRAPS

*Bodygrip traps are designed to kill an animal quickly when one or two rotating jaws strike an animal's neck or chest. States regulate when and where bodygrip traps may be used, and the legality of certain trap jaw spreads.*

- The use of bodygrip traps is allowed in 43 states. All of these states allow bodygrip traps to be placed in water sets; 41 states allow the placement of bodygrip traps on dryland.
- Of those states that allow the use of bodygrip traps on dryland, some restrict the jaw spread and/or require traps of certain sizes to be elevated or in cubbies when on dryland.
- The majority of states do not allow the use of bodygrip traps with a jaw spread of 8 inches or greater on dryland, but rather, such traps must be used in water sets, often partially to fully submerged.
- Bodygrip traps set on dryland must generally be checked every day, in the majority of states where they are allowed.



## FOOTHOLD TRAPS

*Foothold traps are live-restraining traps designed to close on an animal's foot across, or above the foot pad, and they may be used on land or water.*

- The use of foothold traps is allowed in 43 states, with 42 states allowing them to be used in land sets and 41 states allowing their use in water sets.
- Trap check intervals vary among states, but of those states allowing the use of foothold traps, a daily trap check is most common.
- The setting of foothold traps is often restricted by location (to enhance selectivity of this technique), and most states have jaw spread restrictions for traps that may be set on dryland.
- Some states also require trap jaws to be modified with offset, laminated or padded jaws and have a shock-spring incorporated into the chain.



## SNARES

*The use of snares (any device that consists primarily of a cable and lock used to restrain a furbearer) to capture furbearers is allowed in 40 states. In some, the use of these devices is restricted to various species: beaver, otter and canids.*

- Four states require trappers to take a snare-specific class before they may use snares.
- 34 states allow the use of snares in land sets. Most states restrict the locations where snares may be set.
- The majority of states require snares to be checked daily.
- Snares may be used for live restraint (often called a cable restraint device) or lethal capture, depending on the components of the snare and the location of the set.
- Snares may be set for live restraint in 33 states; 27 states allow snares as lethal devices.



## CAGE AND BOX TRAPS

49 states allow the use of cage/box traps and often restrict where devices may be placed. A daily check and removal of captured animals is required in most states. Multi-catch colony traps are allowed for use on land in 33 states, whereas 39 states allow their use underwater.

TRAP ILLUSTRATIONS BY JOE GOODMAN



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## CAPTURE TECHNIQUES FOR MOUNTAIN LIONS AND BLACK BEARS

- Twelve states allow the harvest of mountain lions, and of these, 11 allow the capture of lions with trapping devices (mostly for human-wildlife conflict resolution).
- Two states allow trapping devices (foothold, box/cage/culvert, snares) to be used to harvest mountain lions (New Mexico, Texas).
- Thirty-two states allow the regulated harvest of black bears; 9 allow the capture of black bear with trapping devices (mostly for human-wildlife conflict resolution). Foothold traps may not be used to capture black bear in any state. The state of Maine allows the regulated harvest of black bears with trapping devices. Only specific foot snares or cage/box/culvert traps may be used, and only one device can be deployed at any one time. Bag limit is one bear.

## FURBEARER HUNTING

- Forty-four states allow the hunting of furbearing animals during night time hours. Forty-two of these states allow the use of artificial light to assist in the take of animals. Many restrictions apply.
- Forty states allow the use of electronic calls for hunting furbearers.
- Forty-four states allow dogs to be used in their take. Further regulations are described with the use of dogs.
- All 49 states surveyed allow the harvest of furbearers by hunting.

# About CITES

**THE CONVENTION ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN ENDANGERED SPECIES OF WILD FAUNA AND FLORA (CITES)** is an international treaty to prevent species from becoming endangered or extinct because of international trade. Under this treaty, countries work together to regulate the international trade of animal and plant species and ensure that this trade is not detrimental to the survival of wild populations. Thanks to conservation efforts by state and federal wildlife agencies, North American river otters and bobcats are common and abundant in the United States. However, these two species are included in Appendix II of CITES due to their similarity of appearance to threatened and endangered otter and Lynx species in other countries. Before the pelt of a North American river otter or bobcat can be exported from the United States, a CITES tag must be affixed to the pelt. This CITES tag verifies that the animal originated from the United States, which aids custom officers in detecting illegal trade in otter and Lynx species from other countries.

## HOW HARVESTERS RECEIVE TAGS

**11**

Number of states where CITES tags are mailed by the agency.

**35**

Number of states where tags are applied to the carcass by an agency representative.

**6**

States where there are other methods of tag distribution.

# Science-Based Management and Conservation Programs

**PROFESSIONAL WILDLIFE BIOLOGISTS MONITOR AND EVALUATE THE STATUS OF FURBEARER POPULATIONS** on a regular basis and respond with appropriate management actions. Much of the information known about furbearer populations, and the scientific management of furbearer populations, has been derived from information collected through regulated trapping programs.

Two key methods used by states to collect data on furbearer populations are mail surveys and carcass collection. Mail surveys of licensed trappers generally provide information on the annual harvest, presence/absence and range expansion or decline of various species. Carcasses (or parts such as teeth, reproductive tracts, etc.) provide vital information on genetics, diseases, overall health, food habits, reproductive success, heavy metals and contaminant loads, and more.

When additional information is needed, more intensive research programs can be initiated. Information collected through regulated trapping programs is invaluable, and these data demonstrate how regulated trapping has historically contributed to the scientific conservation and management of furbearer populations.



KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF FISH & WILDLIFE RESOURCES

Passing on a heritage of trapping: State Fish and Wildlife agencies rely on information collected through regulated trapping to continue their conservation efforts.

## MONITORING DATA COLLECTION PRACTICES

27

Number of states that currently collect teeth or carcasses for biological analysis.

23

Number of states that have per-trapper quotas in place for various species.

42

Number of states that collect information to estimate the harvest levels of furbearers, and for most, this includes all furbearers. The primary method used is a mail survey of trappers.