



The authors of the [Wildlife Monograph, “Best Management Practices for Trapping Furbearers in the United States” \(White et al., 2021\)](#), are dedicated to enhancing the practice of trapping. Regulated trapping is a fundamental component of the scientific management and conservation of wildlife and their habitats, as employed by various agencies. It is imperative that when trapping is implemented, it is conducted in a manner that ensures the humane, safe, efficient, selective, and practical capture of wild furbearers. Our research was published to provide guidance toward achieving these objectives. Although our study was conducted using robust and credible scientific methods and has undergone rigorous peer review, we remain open to constructive feedback to further refine the BMP program. For more on the BMP Program, we have developed an [FAQ](#).

## **Why the Best Management Practices for Trapping Furbearers in the United States (White et al., 2021) is a robust, rigorous, and defensible manuscript to guide science-driven decision making.**

The development of BMP's has been a decades long process involving wildlife veterinarians, biometricians, biologists, academics, and technicians, using scientific protocols, under real-life trapping conditions in North America. Our research has garnered endorsement from the leading professional organizations dedicated to wildlife health and conservation, including the American Veterinary Medical Association, the American Association of Wildlife Veterinarians, and The Wildlife Society. Institutional Animal Care and Use Committees associated with universities often require the use of traps that have met the BMP criteria. Notably, our publication was recognized by Wiley as the “Top Cited Article of 2021-2022,” underscoring its significant impact and use in the professional wildlife community.

However, we have recently become aware of an unfavorable “critique” of our publication in *Wildlife Monographs*, and we would like to reiterate a few points that we believe prove the credibility of the program and those who conduct it. Given that agencies rely on the BMP program and our research to guide their furbearer management strategies, we have also found it necessary to briefly address [several points in the critique](#) to correct any misunderstandings and misinformation about the BMP program. As we will demonstrate, this critique lacks scientific merit, deviates from the consensus of the global community of experts, professional organizations of biologists and veterinarians, and

governmental wildlife agencies across the U.S., Canada, and beyond. Consequently, this critique should not influence the continued use of BMPs for trapping.

**The results published in White et al (2021) are published in a reputable, peer-reviewed top-tier journal.**

The decision to submit our research to *Wildlife Monographs* was deliberate, given the journal's high standards and impact factor, an objective measure of the quality and reputation of a journal. After extensive, independent peer review, the results were published. Scientific debate in refereed and peer-reviewed outlets is a healthy process. So, before addressing specific criticisms, it is important to note that the above-mentioned "critique" of the BMP Program did not adhere to standard professional procedures for publication. The accepted norm is to publish a rebuttal in the same journal where the original article was published, in this case, *Wildlife Monographs*. If an argument is determined to be meritless, or lacking a cogent scientific basis, a journal may decline to publish a rebuttal to maintain the scientific rigor of the journal. However, this critique appeared in a magazine with no impact factor, and in fact one of the co-authors also serves as the editor of the journal. Additionally, professional etiquette dictates that a rebuttal should be shared with the original authors for review prior to submission—this protocol was not followed either. The BMP Monograph authors feel compelled to highlight that this breach of professionalism casts doubt on the credibility of the critique and suggests that the authors' primary motivation was to advance their own agendas rather than to improve the BMP program.

**The authors of White et al. (2021) are independent, unbiased, researchers with diverse backgrounds and experience.**

At the time of publication, the 14 authors were employed by 10 separate and independent agencies. Those agencies, as well as the publishing journal, all have established codes of ethics. The authors, and the journal, had no conflict of interest and the results, and dissemination of results, were not influenced by the authors or the journal. The guidelines for published, and independent review, were adhered to at all steps. We believe that the agencies and universities that spearheaded the BMP research bring unparalleled expertise, credibility, and ethical accountability to the field of fish and wildlife management. Indeed, no other entities are as qualified. Additionally, those who conducted field operations signed independent contracts which obligated them to conduct their efforts in an unbiased manner.

**The methodology used in the BMP study is internationally agreed upon and the internationally established standards were adhered to throughout.**

Capture devices, and capture device systems, were evaluated using The International Organization for Standardization (ISO) criteria. The ISO is a global authority and is recognized globally as the most authoritative standard-setting body. ISO provides objective and quantitative standards to assess capture device performance. The ISO guidelines assure the consistency, objectivity, and

credibility of the BMP process. Contrary to accusations in a recent critique, the standards codified by the ISO were used consistently throughout the study. Prior to formal adoption of the ISO standards, tentative standards were used. These tentative standards ultimately became the adopted standards, resulting in consistent evaluation criteria throughout the course of the study.

In conclusion, the Wildlife Monograph "Best Management Practices for Trapping Furbearers in the United States" (White et al., 2021) represents a significant, science-driven contribution to wildlife management and conservation. The study was conducted with rigorous scientific methods, adhering to internationally recognized standards, and was endorsed by leading professional organizations in wildlife health and conservation. The authors have maintained transparency, independence, and ethical integrity throughout the research process. While a recent critique has questioned the credibility of the BMP program, the critique itself lacks scientific merit and fails to adhere to standard professional protocols. Therefore, the BMP program, as outlined in White et al. (2021), remains a robust and defensible guide for the humane and effective management of furbearers.

Best regards,

*Bryant White*

Bryant White

Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies