



With the advent of the internet, a lot of things have become more accessible. There are dictionaries on our phones and apps that allow us to share content with millions in mere moments. There are platforms to have discussions with trappers in other states such as online forums or Facebook groups. But with this access comes some loss of control.



Photos taken with apps like Instagram or posted to Facebook and Twitter and videos posted to Vine and YouTube can be saved by anyone and manipulated in any way they choose. Your successful trap photos can be used

without your permission or give non-trappers a negative view of regulated trapping. This applies to all forms of social media, whether it be photo-sharing sites, video sites, or other platforms that are publicly viewable. You should always think about what you are about to post and consider:

- Is it ethical?
- Will it upset people who don't trap?
- Does it present trapping in a positive light?

Also, don't forget to check your privacy settings on each platform so things you post are only viewable by people you know, when possible, and avoid "checking in" or tagging your location on posts. These "tags" can show even private photos to people you don't know who check in at the same place and can also lead people to where your traps are set.

Your excitement and enthusiasm for trapping is the best promotion! Sharing why you enjoy trapping is a great way to spread the message that trapping is a fun outdoor activity. Always do your best to portray trapping in a positive light by highlighting the "Key Messages for Trappers", which are available at https://www.fishwildlife.org/application/files/8715/2475/8925/AFWA_Key_Messages_2015.pdf

Illegal activity should never be encouraged. It is also best to avoid groups that present a negative image of trapping. There are Facebook groups that allege to be hunting and trapping groups, but post inflammatory messages encouraging illegal activities or the destruction of an entire species, say things to upset those who do not support trapping, and show bloody and maimed animals. They portray trappers negatively and jeopardize our future. All species should be managed properly, regardless of an individual's personal feelings. Trapping needs solid regulations to protect and preserve our precious natural resources. Avoid these groups whenever possible as they do nothing to promote trapping. Discourage friends from contributing to these sites as well.

The Future of Trapping Depends on You!



To learn more about trapping, visit:

<https://www.fishwildlife.org/afwa-inspires/furbearer-management>



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See <http://wsfrprograms.fws.gov/> for further information.

Regulated Trapping and Social Media



Photo ©The Barnett Family





Photos are important. They provide a lifelong memento of your activities and accomplishments. But when used on social media, they also influence how others see you. In today's world, our only communication with others is often through the photos they view of us online. This means that a lot of responsibility comes with the photos we take and post to these platforms. Keep in mind the considerations below when taking photos while on the trap line.

Limit photos of furbearers in traps and don't post photos of animals in traps to social media. Such images can be offensive to some and saved and used by others without your permission.

Move the furbearer away from the dispatch site and into a well-lit natural area free from blood.

Place the furbearer in a respectful manner on the ground in front of you. Straddling the animal, holding it by its back legs, or holding it around the chest looks disrespectful.

Wipe any blood from the animal, put the tongue in its mouth and firmly close the jaw. Brush or clean the fur.



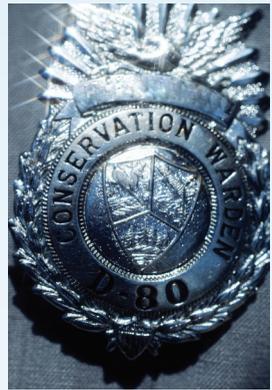
It's exciting to properly catch an animal because of the time, effort and skill invested. You should be proud of your harvest—it's hard work to trap! You should feel good if you are responsibly setting traps and respectfully harvesting animals. But everyone's views are different; there are people who may become upset at the sight of a dead animal or who don't understand regulated trapping. Please be respectful of another's viewpoint. Just because it's not the same as yours doesn't mean it's wrong. Photos that are respectful are a good step in assuring you will have lasting memories that you can be proud to show and that don't negatively impact the future of regulated trapping.



Surprise! Not everything on the internet is true. As an example, the same few cougar photos circulate around the country with people claiming they are from Midwestern or Eastern states when in reality they were taken somewhere in the western U.S. This happens with other species as well, such as fisher, otter, bobcat and wolves. The internet can be a great place to learn about trapping tips, but no matter what is said, be skeptical and do your own research. You can use search engines like google.com/scholar for information on animal ecology and visit other websites for information on common hoaxes.



Forums and online groups are great for getting tips from other trappers, but you should never trust regulations learned from random strangers on the internet. If you have questions about rules and regulations, check the trapping regulations booklet from your state fish and wildlife agency or check with your local conservation warden. You don't want to do something illegal based on the advice of others.



Online groups can be useful for advice, but some people in these groups may boast about illegal activity. Illegal activities give a bad name to trappers and threaten the future of trapping. Report illegal activity by taking screenshots of posts, collecting names and dates and reporting them to your state fish and wildlife agency. The future of trapping depends on all of us making responsible, ethical choices and discouraging illegal and unethical activity.

