Sustainable Use of Wildlife Committee
Meeting Minutes

91st North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference

Hilton Columbus Downtown
Columbus, Ohio

Chair: Eric Lobner (WI DNR)
Vice-Chair: Dave Kay (Alberta, Canada)

Wednesday, April 1st, 2026
1:15 PM – 3:15 PM (EDT)

Committee Charge:
Advocate the North American Model of Fish and Wildlife Conservation and promote the sustainable use of fish and wildlife resources at the international level.

Subcommittees and Working Groups:
U.S. Furbearer Conservation Technical Working Group

Agenda

- **Agenda review, adjustments, and opening comments (Eric)**
- **Approval of minutes from the previous meeting (Eric)**
  - Minutes from the AFWA Annual Meeting in Tucson, Arizona during 2025 were unanimously approved.

- **Update from the One Health Committee (Lorisa Smith (MDC), Tricia Fry (MAFWA))**
  - Purpose and One Health Framework
  - The Committee discussed how the One Health concept can help elevate natural resource conservation among stakeholders, decision-makers, and the broader public.
  - One Health was characterized as broader than a pathogen- or disease-focused model and as a framework for recognizing the interconnectedness of human health, animal health, and environmental health.
  - Because health is a universal concern, framing conservation within a One Health context may provide opportunities to engage audiences beyond traditional fish and wildlife constituencies.
  - AFWA One Health Committee

- The AFWA One Health Committee was established to help integrate One Health concepts into the Association's conservation work.
- The Committee's charge is to collaborate with other AFWA committees and organizations outside the fish and wildlife sector to communicate, develop policies, and take actions that elevate the importance and relevance of fish and wildlife conservation within the One Health framework.
- The One Health approach was described as a means of creating leverage for conservation by connecting fish and wildlife priorities with issues of importance to a much broader constituency.
- Connecting Conservation and Human Health
- The presentation highlighted significant societal and environmental trends—including declines in birds and farms and increases in childhood obesity—as examples of challenges that reinforce the value of connecting people, nature, and health.
- The healthcare sector increasingly recognizes connections between nature and major components of human health and well-being, including physical activity, nutrition, stress management, sleep, social connectedness, and other healthy behaviors.
- Greater recognition of these connections could provide new opportunities to communicate the value of healthy landscapes, wildlife populations, outdoor recreation, and conservation.
- Current One Health Committee Priorities and Activities
- Initial efforts have focused on increasing awareness of the One Health framework and developing relationships with other AFWA committees whose work aligns with One Health.
- Regional associations and regional health coordinators have been engaged in One Health communications and integration with other organizations.
- An engagement working group is developing communication strategies, including collaboration with Shane Mahoney and Conservation Visions on an animated outreach piece.
- A One Health special session was held at the 2025 The Wildlife Society Annual Meeting in Edmonton.
- Regional coordinators are working to integrate One Health concepts into the Fish and Wildlife Health Initiative toolkit.
- The 2025 AFWA One Health Committee meeting included a workshop designed to improve communication with individuals and organizations outside the traditional wildlife profession and to better frame conservation work through a One Health lens.
- Engagement with Other AFWA Committees
- The One Health Committee is seeking engagement and representation from other AFWA committees whose missions and activities intersect with One Health.
- Participants were encouraged to consider how their committee's priorities could be advanced by connecting conservation outcomes with human health and well-being.
- The presentation emphasized that people are an important part of the conservation equation and that conservation communications should reach both traditional stakeholders and broader audiences.
- Potential alignment was noted with efforts emphasizing the benefits of spending time outdoors and the broader connections among wildlife, landscapes, recreation, and human health.
- Key Takeaway
- The One Health framework provides AFWA and its committees with an opportunity to reframe and broaden the relevance of conservation, strengthen partnerships outside the traditional fish and wildlife community, and leverage society's strong interest in health to advance fish and wildlife conservation.

- The One Health Committee requested continued engagement, participation, and representation from interested AFWA committees.

- **Partner with Payer Program Update (Matt Hogan, US FWS)**
  - U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service – Partner with a Payer™ and Grant Acknowledgement Update
  - Partner with a Payer™ Program
  - Matt Hogan, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, provided an update on the Partner with a Payer™ initiative and related efforts to strengthen collaboration among federal and state wildlife agencies and industry partners.
  - The program is intended to increase awareness and understanding of the important role that manufacturers, state agencies, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service collectively play in funding fish and wildlife conservation.
  - Program Reach and Accomplishments
  - The Partner with a Payer initiative has hosted 82 events designed to strengthen partnerships.
  - Field and facility tours have engaged 1,351 attendees representing 143 organizations across the country.
  - Outreach efforts have also produced 59 videos highlighting federal, state, and industry partnerships and 149 conservation articles that have been disseminated nationally.
  - Grant Acknowledgement and New Signage
  - The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is undertaking an effort to replace outdated grant acknowledgement signs at facilities and access areas supported by federal conservation funding.
  - The new signage is intended to be more welcoming and informative while clearly communicating how manufacturer-paid federal excise taxes and hunting and fishing license revenues help fund conservation and public access.
  - Signs will include QR codes directing visitors to additional information, nearby access opportunities, and stories about conservation resources and accomplishments within individual states.
  - The signage continues to incorporate the Wildlife Restoration, Sport Fish Restoration, and Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program logos consistent with federal grant acknowledgement requirements.
  - Types and Distribution of Signs
  - Four primary signage applications are being developed for fishing and boating access areas, target shooting/archery facilities, fish hatcheries, and wildlife management areas.
  - Hatchery signs are currently being distributed, with more than 200 signs delivered to over 20 states.
  - Additional signs will be distributed in stages as they become available.
  - USFWS staff are communicating directly with relevant state agency contacts, including boating access, shooting range, wildlife management area, and Federal Aid Coordinator personnel, regarding distribution and placement.
  - Hunting and Fishing Regulation Digest Outreach
  - The Grant Acknowledgement Project also includes placing conservation accomplishment graphics and messaging in state hunting and fishing regulation books and digests.
  - These materials are intended to demonstrate Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration (WSFR) Program accomplishments and increase public awareness of the North American Model of Conservation Funding.
  - Messaging will illustrate how grant funding supports habitat restoration, public access improvements, and fish and wildlife conservation.

- Hunting and fishing regulation publications provide an opportunity to reach a broad and highly relevant audience because they are widely distributed and routinely used by hunters and anglers.
- The outreach materials are also intended to encourage stewardship by helping hunters and anglers understand the magnitude of conservation accomplishments supported by these funding mechanisms.
- Conservation Funding Message
- The presentation emphasized the importance of clearly communicating the connection between manufacturers, hunters and anglers, state fish and wildlife agencies, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in supporting conservation.
- Improved signage, regulation-digest graphics, videos, articles, and Partner with a Payer events are being used collectively to help the public better understand how excise taxes and license revenues translate into tangible conservation and public-access benefits.
- The presentation concluded by highlighting the Wildlife Restoration video, "American Craft, Natural Legacy," as an additional communications resource.

- **Environmental Assessment on Beavers in Wisconsin (Keith Wehner, USDA-APHIS-WS)**
  - Keith Wehner provided an update on Wildlife Services' Environmental Assessment (EA) addressing beaver damage and conflict management in Wisconsin. The EA evaluates the potential environmental effects of alternatives for Wildlife Services' involvement in managing beaver conflicts and considers an adaptive, integrated approach using a variety of management methods to reduce impacts to human health and safety, property, agriculture, and natural resources. (APHIS) The discussion noted the need to balance the important ecological benefits provided by beaver with localized conflicts, including flooding and damage to roads, agricultural lands, timber, and other resources, as well as impacts to cold-water streams and trout habitat. (APHIS) The EA was particularly timely given Wisconsin's concurrent effort to update its Beaver Management Plan and increasing interest in both lethal and nonlethal approaches to managing beaver conflicts. (Wisconsin DNR) Wildlife Services released the pre-decisional EA for public review in January 2026, with comments accepted through February 23, and was evaluating those comments as part of the NEPA decision-making process. (APHIS)

- **WI DNR Beaver Management Plan (Sam Jonas, WIDNR)**
  - Wisconsin Beaver Management and Planning Update
  - History of Beaver Management in Wisconsin
  - Sam Jonas, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR), provided an overview of the history and current status of beaver management planning in Wisconsin.
  - Wisconsin's first formal Beaver Management Plan was developed in 1990 in response to high beaver populations, particularly in northern Wisconsin, and associated impacts to infrastructure, forests, wildlife habitats, and native trout streams.
  - Although the 1990 plan recognized the ecological value of beaver, its primary objectives were to reduce beaver populations and protect critical resources.
  - The original planning team consisted primarily of WDNR personnel and Great Lakes Indian Fish & Wildlife Commission (GLIFWC) representation, in contrast to contemporary planning processes that include broader stakeholder, tribal, and governmental participation.

- 1990 Beaver Management Plan
- The 1990 plan established management approaches that continue to influence Wisconsin's beaver program, including beaver management zones, regional population estimates, trapper subsidies, habitat management, targeted stream control, and beaver damage guidelines.
- Trapper payments were established to encourage harvest when fur values were low.
- The plan also reinforced targeted beaver management on cold-water streams, including cooperative removal efforts involving WDNR, the U.S. Forest Service, and USDA Wildlife Services.
- Beaver Control Guidelines were expanded to provide landowners and agencies with information about options for coexisting with beaver and resolving conflicts.
- 2015–2025 Beaver Management Plan
- After approximately 20 years under the original plan, WDNR initiated an update that resulted in the 2015–2025 Beaver Management Plan.
- The planning process incorporated a much broader Beaver Task Force of more than 40 participants representing WDNR, tribes, other governmental agencies, and interested stakeholder groups.
- The updated plan placed greater emphasis on balancing the ecological benefits of beaver with the need to address conflicts, while continuing management of beaver on cold-water streams for trout conservation.
- The plan also identified research needs related to interactions among beaver, trout, habitat, and people.
- The final plan contained six goals, 10 objectives, and 33 strategies, supported by information on beaver biology, history, status, management, and relevant scientific literature.
- Changing Perspectives on Beaver Management
- Interest in beaver and their ecological role has increased substantially since 2015, particularly recognition of beaver as ecosystem engineers and wetland creators.
- Research, particularly in the western United States, has examined the potential for beaver-created wetlands to help mitigate effects associated with drought, wildfire, and climate change, with growing interest in these relationships in the Midwest, Northeast, and Southeast.
- At the same time, beaver continue to create challenges for infrastructure, agriculture, and some cold-water systems.
- Public interest in coexistence has increased, creating a need to consider an appropriate balance between lethal and nonlethal management approaches.
- Stakeholder Engagement and Public Input
- WDNR emphasized the importance of stakeholder engagement in building trust, credibility, and support, improving management decisions, and aligning management goals and expectations.
- Input for the current plan update has been gathered through several mechanisms, including a statewide household opinion survey, a Beaver Management Input Form, public listening sessions, email comments, and the Beaver Management Plan Committee.
- Public input was intentionally collected before completion of the Committee's work so that survey results and public comments could inform the Committee's recommendations.
- Beaver Management Plan Committee
- The Beaver Management Plan Committee includes stakeholders, tribal representatives, governmental agencies, and WDNR staff and is supported by an independent facilitator.
- The Committee met four times between October 2025 and March 2026 and was charged with developing recommendations for the updated management plan.

- Its work included identifying management issues and concerns, considering potential solutions, reviewing areas of agreement, discussing management zones and population objectives, and prioritizing recommended actions.
- The planning process initially generated 143 potential solution items, which were subsequently consolidated into approximately 58 emerging action items and further refined through Committee deliberations and surveys.
- Next Steps in the Planning Process
- The independent facilitator will prepare a report summarizing the Beaver Management Plan Committee's recommendations, with a draft provided to Committee members for review and a final report anticipated in early May 2026.
- WDNR staff will then update the Beaver Management Plan using Committee recommendations, public input, and the latest available research.
- The draft plan will undergo a 45-day public review period, after which WDNR will make revisions and submit a final draft to the Wisconsin Natural Resources Board for consideration and potential adoption.
- Following Board approval, WDNR will move into implementation, with portions of implementation also informed by the Department's Furbearer Advisory Committee.
- At the time of the presentation, WDNR was targeting adoption of the updated Beaver Management Plan in late 2026 or early 2027, although the schedule remained subject to change.
- Key Takeaway
- Wisconsin's current beaver management planning process reflects an evolution from a primarily population- and conflict-control approach toward a more comprehensive framework that seeks to balance the ecological benefits of beaver with impacts to infrastructure, agriculture, trout resources, and other human interests.
- Broad stakeholder participation, public input, scientific research, and consideration of both lethal and nonlethal management tools are central to development of the updated plan.

- **Colorado Game Management Team Update (Matt Eckert, CPWD)**

  - Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) provided an update on several emerging issues affecting the sustainable use and management of furbearers in Colorado. A major focus has been development of a statewide **Beaver Conservation and Management Strategy**, intended to provide a coordinated framework for increasing and sustaining beaver and beaver-influenced wetlands in suitable habitats while maintaining opportunities for sustainable avocational harvest and addressing human–beaver conflicts. The strategy includes population and habitat monitoring, harvest management, restoration, nonlethal conflict resolution, and translocation. CPW also identified a need for better population and harvest information for beaver and other furbearers so that future decisions can be based on stronger biological data. (Engage CPW) Broader furbearer discussions have included appropriate methods of take and dispatch, hunter/trapper ethics, and whether bag limits should be established where harvest previously was largely unlimited. CPW subsequently proposed—and the Commission approved in July 2026—a **daily bag and possession limit of two animals for 17 furbearer species**; beaver are being managed somewhat differently through mandatory harvest checks and the statewide Beaver Strategy. (Colorado Parks and Wildlife)
  - The presenter also discussed concern within CPW and among stakeholders regarding a proposal to **prohibit the commercial sale, barter, or trade of legally harvested**

furbearer pelts. CPW did not support the proposed prohibition and recommended that the petition be denied, noting that sustainable harvest concerns could be addressed more directly through conventional wildlife-management tools such as bag limits, harvest monitoring, and improved population information. (Colorado Parks and Wildlife) The discussion highlighted a broader challenge for the agency: how to respond to changing public values and concerns about take, dispatch, ethics, and commercial use while continuing to recognize regulated hunting and trapping as legitimate and sustainable wildlife-management activities. The presenter questioned how CPW can best navigate these competing expectations while retaining science-based management, improving furbearer population data, conserving species such as beaver for their ecological benefits, and maintaining meaningful opportunities for sustainable use.

- **Update on CITES and IT on Canada Lynx in the contiguous US (Deb Hahn, AFWA)**

  - The Committee received an update on several federal and international policy developments with potential implications for the sustainable use of wildlife. Of immediate domestic concern was the status of the **Canada lynx Incidental Take Statement (ITS)** and the implications it could have for regulated bobcat harvest in states within Canada lynx range. Because bobcats and Canada lynx can occur sympatrically and some trapping methods overlap, the terms governing incidental take of federally threatened lynx have the potential to affect state trapping programs and management flexibility. The issue therefore remained important to AFWA and affected state agencies as they worked to ensure that lawful, state-regulated bobcat harvest could continue while meeting Endangered Species Act requirements. Internationally, AFWA was engaged in discussions surrounding implementation of the newly adopted IUCN motion directing an update of the **IUCN Policy on the Sustainable Use of Wild Living Resources**. Importantly, the motion established a process for reviewing and updating the policy rather than prescribing what the revised sustainable-use policy must ultimately say. (IUCN World Conservation Congress) The Committee was also advised of work within the **International Council for Game and Wildlife Conservation (CIC)** concerning development of international principles or standards for sustainable wildlife management, an area of considerable interest because international standards can ultimately influence how hunting and other consumptive uses are evaluated.
  - The presentation also highlighted several emerging conservation concepts that could have implications for sustainable use. One was **"free evolution,"** an approach receiving attention within IUCN that emphasizes allowing natural ecological and evolutionary processes to proceed with reduced human intervention; the 2025 IUCN Congress had adopted a resolution specifically promoting free evolution and tools to sustain it. (IUCN Portals) Another was **"longevity conservation,"** which seeks to maintain naturally age-structured wildlife populations and recognizes the ecological and reproductive importance of older individuals. The IUCN motion on longevity conservation called for consideration of age truncation in wildlife and fisheries management and contemplated management approaches that could reduce mortality of older individuals, including age- or size-based harvest regulations and temporal or spatial restrictions. (IUCN World Conservation Congress) The presenter noted that these concepts warrant attention because their eventual implementation could influence established approaches to sustainable harvest.

- Additional discussion addressed emerging efforts to identify species for conservation attention and the **criteria used to determine when, where, and at what geographic scale species should be listed or afforded additional conservation measures**. The presenter emphasized that concepts developed through international conservation forums can eventually translate into strategies and implementation guidance with consequences for wildlife use in North America. Accordingly, the **AFWA Sustainable Use of Wildlife Committee may need to provide technical and policy input as these initiatives move from conceptual development into implementation**, particularly where they intersect with state wildlife-management authority and established sustainable-use programs. One example discussed was the take of migratory birds, including consideration of the biological and social drivers of take and possible future changes to legislation or policy governing harvest. Although many of these conversations originate in international conservation forums, the principal concern for AFWA is how resulting concepts or recommendations could ultimately be applied **domestically**, potentially affecting established hunting, trapping, and other sustainable-use programs in the United States.

- **New Report on Hunter Access Across the US (Bob Holsman, DJ Case)**
  - Crowding, Access, and Hunter Carrying Capacity
  - Changing Context for Hunting Participation
  - The presentation discussed factors affecting hunting participation and opportunity, including demographic shifts, changing cultural values, increased digital entertainment, and urbanization.
  - These broader societal changes provide important context for considering whether declines in hunter numbers may also reflect changes in the availability and perceived quality of hunting opportunities.
  - Concept of Hunter Carrying Capacity
  - Hunter carrying capacity was described as being limited in part by hunters' perceptions of available opportunity, including crowding, hunting pressure, and access.
  - A desirable hunting environment was characterized as one providing an attractive place to hunt, abundant game, and relatively little competition from other hunters.
  - The presentation raised the broader question of whether declining hunter participation may, at least in part, reflect a decline in the carrying capacity of available hunting opportunities.
  - Access as a Multidimensional Issue
  - Hunting access extends beyond simply having legal permission to enter a property.
  - Factors influencing functional access include permission or right of entry, availability of parking and trailheads, motor vehicle access, distance from home, and difficulty of terrain.
  - Consequently, land may technically be available for hunting but still provide limited practical opportunity depending on these additional considerations.
  - Factors Reducing Hunter Carrying Capacity
  - Several land-use trends may be contributing to declining hunting access and opportunity.
  - Parcelization can result in smaller properties and reduced access, while shifts from production-oriented land ownership toward amenity ownership may further change the availability of private lands for hunting.
  - Exurban development can fragment access even where wildlife habitat remains intact.
  - Reduced private-land access may shift additional hunting pressure onto public lands, potentially affecting the perceived quality of those hunting experiences.

- Crowding Study
- A study was undertaken in response, in part, to concerns that hunter recruitment, retention, and reactivation (R3) efforts might be increasing crowding and potentially contributing to hunters leaving the activity.
- The research included a literature review, focus groups in states representing AFWA regions, a pilot hunter survey, and a license-based survey incorporating a discrete-choice component.
- Findings Regarding Crowding
- The study found little or no evidence that crowding is causing substantial numbers of hunters to quit hunting.
- Crowding was generally not identified as an issue on private lands.
- Experiences varied regionally, with crowding conditions characterized as improving in the Northeast, worsening in the West, and mixed in the Midwest.
- Hunters may also reduce the effects of crowding through social networks and through experience that allows them to adapt their hunting strategies and locations.
- Limited-draw tags were not found to represent a significant barrier to annual hunting participation.
- Potential Future Actions
- The presentation identified several areas warranting additional consideration, including conducting a national review of private-land access programs.
- Agencies and partners could explore novel approaches for incentivizing private-land access and consider opportunities to improve the quality or accessibility of public hunting lands.
- Additional research could seek to quantify hunter carrying capacity by species and geographic region, providing agencies with a better understanding of how access, opportunity, and hunter density interact.
- Key Takeaway
- Hunter access and carrying capacity should be viewed as broader concepts than the simple availability of land or licenses. The quality, accessibility, proximity, game abundance, and perceived competition associated with hunting opportunities all influence hunters' experiences.
- While the research did not find strong evidence that crowding is causing hunters to leave hunting, changes in land ownership, development, private-land access, and resulting pressure on public lands warrant continued attention when considering long-term hunter participation and R3 strategies.

- **Updates from Conservation Force on CoP 15, recent IUCN motions (e.g., 066, 113), and other related concerns for sustainable use (Joe Goergen, Conservation Force)**
  - International Conservation Policy – IUCN and Animal Culture Issues
  - IUCN Policy on Sustainable Use
  - The Committee received an update concerning Motion 066: Updating the IUCN Policy on Sustainable Use.
  - The motion relates directly to sustainable use policy within the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and was identified as an issue relevant to the Committee's international conservation interests.
  - Longevity Conservation Approach
  - The presentation also identified Motion 113: Longevity Conservation Approach as an issue for Committee awareness and consideration.
  - The motion was highlighted alongside the proposed update to IUCN sustainable use policy as a matter relevant to ongoing international conservation policy discussions.
  - Animal Culture and Social Complexity

- The Committee was also informed of Document 28.13: Conservation Implications of Animal Culture and Social Complexity.
- The document was identified as another emerging international conservation policy issue with potential relevance to wildlife conservation and sustainable use.
- Key Takeaway
- The presentation highlighted several international policy developments warranting continued attention by the Sustainable Use of Wildlife Committee, particularly proposed changes involving IUCN sustainable use policy, longevity-based conservation approaches, and consideration of animal culture and social complexity in conservation policy.
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- **Final Report on Multistate Grant 2025/Best Management Practices for Trapping Program (Bryant White, AFWA)**
  - Certainly. Here is this presentation converted into the same meeting-minutes-style outline, focusing on the Best Management Practices for Trapping Program and associated outreach and education activities.
  - Best Management Practices for Trapping Program Update
  - Program Overview
  - The Committee received an update on AFWA's Best Management Practices (BMPs) for Trapping Program and related trapping education and outreach activities.
  - The BMP Program is conducted within the broader mission of AFWA's Sustainable Use of Wildlife Committee, which advocates for the North American Model of Fish and Wildlife Conservation and promotes sustainable use of fish and wildlife resources internationally.
  - Results from the BMP research program have been published in Wildlife Monographs, providing a peer-reviewed scientific foundation for evaluating modern regulated trapping. The research demonstrates that trapping can be conducted humanely, safely, and selectively when appropriate equipment and techniques are used.
  - Trapping Matters Workshops
  - Through a 2025 Multistate Conservation Grant, AFWA continued its Trapping Matters Workshops, full-day programs designed to improve wildlife professionals' understanding of regulated trapping.
  - Workshop topics include effective communications and key messages, the role of trapping in wildlife management, Best Management Practices, public attitudes toward trapping, and hands-on demonstrations involving various trap types.
  - Since 2003, more than 200 workshops have been conducted in 48 states, reaching more than 6,500 wildlife professionals and students.
  - Recent workshops have been conducted for state and tribal wildlife agencies and other professional audiences, including participants associated with The Wildlife Society and the National Military Fish and Wildlife Association.
  - Wild Fur Schools
  - Multistate Conservation Grant funding also supported Wild Fur Schools, intensive four-day training programs that provide participants with both classroom instruction and extensive hands-on experience.
  - Training includes communications and messaging, trapping in wildlife management, BMPs, trap demonstrations, skinning and processing furbearers, wildlife diseases, ecology, and law enforcement considerations.
  - Schools were conducted in several locations, including Idaho, Kentucky, New York, Wisconsin, Wyoming, and a program involving tribal nations in Oklahoma.
  - Communications and Video Production

- Additional Multistate Conservation Grant activities include development of 12 short videos for agency use addressing topics such as R3 for trapping and public education and acceptance of regulated trapping.
- The existing Trapping and Furbearer Management in North American Wildlife Conservation video is also being reshot and modernized to provide an updated communications resource for agencies and partners.
- Best Management Practices Program Objectives
- The BMP Program scientifically evaluates and seeks to improve traps and trapping systems based on five primary criteria: animal welfare, safety, selectivity, efficiency, and practicality.
- Additional objectives are to increase awareness and understanding of modern regulated trapping and sustain regulated trapping as an effective wildlife management technique.
- BMP Development
- Through 2025, BMPs have been developed for a broad range of North American furbearers, including raccoon, beaver, coyote, bobcat, foxes, muskrat, otter, mink, marten, fisher, badger, skunk, nutria, lynx, wolverine, wolf, weasels, and other species.
- The program continues to use scientific trap testing and animal necropsies to identify trapping systems that satisfy established BMP and international animal-welfare criteria.
- Body-Grip Traps in Urban Areas
- The program has also addressed the safe use of body-grip traps in urban and developed environments.
- An instructional video was produced to provide guidance on the safe use of lethal trapping devices in urban settings, supporting efforts to reduce potential conflicts and improve trapping practices where people, pets, and wildlife occur in close proximity.
- BMP Research Accomplishments
- The BMP research program has evaluated 731 trap types for 23 species of furbearers, involving necropsies of approximately 11,000 animals.
- Research has been conducted across all five U.S. regions and in 46 states.
- Numerous trap types have been demonstrated to meet International Organization for Standardization (ISO) animal-welfare standards for every common furbearer species evaluated.
- Approximately 80% of furbearers are being captured in traps that meet BMP/ISO criteria, while approximately 10% are captured using devices that have not yet been tested.
- The program reported no captures of endangered species, and no dogs captured during the research were injured or killed.
- Communicating the Science
- AFWA has developed Science Briefs that distill major findings from the BMP research program into accessible information for agencies, wildlife professionals, policymakers, and other audiences.
- The research demonstrates that using the appropriate trap for the target species and employing it correctly can result in humane capture while maintaining the effectiveness of trapping as a wildlife management tool.
- Program Partnerships
- The BMP Program relies on substantial cooperation among state and tribal fish and wildlife agencies, USDA APHIS Wildlife Services and the National Wildlife Research Center, trappers associations, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program.
- Key Takeaway
- More than two decades of BMP research and outreach provide a substantial scientific foundation supporting modern regulated trapping. The program demonstrates that

trapping systems can be humane, safe, selective, efficient, and practical when appropriate equipment and methods are employed.

- Continued research, professional training, public communications, and partnerships among state, federal, tribal, and trapping organizations remain important to improving trapping practices and sustaining regulated trapping as a wildlife conservation and management tool.
-