Conservation Leaders for Tomorrow
Hunting Awareness & Conservation Education

Trapping and Fishing: Gear, Terminology, and Methods

Goal: To provide exposure and discussion opportunities related to the roles of trapping furbearers and fishing in conservation and wildlife management.

Objectives: After this block of instruction the participant will be able to:

1. Describe who participates in these pursuits, what motivates them, and some values of each.
2. Understand that each is a highly regulated activity.
3. Recognize that most state agencies have education programs specific to trapping and fishing, similar to Hunter Education; many agencies and organizations offer a variety of educational and informational materials on both.
4. Understand the arrays of equipment involved, with emphasis on the mechanics, designs, and limitations of some trapping equipment.
5. Describe essential skills required to trap various furbearers in different environments.
6. Discuss the effects of furbearer management through trapping, including:
    a. Wildlife management
    b. Ecosystem management
    c. Public health and safety
    d. Economic impacts
        i.   Compared to hunting in general
        ii. Commercial
        iii. International trade
    e. Humaneness to resources through Best Management Practices
7. Know where to find additional, factual information related to trapping as a component of wildlife management, including http://furbearermanagement.com/

Why This Is Important for a Natural Resource Professional

This basic information is fundamental to participants' understanding trapping. Focus group and human dimension research have demonstrated that agency professionals are not familiar with trapping as an activity, or with the public who traps, or the effects of trapping - even believing it endangers wildlife.

As representatives of agencies that support trapping as part of their conservation mission, participants should understand the following related to trapping:

- Regulated trapping is a sustainable activity that does not cause wildlife to become threatened or endangered.
- Trapping is managed through science-based regulations that are strictly enforced by wildlife officers.
- Agencies continually review and develop rules, regulations, education programs and capture methods that consider animal welfare.
- Regulated trapping has many uses in wildlife conservation and management and provides many benefits, including relocation of endangered species for restoration programs, helps to strike a balance between certain species of wildlife and people, helps to improve habitat for wildlife (including T&E species), reduce predation on T&E species, reduce damage to crops and property and reduce threats to human health and safety.

Station 1- Processing Harvested Furbearers

Goal: To provide hands on exposure to the types of equipment and procedures used to process furbearers into food and other products.

Objectives: After this block of instruction the participant will be able to:
1. Describe some of the varied products derived from wild furbearers.
2. Describe how processing furbearer products starts with proper treatment of the animal from trap set to preparation for personal use and/or market.
3. Discuss how improper dispatching of the animal can affect fur quality and pricing.
4. Identify some of the tools used in processing fur and describe how they are used.

Background: Processing furbearer products starts with proper treatment of the quarry from trap set to preparation for personal use and/or market. The skills, knowledge, and technique of processing the animal are as important as those used in catching the animal. Depending on the species, trappers may use the bones, fur, meat, and glands of the animal.

Station 2- Fishing Equipment

Goal: To provide hands on exposure to the types of equipment and procedures used to recreationally fish.

Objectives: After this block of instruction the participant will be able to:
1. Describe some of the varied types of equipment used to fish.
2. Demonstrate the use of equipment and methods of fishing.

Station 3 – Trapping Equipment and Terminology

Goal: To provide hands on exposure to the scope of equipment, nomenclature, and terminology used by trappers.

Objectives: After this block of instruction the participant will be able to:
1. Identify some of the different traps, parts, tools, and accessories used by trappers.
2. Describe how traps work and why there are certain design variations of basic components.
3. Understand what Best Management Practices (BMPs) are, how they have been developed, and examples in regulated trapping.

Station 4 – Trap Setting

Goal: To provide a field setting exposure to the use of some of the equipment and techniques used by trappers and the skills required to harvest target animals.

Objectives: After this block of instruction the participant will be able to:
1. Identify different trap sets and how they are designed to capture specific species and even individual animals.
2. Describe how trappers employ different mechanisms in different environments to exclude non-target species.
3. Describe some of the unique skills required to trap target animals.
4. Discuss the humane dispatch of a live restrained animal.

Background: The skill and knowledge in choosing the right trap type, careful choice of the trap set location and selection and placement of bait or lure are all vital to successfully capturing the intended animal (combined, these decisions make trapping selective, safe, and efficient). States, through their regulation setting process, greatly influence when, where, and how traps are used and maintained.

Additional Resources:

Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies http://furbearermanagement.com/

Organ, J.F., T.A. Decker, S. Langlois, and P.G. Mirick. 2001. Trapping and Furbearer Management in North American Wildlife Conservation. Northeast Furbearer Resources Technical Committee. 42 pp.