



Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

STATE FURBEARER PROGRAM NEWSLETTER

Spring 2005

Wildlife Division P.O. Box 200701 Helena MT 59620-0701

This newsletter is provided through Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) state furbearer program to inform trappers, hunters, the public, and department personnel about current furbearer management activities and issues in the state of Montana – Brian Giddings, State Furbearer Coordinator.

2005 TRAPPING LEGISLATION

Bills introduced during the 2005 Legislative Session included HB 603 sponsored by Rep. Gail Gutsche (D-Missoula) which was intended to reform trapping laws. There were two sections to the bill, one that would make trapper education a mandatory state program and the second that would have directed the FWP Commission to consider implementing regulatory changes that included a required trap check, posting notice signs of trapping areas, owner notification of captured pet dogs, and implementing BMP's in trapping regulations. On February 17 the House Fish, Wildlife & Parks Committee tabled the bill on a tie vote.

Written testimony submitted by FWP at the committee hearing indicated support for the education component of HB 603. Although the bill did fail, this issue will likely surface in the 2007 legislature, so FWP is now seeking support and involvement from the state's trappers to move forward with the concept of a mandatory trapper education program. This could incorporate many aspects of the current voluntary MTA course and build off the success of FWP's mandatory Hunter and

Bowhunter Education. A required education program may preclude additional regulations.

TRAP RELEASE BROCHURE

A brochure published last year through the furbearer program is still available at FWP offices. The "Recreationist Guide to Releasing Traps and Snares" and "Trapper Guidelines for Placement of Ground Sets" will familiarize outdoor recreationists with the mechanical operation and simple release techniques of various traps and snares. Although traps and snares are rarely encountered by bird hunters, skiers or hikers in Montana, it can occur and so this brochure is an excellent "how to" reference to release a dog quickly and safely from a trap. The brochure also includes a section for trappers regarding state regulations for the placement of body-gripping or conibear ground sets.

MONTANA YOUTH TRAPPER CAMP

The sixth annual Youth Trapper Camp is scheduled this summer for June 10, 11 & 12 at Beaver Creek Park south of Havre. Over 500 students have passed through camp classes and hands on activities since the first session in 2000. Contact Fran or Jim Buell from the MTA by phone at 376-3178 or at 7mbuell@ttc-cmc.net by email. Participant registration is \$40.00 although \$20.00 FWP education scholarships are available upon registration. Registration is due by May 15. This trapper education camp is co-sponsored by the MTA, FWP and 4-H.

Year	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04
Beaver	11,699	8,620	16,531	13,497	11,634	12,753	9,056	11,156	8,475	9,361
Otter	62	61	65	84	67	64	48	96	83	82
Muskrat	14,256	11,727	16,121	18,816	12,243	13,247	13,842	11,070	11,448	11,915
Mink	1,145	919	1,638	1,493	1,078	1,709	1,536	959	1,071	808
Marten	1,323	802	830	900	716	653	1,064	845	953	1,091
Fisher	8	2	6	7	8	5	7	7	7	8
Wolverine	9	12	12	15	9	4	13	10	15	10
Bobcat	1,052	762	1,041	1,206	1,093	1,411	1,398	1,702	1,786	1,814
Weasel	802	343	1,094	381	246	480	167	100	405	321
Skunk	3,219	1,784	3,382	2,682	1,567	2,762	1,570	1,330	1,171	2,776
Coyote	10,079	5,495	9,354	10,510	6,059	11,134	9,303	6,238	7,426	8,992
Fox	6,872	3,573	5,764	4,810	2,156	3,629	2,201	2,771	2,283	1,857
Raccoon	4,392	4,687	9,216	6,956	4,200	4,944	4,387	4,034	3,300	4,519
Badger	931	491	1,819	1,071	261	991	498	631	818	1,660
TOTAL	58,854	38,813	66,876	62,434	41,340	53,786	45,090	40,949	39,330	45,214

2005 FURBEARER QUOTAS

The FWP Commission met in Helena June 9 to adopt tentative furbearer quotas for the 2005 furbearer season. Public comment on the tentative quotas for bobcat, otter, fisher and wolverine will be accepted until mid-July. Final quotas will be adopted at the August 4 FWP Commission meeting in Helena.

AVERAGE PELT PRICE VALUES

Species	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04
Beaver	12.40	14.00	14.50
Otter	47.93	75.00	90.00
Muskrat	2.07	2.10	2.15
Mink	10.05	10.50	11.00
Marten	18.70	19.50	20.50
Fisher	25.12	25.00	28.00
Wolverine	225.00	225.00	275.00
Bobcat	135.25	203.00	280.00
Coyote	23.70	30.70	28.00
Red Fox	22.65	24.00	20.00
Raccoon	10.30	11.00	11.50
Ermine	2.00	3.00	3.00
Skunk	5.00	7.00	5.50
Badger	18.50	21.50	23.00

THINK ABOUT TRAP PLACEMENT

Next trapping season think about where you place your traps and snares. Trapping regulations are rather specific to 30-foot setbacks along roads and trails for some conibear sets and 1,000 feet from occupied dwellings and campgrounds for any ground set. However, to further reduce conflicts with hunting dog and pet dog owner's, placement of any type of set should be well off roads and trails that may be used by the public. By moving sets up to 100 feet away, you may not only avoid people with dogs, but also reduce trap disturbance or the loss of a captured animal. So...think trap placement!

TRAPPING ON STATE LANDS

A resident conservation license allows hunters, anglers and trappers access to accessible state lands. However, licensed trappers are also required to obtain a Special Recreational Use License for Trapping (SRULT). For further information on how to apply for a SRULT contact a DNRC office. The application deadline is September 30th.