



Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

STATE FURBEARER PROGRAM NEWSLETTER

Spring 2004

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, government agencies, the public, and department personnel about current furbearer management activities and issues in the state of Montana – Brian Giddings, State Furbearer Coordinator.

NEW TRAP BROCHURE AVAILABLE

A new brochure produced by the state furbearer program is now available at FWP offices. This "Recreationist Guide to Releasing Traps and Snares" and "Trapper Guidelines for Placement of Ground Sets" brochure is intended to familiarize outdoor recreationists with the mechanical operation and common release techniques of different traps and snares. It is intended for bird hunters, hound handlers, dog trainers, pet owners and hikers/skiers. The brochure also includes a section for trappers on ground sets and the use of conibears, as Montana trapping regulations are rather specific to their use. A list of recommendations and state regulations are intended to focus the importance for trappers to avoid or minimize the accidental capture of non-target animals, particularly pet dogs, trained hounds and bird hunting dogs. 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 reference on how to

release a dog quickly and safely from a trap. Despite the increasing recreational use of most public land and some private lands, trappers have the same opportunities as hunters or recreationists to use these lands, so this brochure is designed to enhance relations between multi-user groups.

MONTANA YOUTH TRAPPER CAMP

The fifth annual Youth Trapper Camp (YTC) is scheduled this summer for June 11, 12, & 13 at Beaver Creek Park south of Havre. Over 400 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 there are \$20.00 FWP education scholarships available upon registration. Registration is due by May 15. This trapper education camp is co-sponsored by the MTA, FWP and 4-H.

FWP COMMISSION MEETS IN JUNE

The FWP Commission will meet in Helena June 10, 2004 with an agenda that includes setting tentative regulations for the 2004 & 2005 furbearer seasons. This process will include season setting, trapping regulations, trapper limits and furbearer quotas. FWP will present any proposed changes in state

furbearer regulations to the Commission at this time and public comment will be taken. Tentative regulations adopted by the Commission will be available from FWP's website or by calling 444-2612 after June 14.

Written public comment on the tentative regulations will be accepted until mid-July. The FWP Commission is scheduled to adopt final furbearer regulations for the 2004 & 2005 seasons on August 5 in Helena.

Year	1993-94	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03
Beaver	6,478	11,699	8,620	16,531	13,497	11,634	12,753	9,056	11,156	8,475
Otter	51	62	61	65	84	67	64	48	96	83
Muskrat	15,772	14,256	11,727	16,121	18,816	12,243	13,247	13,842	11,070	11,448
Mink	844	1,145	919	1,638	1,493	1,078	1,709	1,536	959	1,071
Marten	822	1,323	802	830	900	716	653	1,064	845	953
Fisher	7	8	2	6	7	8	5	7	7	7
Wolverine	9	9	12	12	15	9	4	13	10	15
Lynx	2	3	5	2	3	6	3	Closed	Closed	Closed
Bobcat	965	1,052	762	1,041	1,206	1,093	1,411	1,398	1,702	1,786
Weasel	327	802	343	1,094	381	246	480	167	100	405
Skunk	1,734	3,219	1,784	3,382	2,682	1,567	2,762	1,570	1,330	1,171
Coyote	9,766	10,079	5,495	9,354	10,510	6,059	11,134	9,303	6,238	7,426
Fox	6,047	6,872	3,573	5,764	4,810	2,156	3,629	2,201	2,771	2,283
Raccoon	4,067	4,392	4,687	9,216	6,956	4,200	4,944	4,387	4,034	3,300
Badger	839	931	491	1,819	1,071	261	991	498	631	818
TOTAL	47,731	58,854	38,813	66,876	62,434	41,340	53,786	45,090	40,949	39,330

AVERAGE PELT PRICE VALUES

<u>Species</u>	<u>2001-02</u>	<u>2002-03</u>	<u>2003-04</u>
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

USE A TRAPPERS LOG ?

Each spring this newsletter accompanies the annual trapper harvest questionnaire. This trapper survey provides valuable data to FWP for estimating harvest levels, trapper & hunter participation, success rates and effort, and trends in species catch rates. However, it may be difficult to remember the number of traps used or animals taken months earlier. Why not use a log to keep better track of your trapping and hunting activities throughout the season? A small notebook or paper pad may serve as a log that can be used over several years. Even notes and drawings can be added to the log regarding animal track crossings or most successful set locations. A log makes this survey easier.