

BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES FOR TRAPPING FURBEARERS IN THE UNITED STATES

Overview

State wildlife agencies and trappers are developing "Best Management Practices" (BMPs) for trapping furbearers in the United States. A BMP is a method to improve an activity or set of activities by developing recommendations based on sound scientific information, while maintaining practicability. BMPs for traps will be provided to state agencies and trappers for incorporation into trapper education and furbearer management programs.

Why are BMPs needed?

- To ensure the continued responsible management of wildlife resources.
- The process of improving traps and trapping methods needs to continue to maintain and improve animal welfare.
- Real and perceived problems associated with trapping needs to be reduced to maintain public acceptance.
- This is necessary to sustain regulated trapping now and in the future, and to maintain the integrity of furbearer management programs throughout the United States.

What will the BMPs look like?

- BMPs will be based on regional differences in trapping conditions (e.g., climate, species trapped, and habitat) because these conditions differ throughout the nation.
- BMPs will be developed for specific trapping conditions (e.g., land vs. water) in a given region.
- BMPs will recognize the fact that a given trap may be set to catch several target species.
- BMPs will include descriptions of the best traps, as well as recommendations for setting traps.

Who will develop the BMPs?

- The International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies' Fur Resources Committee is responsible for this project. Professional furbearer biologists from all regions of the country are involved.
- Additionally, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services' Division of Federal Aid and the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal Damage Control program are assisting.
- The National Trappers Association supports this project and is actively involved in all stages.

How and when will the work get done?

- Existing information on performance of traps will be summarized.
- Where information is lacking, new evaluations of trap performance will be done based on the highest needs.
- The evaluations will include efficiency, selectivity, user safety, practicability, and injuries.
- BMPs will be published and made available to trapper organizations, state wildlife agencies, as well as any other interested party.
- The preliminary work has already begun. The first version of BMPs is expected by the year 2001.
- BMPs will be continually updated and revised, as needed after that.