

2011 Status Report of the Joint Management Committee of the Agreement on International Humane Trapping Standards (AIHTS)

The overall objective of JMC meetings is to share information among those countries implementing the AIHTS. The U.S. attends JMC meetings as an observer but implements the same standards under a bilateral agreement with the EU. The annual Joint Management Committee (JMC) meeting under the Agreement on International Humane Trapping Standards (AIHTS) was hosted by Canada on October 4-5, 2011, in Edmonton, Alberta. There was a renewed commitment among the four country JMC members to work together to fulfill the terms of the AIHTS.

Status Report of Canada

The Agreement on International Humane Trapping Standards (AIHTS) was ratified by the Government of Canada in May 1999 and became effective on June 1 of that year. The agreement came into full force in July 2008. Canadian federal, provincial and territorial wildlife ministers reconfirmed their strong support for the agreement at a meeting on September 16, 2004.

The Canadian fur industry consists of 65,000 people—from fur producers to pelt processors, auction houses, fur brokers, garment designers, manufacturers and retailers—and contributes some \$800 million annually to Canada's GNP. The fur industry also contributes to cultural, social and in-kind economic values of considerable importance to Canada's Aboriginal peoples and particularly to remote Aboriginal communities located on seacoasts, in the Arctic and in the boreal forest. Much of the harvesting and trapping of fur-bearing animals takes place in regions inhabited by Inuit, Metis and First Nations peoples.

Over the past 28 years, the Canadian fur industry and the federal and provincial governments have invested over \$19 million in trap research. Since 1999, Canada has invested over \$9 million in trap research and testing, and the Canadian Competent Authorities are investing \$2.5 million annually in implementing the AIHTS obligations. Many AIHTS obligations involve activities that had been ongoing in Canada for years before the agreement was negotiated and ratified. For example, Canadian provinces and territories had prohibited the use of some limb-holding traps to capture several furbearing species listed in the AIHTS. Furthermore, mandatory trapper education programs had been in place for many years, and individuals must qualify through these courses before they can obtain a licence to trap.

Canada, through the Fur Institute of Canada, has established the most advanced trap research and testing program of its kind anywhere. The program continues to gain international credibility among the scientific community. The AIHTS requires that trapping systems undergo scientific testing procedures to determine their performance against animal welfare thresholds specified in the agreement. Through the Canadian program, 154 species-specific trapping devices have already been identified as meeting the AIHTS and have been certified by a Canadian competent authority. A listing of these

certified trapping devices is available on the Fur Institute of Canada website at <http://fur.ca/>.

Over the past years, the research and testing program has been focused entirely on the work necessary to comply with the AIHTS. Provinces and territories adopted new regulations extending the already existing prohibition of the conventional steel-jawed leg-hold restraining trap to wolf, coyote, raccoon, bobcat and lynx. This was an obligation under the AIHTS, effective April 2001. Field testing to develop alternatives for restraining traps that comply with the standards is ongoing and remains a high priority.

Scientifically validated computer simulation models (CSMs) have been established using the extensive database developed through the Canadian trap research program and the availability of new computer technologies. So far, for killing traps, seven species-specific models are available, for muskrat (on land), beaver (on land and underwater), marten, fisher, raccoon, river otter (underwater), weasel and Canada lynx. These models accurately simulate 10,000 animal-based tests of a species-specific killing trap based on the trap's mechanical values and anatomical strike parameters.

This means that animals will not have to be live captured, transported, housed and used in testing traps for compliance with the AIHTS. Not only is this more economical, saving up to 90% of costs for enclosure tests; but, as computer models are developed for more species, they can virtually eliminate the need to test traps on live animals. To date, the use of Canada's unique CSM's for AIHTS listed species has saved over \$5 million in trap testing costs and eliminated the need to use some 1,500 animals in live animal testing. Canada and the US continue to work together on an innovative project to develop a computer simulation model to rate coyote limb restraining traps.

The CSM program represents an alternative scientific methodology for testing traps as permitted in the AIHTS. With Canada's extensive expertise in trap research and testing, the Fur Institute of Canada is in a position to offer its services to other countries interested in having their trapping systems scientifically validated and certified under the AIHTS.

Trap testing and AIHTS rating results show that the agreement is having significant impacts on trapping practices in Canada. To date, FIC has tested some 150 killing traps and 58 restraining traps since 1999. Twenty-one percent of the killing and 81 percent of the restraining traps tested failed to meet the prescribed requirements for the species concerned.

Collectively, the provincial and territorial governments and the Aboriginal authorities are the competent authorities ultimately responsible for implementing the terms of the AIHTS. In 2001, provincial and territorial governments established and implemented a national trap certification program, an obligation under Article 7 of the AIHTS.

A process continues to incorporate the role of the Aboriginal competent authorities in trap certification. So far, 132 certificates of compliance have been issued to various

Canadian and American trap manufacturers for killing type traps used to capture eight North American species, and 22 certificates to manufacturers for restraining traps used to capture five species. Also, a certificate was issued to a Russian trap manufacturer for a killing type trap used to capture Russian sable.

Regarding the delivery of the Canadian trapper education program, all 13 jurisdictions and corresponding Aboriginal authorities have established trapper education programs and trapper training didactical material has been developed on a national basis, including an 11-hour DVD production that was presented at the 2005 AIHTS Joint Management Committee meeting. A video and brochure have been published to explain the terms and implications of the AIHTS to trappers, mainly Aboriginal, located in remote areas. These administrative structures are ready-made vehicles through which the AIHTS obligation under Article 8 concerning trapper education will continue to be met. These efforts incorporate and further complement traditional Aboriginal teachings that encourage respectful trapping practices.

Aboriginal competent authorities are working to revise laws to reflect Aboriginal values and principles, which dictate the respectful harvesting of animals. In December 2003, wildlife legislation was enacted in Nunavut that incorporates the principles of Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit (traditional Inuit knowledge and values), following more than three years of extensive public consultations and collaboration with the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board, hunter and trapper organizations and regional wildlife organizations. This legislation explicitly reflects the trap certification requirements under the AIHTS.

Aboriginal traditional knowledge is also being applied to the development of best practices, occupational standards and culturally relevant trapper training initiatives. Canada has a hunter support program in the Kativik region, where each settlement has a committee of hunters and elders who meet and discuss wildlife issues such as harvesting, traditional knowledge and game laws. These committees decide on education programs required for the youth, in order to pass on traditional knowledge and values.

The Senate Committee on Aboriginal Peoples recognized these values in its March 2007 report noting that Aboriginal communities, especially those in northern and rural areas, depend upon and work daily with the surrounding resource base. It was recognized that the traditional economy of Aboriginal peoples, including the fur industry, provides tangible quality of life benefits, essential dietary staples, continuity of cultural heritage and other economic returns. (See <http://www.parl.gc.ca/39/1/parlbus/commbus/senate/com-e/abor-e/rep-e/rep06-e.pdf>)

Canada remains committed to the improvement of animal welfare related to trapping, with all sectors of the fur industry, including trappers, trap manufacturers, fur product manufacturers, and governments, Aboriginal authorities, animal welfare organizations and scientists involved and committed to the continuing implementation of the AIHTS.

Status Report of the Russian Federation

English language translation

Presented by: A.A. Sitsko, Deputy Director, Department of State Policy and Regulation in the Domain of Hunting and Wildlife Ministry of Natural Resources and Ecology

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to inform you of the events related to the implementation, by the Russian Federation, of its commitments under the Agreement during the year since our previous meeting in Charleston.

May I remind you, briefly, that the main piece of legislation that regulates the field of hunting and conservation of wildlife, the Federal Act № 209-FZ of 24 July 2009, lays down the use of hunting implements and methods that meet the requirements of humanity and prevention of cruel treatment of animals (paragraph 2.5) as one of the basic principles of legal regulation in this field, while article 22 of the Act directly invokes the Agreement by stating that “trapping methods must comply with international standards on humane trapping of wild animals.”

Control and oversight by the Federal Government on the territory of a constituent (a large administrative territorial entity) of the Russian Federation, including the control over the use of traps and other hunting devices, are carried out as part of the powers of government authorities of the Russian Federation’s constituents.

The Ministry of Natural Resources and Ecology is the competent authority in charge of implementing the Agreement (instruction of the Cabinet of the Russian Federation №1440-r of 2 September 2010).

Within the Ministry, responsibility for the implementation of the Agreement is vested in the Department State Policy and Regulation in the Domain of Hunting and Wildlife.

The Russian Federation has developed regulatory legal tools that include a list of statutory restrictions comprising permissible hunting methods and specify types and features of traps used to harvest specific species, as well as hunting requirements and parameters for various types of wildlife.

Thus, the Russian Federation is in possession of a legislative basis underpinning the implementation of the Agreement and identifies the authorities responsible for this work.

Russian law vests authority in the area of hunting and wildlife conservation in various government authorities at the federal and regional levels. At the federal level, this Ministry is entrusted with the development of state policies, the regulation of harvesting, and the oversight of compliance with laws and standards. The regional level authorities deal with organizing and implementing the conservation and use of wildlife and habitat; they issue hunter’s cards and permits for harvesting, they control the use of traps and the turnover of hunting products.

The Ministry has established good relations with authorities in Federation constituents, which shoulder the main burden of the operational implementation of the Agreement.

Attending our meeting today is Pavel Kochkariov, a representative of the Krasnoyarsk krai, Russia's largest krai (province) and the most important one in terms of commercial hunting and of preserving the traditional lifestyle of aboriginal peoples in the region.

May I remind that, in Russia, the list of furbearing animals covered by the international humane trapping standards includes 12 species: sable, pine marten, European and Canadian beaver, otter, lynx, ermine, muskrat, common raccoon, raccoon-dog, badger and wolf. Among these, sable, beaver, wolf and muskrat are the most frequently encountered and commercially significant.

Overall, three species are most prominent: muskrat, squirrel and sable. Their respective harvest is distributed almost evenly and makes up 90% of the total fur harvested.

Sable stands out by far in terms of monetary value, accounting for 90% of the total volume.

In terms of export value, sable is the undisputed leader, accounting for about 95% (in recent years up to 100%) of total sales.

The area inhabited by sable in Russia is broad, encompassing almost all of Siberia and the Far East. Over 10% of this areas lie in the Krasnoyarsk krai, which happens to be the most productive region for sable, topping the list of the most important hunting areas and main sable providers.

The sable population in Russia is currently about 1.5 million. It is stable, displaying (like harvesting) a tendency for growth.

An analysis has shown that a significant proportion of the sable trapped by Russian commercial hunters is already done by methods that meet the humane trapping standards.

These are, first of all, wooden killing traps. By all parameters, they outperform metal leg-hold traps. They catch more, yield better quality fur and meet humane trapping standards.

Due to the changing economics of the fur industry related, among other factors, to the global economic crisis, trappers are gradually shifting away from metal leg-hold traps. These traps are expensive, and the need to purchase them each year reduces the cost-efficiency of commercial hunting, pushing it to the edge of profitability.

Another way of harvesting sable without using "inhumane" traps consists in tracking an individual sable down with a hunting dog and then shooting the sable. Up to 60% of sables are harvested in this way, particularly by aboriginal hunters. Some hunters use no traps at all, preferring hunting on foot with a shotgun and a dog.

Pictures in the presentation depict the sable hunt: departure for hunt on snowmobiles or on horseback (particularly in Yakutia), dog chase, prey, hunters' dwelling.

In areas with little snow, the horseback hunt can go on for quite a long time. The horses are of a special Yakutian breed and forage for food on their own. Later in the season, hunters ski.

Altogether, more than half of all exported sables are harvested in wooden traps or by shooting prey flushed by dogs.

Aboriginal peoples in Krasnoyarsk krai

As in some other provinces, fur trapping in Krasnoyarsk krai is a source of sustenance for remote communities where, frequently, virtually everyone is in some way involved in the sable hunt. This hunt plays an enormous part in the life of aboriginal peoples of the North, Siberia and Far East and of other permanent inhabitants of those areas. It is a traditional occupation that helps maintain ancestral ways and habits.

Within Krasnoyarsk krai, aboriginals are directly involved in the sable hunt in four municipal districts—the Evenkian, North-Yenissey, Turukhansk and Yenissey districts—with a total area of 100 million hectares. Trappers total 3,000, including 1,950 for whom hunting is the main source of revenue.

Currently, in the municipal district of Evenkian, the responsible procurement and marketing agencies supplied humane traps to 30-35% of the trappers. The remaining trappers will gradually introduce the new traps. They rely on hunting with guns and on the use of *plakha* (half-log) and *kuliom(k)a* traps (two traditional deadfall traps), despite the substantial physical effort required to build, set up and check them.

Wolf

Since wolf harvesting with traps that meet the international humane hunt standards is central to our meeting, this beast of prey in Russia deserves a few words.

At present, according to some estimates, the total wolf population is 60,000. The wolf causes significant damage to agriculture and hunting, poses a threat to humans and transmits rabies and other diseases. In most regions of Russia, the problem of wolf management is high on the agenda.

Unlike European countries, where the wolf is a rare or even a protected species, we have the opposite situation: the wolf population is large and growing.

The wolf is a highly sophisticated animal, adapting well to living next to humans. Hunting it across the vast territory of Russia is, therefore, difficult. It requires significant experience and, often, significant financial outlays. In the Soviet past, when authorities paid a bounty for harvesting a wolf and when aircraft and poison baits were used, the wolf population was kept at the optimum 20,000-25,000. Nowadays, the harvest is about 20-30% of what it used to be (5,000-7,000), not enough to substantially reduce the population.

The main methods of harvesting wolf in Russia are hunting with rifles and self-catch. The traditional hunt with flags requires important expenses, time and experience.

The area where the wolves rest is encircled with a cord carrying little red flags. The circumference can reach 1 km or more. The wolves, as a rule, fear the sight and the smell of the flags and do not cross out, but rather move inside the enclosure. The hunters are placed on the inside along the flag line to shoot the wolves.

Other methods of gun hunt are also used, including various types of chase (when the wolves are chased towards a line of shooters).

Trapping also requires experience and knowledge, and it is less prevalent.

A number of Russia's regions (Yakutia, Buriatia) have their own wolf control programs and pay bounties to the hunters.

Beaver

In harvesting beaver, killing traps are much more effective than leg-hold traps, and so hunters willingly adopt new ways of trapping. The primary challenge is to provide them with how-to guides and to make available the traps that meet the proper standards.

Year's accomplishments

In the year since our previous meeting in Charleston, a number of steps have been made in Russia to ensure transition to new types of traps.

Government authorities in all constituencies of the Russian Federation received a letter reminding them that the Agreement was about to take effect and that there were consequences that hunters and control authorities would have to live with.

The experimental trapping facilities subordinated to the Ministry of Natural Resources and Ecology of Russia conducted works to assess the efficacy of using new humane traps as well as traditional wooden traps in the Central and Northern European Russia. These experiments have demonstrated that trapping practices that meet international standards have a future for harvesting beaver, pine marten, mink, ermine and raccoon-dog.

Our Department commissioned learning materials to help hunters in their transition to using new traps. These were developed by the research division of a university that trains hunting experts (*Russian State Agrarian University of Distance Studies*). The materials include a series of lectures presenting theoretical aspects of using various traps under international standards and a video tutorial demonstrating such traps in practical usage.

The same research project is currently studying the issue of supplying Russian hunters with certified traps. Trappers have already begun to acquire new traps on their own, with financial support from private business stakeholders.

The project also implies a choice of one or several options, and currently the researchers are finalizing the calculations and the feasibility rationale.

According to some estimates, at least three sizes of body-gripping traps are needed.

Conclusion

Russia continues its steady implementation of the Agreement towards the full-scale establishment of standards of humane trapping of wild animals.

As before, our task is to ensure a consistent and timely implementation of the Agreement and to make sure that new traps are developed, certified, manufactured and used and that hunters are properly trained to use them. In doing this, we also hope to rely again on the experience of competent organizations, whose esteemed representatives are attending our meeting.

Currently, we are paying a particular attention to the use of traditional wooden traps. As mentioned before, they correspond to international humane hunt standards. The economic situation is favourable to their spread in commercial hunting areas.

Status Report of the European Union

The EU is presented by the European Commission.

Progress report on the implementation in the EU of the Agreement on International Humane Trapping Standards

Responding to public concerns about trapping methods used Council Regulation (EEC) No 3254/91 popularly known as the Leghold Traps Regulation was adopted on 4 November 1991 and it prohibits both the use of leghold traps in the EU and the introduction into the EU of pelts and manufactured goods of certain wild animal species originating in countries which catch them by means of leghold traps or trapping methods which do not meet international humane trapping standards.

The Regulation, defines leghold trap as a device designed to restrain or capture an animal by means of jaws which close tightly upon one or more of the animal's limbs, thereby preventing withdrawal of the limb or limbs from the trap.

While the use of leg hold traps in the EU is prohibited for all animals, the prohibition to import into the EU concerns the 13 animal species listed in the Annex I of the Regulation:

On this basis all countries failing to prohibit leg hold traps for the 13 animal species or to use trapping methods which meet international humane trapping standards have been barred from exporting their products into the EU. Council Regulation (EEC) No 3254/91 is completed by a Commission Decision listing those countries, which fulfil these conditions and from where specific animal pelts and manufactured goods can be accepted.

1 OJ L 308, 9.11.91, p.1

In 1995 the EU (European Community (EC) became EU after the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty) together with the main trading partners such as Canada, the Russian Federation and the USA set up a working group consisting of scientific experts with the task to elaborate on international humane trapping standards. The results of the expert group formed the basis for the agreement on international humane trapping standards (AIHTS) that was concluded with Canada and the Russian Federation in 1998. The EU ratified the agreement in 1998, Canada in 1999 and the Russian Federation in 2008 and the Agreement entered in to force 22 July 2008 following the deposit of the last instrument of ratification by the Russian Federation.

A substantially similar bilateral agreement concerning the standards was reached in the form of Agreed Minute² with the USA. These agreements allowed the EU to exempt Canada, the Russian Federation and the US from the import ban under the Leghold Traps Regulation.

According to the AIHTS, the Parties are basically obliged to prohibit traps which do not meet the humane trapping standards within an agreed timetable for the 19 animal species listed in the Agreement to ensure a sufficient level of welfare of trapped animals, and to further improve this welfare. The AIHTS applies to all killing and restraining traps used for the trapping of certain mammals for the purpose of wildlife management including pest control, obtaining fur, skin or meat and for the capture of mammals for conservation. These traps must be certified according to the humane trapping standards and those traps failing the standards must be prohibited.

Of the 19 mammal species covered by the AIHTS, 11 are found present in the EU territory; Wolf, European beaver, American beaver (only in Finland), European otter, European lynx, Pine marten, European badger, Ermine, Raccoon dog, Muskrat, Raccoon. The distribution of these species varies throughout the 27 Member States, and are absent in Cyprus and Malta.

The main motivations for trapping in the EU are for wildlife management and the control of pest species:

- in the interest of public health and safety (e.g. Muskrat);
- for the protection of public and private property (e.g. Pine Marten);
- for the conservation of breeding birds and other indigenous species (e.g. Raccoon dog);

In many cases, particular animal species are trapped for a combination of the reasons mentioned above. In the EU, trapping is generally subject to specific national legal provisions and rules. These can include the types of trap, the conditions under which these may be used, methods required to avoid capture of non-target species (selectivity), as well as the elimination of avoidable suffering. Several Member States require that

² Council Decision 98/487/EC of 13 July 1998, OJ L219, 7.8.98, page 24.

trappers must have taken and passed mandatory training courses in hunting and/or trapping. In addition, trappers are often required to obtain a valid trapping and/or hunting license along with landowner permission where they wish to trap.

Muskrats are the most trapped mammals in the EU and today the estimate is that around 500 000 muskrats/year. This is followed by the Raccoon Dog, for which it is estimated that approximately 100,000 individuals are trapped annually. Estimates for pine marten and badger are similar with 45,000 trapped annually. The badgers are caught in restraining traps and the pine marten in a variety of killing traps, as well as restraining traps. Current information suggests that approximately 26,000 stoats (ermine) are captured in traps annually within the EU and 6,500 raccoon.

The Commission thought that it would be useful to have a further harmonisation of national measures in Member States and submitted in 2004 a proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council introducing humane trapping standards for certain animal species – COM (2004) 532 final.

This proposal was submitted with the objective to harmonise the remaining obligations and commitments arising from AIHTS and the Agreed Minute. This Proposal was submitted to the other institutions for adoption under the co decision procedure. The Proposal was, however rejected for a variety of reasons by the European Parliament in the first parliamentary reading. The publicly stated reason was that the proposal was not based on the latest available science. Some members of Parliament also expressed doubts about the EU competence to legislate in the domain of the welfare of wild animals.

Noting that there was a clear request for better explaining and substantiating the scientific base for the proposal the Commission decided that it would undertake a comprehensive study looking at the scientific aspects, raised by the European Parliament before considering the way forward.

The objective of the study was the description of the state of the art of research, science and application of humane trapping standards referred to in the “Agreement on International Humane Trapping Standards” (AIHTS) and described in Commission proposal COM (2004) 532 final in view of identifying the improved trapping standards which reduce unnecessary pain, distress and suffering of trapped animals as much as technically possible.

The aim of the study was to identify according to the latest science such trapping standards and methods which would reduce unavoidable pain, distress and suffering as much as technically feasible.

The following key tasks were completed

- Collecting worldwide data by undertaking reviews of existing scientific literature and other publications on the subject;

- Collecting data on the state of art with regard to the trapping methods used in the Member States of the EU as well as in the parties to the AIHTS and in the USA;
- Review of methods for testing of traps and trapping methods for the animal species concerned;
- Establishing the shortest possible technically achievable time limit (improved standards) concerning unconsciousness and insensibility with regard to killing trapping methods;
- Identification of relevant indicators for restraining trapping methods to assess the welfare of the trapped animals and establishing thereafter the improved standards for restraining trapping methods;
- Identification of killing and restraining trap types meeting the standards for the animal species concerned;
- Identification of testing methods which reduce the use of live animals;
- Organisation of a technical workshop presenting obtained scientific and technical results for discussion and evaluation;
- Contributing to a stakeholder Internet consultation of which the results will be taken into account by the contractor in the final report.

In carrying out these tasks the contractor was required to base its work on latest available objective scientific and technical data.

The results of the study were made available to the Commission in March 2010. The Commission services are currently examining the results and some further assessments will be undertaken before the Commission decides how to complete the implementation of the AIHTS.

<http://www.acceptance.ec.europa.eu/environment/pubs/studies.htm#trapping>.

EU legislation that currently applies to trapping activities:

Council Regulation (EEC) No 3254/91 of 4 November 1991 prohibiting the use of leghold traps in the Community and the introduction into the Community of pelts and manufactured goods of certain wild animal species originating in countries which catch them by means of leghold traps or trapping methods which do not meet international humane trapping standards [Official Journal L 308, 11.9.1991]

Council Decision 98/142/EC of 26 January 1998 concerning the conclusion of an Agreement on international humane trapping standards between the European

Community, Canada and the Russian Federation and of an Agreed Minute between Canada and the European Community concerning the signing of said Agreement [Official Journal L 42, 14.2.1998]

The Habitats Directive - Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora [Official Journal L 206, 22.7.1992]

http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/environment/nature_and_biodiversity/l28147_en.htm

Report of the United States Observer Delegation

Report – United States Observer Delegation

The United States delegation appreciated the opportunity to participate as a permanent observer in the third formal meeting of the Joint Management Committee (JMC) for the AIHTS. The US, while not party to the Agreement among Canada, Russia, and the European Union, has interest in its progress and conducts related activities referencing the same international testing standards.

Authority for management of resident wildlife in the United States rests with the individual states and tribes, necessitating a cooperative effort among the state wildlife agencies, the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (AFWA), and the federal government to improve animal welfare in US trapping programs. The U. S. Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), Wildlife Services is the federal agency responsible for technical communications related to the separate understanding with the EU on trap testing relative to international standards and has coordinated funding for the US program in cooperation with state wildlife management agencies.

In the U.S., wild furbearer management programs depend on traps and trappers for management of game species and rare (threatened or endangered) species, for reintroduction of wildlife species to historical ranges, for habitat protection and management, for protection of private and public property, for maintenance of public health and safety, and for a wide range of research activities that require wildlife capture. In addition, trapping provides for subsistence and income in rural societies. With the resurgence of rabies, bovine tuberculosis, and other wildlife-borne diseases in some states, trapping for disease surveillance has recently increased in importance. Regulated trapping and habitat modification are the principal means available to state wildlife conservation agencies for public participation in maintaining healthy furbearer populations.

Within the U.S., there are about 150,000 state-licensed trappers (Responsive Management, 2005, Ownership and Use of Traps by Trappers in the United States on the

AFWA website: www.fishwildlife.org) and approximately 250,000 individuals employed by the U.S. pest control and nuisance wildlife control industries – consolidated estimates provided in 2000 by National Pest Management Association (www.pestworld.org), based on U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics information (www.bls.gov). Currently, the fur industry in the U.S. directly supports over 199,000 jobs (Fur Information Council of America, 2011; www.fur.org) with direct retail fur sales between 1 and 2 billion dollars reported annually (Fur Information Council of America, \$1.82 billion in 2005; www.fur.org). Additional analysis of the economics of the U. S. fur industry has been compiled by the U. S. International Trade Commission (Industry and Trade Summary – Furskins, USITC Publication 3666, January 2004, available on the AFWA website: www.fishwildlife.org).

The U.S. delegation provided a summary of progress of U.S. research related to implementation of the separate understanding between the E.U. and the U.S. The U.S. program builds on efforts undertaken by the several states which hold constitutional authority for management of resident wildlife. About \$9 million has been spent to date on this national trap testing program, including federal funds and state contributions, direct and in-kind. In addition, federal and state wildlife management agencies conduct related, specialized research and development programs to improve animal capture systems.

Research by U.S. state wildlife management agencies preceding the U.S.-E.U. understanding included a survey of trap ownership and use in the U.S. and a review of technical literature on trap research for the prioritized list of 23 species included in the U.S. program. A second survey of trap ownership and use in the U.S. was conducted in 2004. We expect such surveys will be done periodically as a means to assess changes in the pattern of trap use and trapping.

The U.S. program is based on a Best Management Practices (BMPs) approach that identifies performance profiles of animal capture devices for five variables (animal welfare, efficiency, selectivity, practicality, and safety), provides detailed descriptions of mechanical features of each device, and makes this information widely available for voluntary use by trappers, agency personnel, and manufacturers. Extensive outreach and education efforts using the trap research results are being conducted throughout the U.S. as well. The BMPs, which provide information on trapping devices approved through the process, are provided to state and federal wildlife agencies, trapper associations, and state agency trapper education programs via the Internet and interactive CD-ROMs. Also, over 30 workshops have been held throughout the U.S. to educate state agency personnel and other wildlife professional about BMPs.

Since the start of the U.S. testing program in 1997, over 150 types of commercially available traps have been evaluated with 21 species, with more than 1200 trappers, wildlife technicians, and state agency biologists in 41 states and 5 U.S. regions directly involved. This extensive effort, involving both state and federal government agencies, is one of the most ambitious, nationally coordinated projects in wildlife management undertaken in the U.S. in recent years. The U.S. program, coordinated through the

AFWA, has included routine information exchange with other wildlife researchers worldwide. Reports and resource material are available at the AFWA website, www.fishwildlife.org.

The U.S. delegation values the opportunity to exchange technical information and to learn of research progress on trapping in the European Union countries, Canada, and Russian Federation. The U.S. delegation very much appreciates the standing invitation by the three parties to the Agreement to participate as a permanent observer in these meetings.

2. Next meeting

The European Union will host the next Joint Management Committee meeting, in Brussels in November or December of 2012.

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