

*The Agreement on International Humane Trapping Standards*

# ABORIGINAL TRAPPING

*Continuing The Heritage*



Produced by  
Aboriginal Communications Committee  
Fur Institute of Canada



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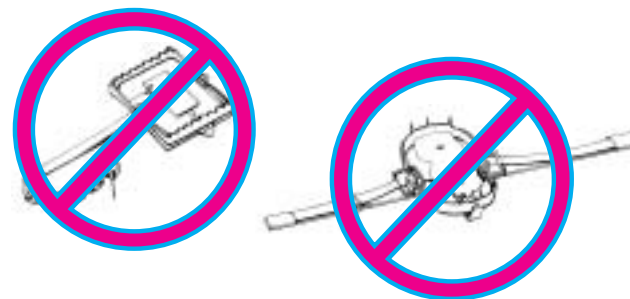
## HISTORICAL CONNECTIONS

Living in harmony with nature, Aboriginal peoples in Canada have been harvesting animals for thousands of years as a necessary part of their survival. Their understanding of animal behavior, combined with hunting knowledge and skills accumulated over many generations, enabled indigenous people to capture a variety of animals for food, shelter, clothing, tools and trade. Some trapping methods included wood or rock deadfalls, snares made from sinew, pits, net or wooden enclosures and snares attached to spring poles.



*Ancient rock drawings of trapping methods*

Beginning in the late sixteenth century, Europeans began arriving in North America and found the forests to be bountiful with furbearing animals and other wildlife. At the same time, furbearing animals and their habitats in Europe had been seriously depleted. European iron traps were soon adopted by Aboriginal trappers as they proved to be more efficient. By 1850, steel leghold traps were being manufactured in North America and, ever since, millions of these devices have been used across Canada by Aboriginal trappers. The introduction of these traps marked the beginning of Canada's modern fur industry.

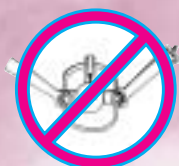


*Early iron traps now prohibited*

## ANIMAL WELFARE & RESPECT FOR ANIMALS

Over the past fifty years, organizations whose members are largely from cities have been protesting the use of animals for fur, claiming that the trapping methods used are cruel and inhumane. Their lifestyle and livelihoods are no longer connected directly with land-based activities and they do not understand the spiritual bond that Aboriginal people have with the animals they hunt.

Respect for animals is central to the spiritual bond that Aboriginal people have with "Mother Earth". Hunters are bound to take only as many animals as are needed. They are conscious of their obligation to respect not only the species they hunt, but also the individual animals they harvest. Hunters are obliged to kill "well" and having killed, are bound to ensure that the gifts of the animal are not wasted. As the fur trade has evolved over the past fifty years, so have trapping practices. Today, respect for the individual animal is most clearly expressed in activities to promote and improve humane trapping methods and standards, animal welfare, trapper education and scientific research. It was to promote these activities as well as the sustainable use and conservation of furbearing animals that the Fur Institute of Canada was formed in 1983.



*Leghold trap now prohibited for Marten*



*Humane, efficient rotating-jaw traps now used for Marten*

## TRAP RESEARCH AND TESTING

The long-term objective of the Fur Institute of Canada's trap research and testing program has always been to ensure that the capture devices used by trappers are efficient, humane and safe. The program is the most extensive in the world and the Institute brings together traditional knowledge, science and new technologies to determine if traps meet the Agreement on International Humane Trapping Standards.



*Computer technologies reduce the need for live animal tests to rate trap performance*

## AGREEMENT ON INTERNATIONAL HUMANE TRAPPING STANDARDS

As a result of relentless campaigns by animal rights organizations who are opposed to the fur trade, the European Union passed a law in 1995 that banned the importation of wild fur products into its member state countries. The EU law bans wild fur products unless countries have prohibited the use of all jaw-type leghold traps OR unless the trapping methods they use meet internationally agreed humane trapping standards.

To be exempted from the EU fur ban, the Canadian government, after several years of negotiations, signed the Agreement on International Humane Trapping Standards.

The Agreement, signed in December 1997 by Canada, the European Union and Russia, benefits the trappers by protecting their wild fur markets. The main points of the Agreement are:

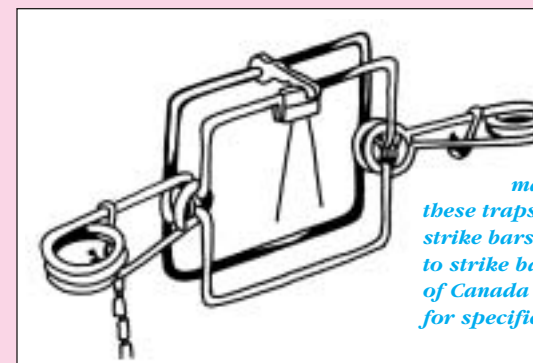
- ❖ In Canada, it applies to killing and restraining traps used to capture beaver, muskrat, otter, weasel, marten, fisher, raccoon, badger, coyote, wolf, lynx and bobcat.
- ❖ It establishes mandatory animal welfare performance standards for traps used to capture these twelve Canadian furbearers.
- ❖ In the Fall of 2001, the use of conventional steel jawed leghold restraining traps on land is to be prohibited.
- ❖ By June 2004, testing of traps is to be completed to determine if they meet the standards.
- ❖ In 2007, traps that meet the standards are to be certified, their use regulated and any traps that do not meet the standards are to be prohibited.
- ❖ In 2007, designs of commonly used snares made by individual trappers are to be approved by the provincial, territorial or recognized Aboriginal management authorities.
- ❖ Use of traditional wooden deadfall traps is permitted where they are legal.

Provincial, Territorial and Aboriginal Groups that have management authority are taking the necessary steps to implement the Agreement which is being coordinated through the Fur Institute of Canada. The Institute publishes a list of those traps that do meet the standards.

## NORTH AMERICAN TRAPS MEETING INTERNATIONAL HUMANE TRAPPING STANDARDS

### KILLING TRAP SYSTEMS

*For Use on Land or Underwater*



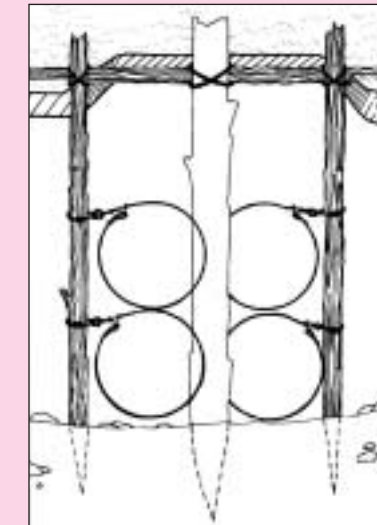
*Rotating-jaw traps available in 5 sizes and produced by several manufacturers. Some of these traps include bent, or offset strike bars or metal bars welded to strike bars. Refer to Fur Institute of Canada list of traps for specific designs.*



*Running pole set with rotating-jaw trap, typical for Marten, Fisher and Raccoon.*



*Traditional wooden deadfall set permitted by the Agreement where legal.*



*Baited underwater double pole snare set for Beaver*



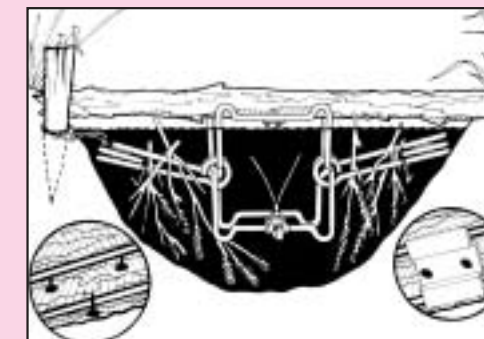
*Trail snare set to be approved by authorities*



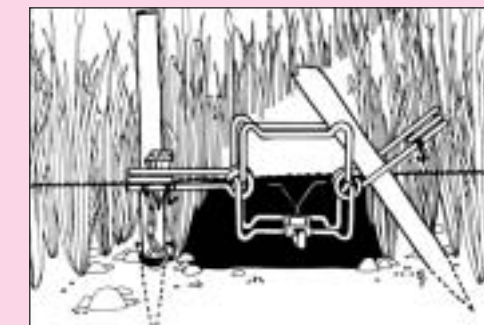
*Snap trap for Weasel*



*Floating log set for Muskrat, using leghold trap.*



*Chammel set for Beaver, using rotating-jaw trap*



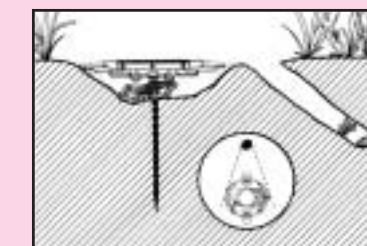
*Chammel set for muskrat using rotating-jaw trap*

### RESTRAINING TRAP SYSTEMS

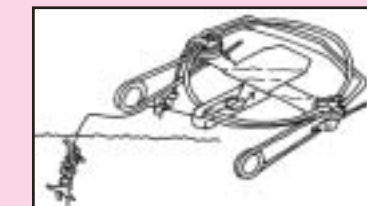
*For Use on Land*



*Leghold restraining trap for Lynx.*



*Typical leghold trap set for Coyote.*



*Foot snare for Coyote and Lynx*

For further information and a list of traps that meet the animal welfare performance requirements of the Agreement on International Humane Trapping Standards, please contact:

Aboriginal Communications Committee  
Fur Institute of Canada

130 Slater St. Suite 605 Ottawa, ON K1P 6E2  
Tel: 613-231-7099 Fax: 613-231-7940  
email: info@fur.ca / website: www.fur.ca