



About Trapping



Throughout human history, people have trapped animals for fur, meat and other valuable products.

It is only in recent years that trapping has been used for the added purposes of conservation, environmental protection and for maintaining biodiversity.

Trapping continues to occur in all parts of Canada (and around the world) for many reasons:

- to protect natural habitat, farmland, roads and other property from wildlife damage;
- for disease control (such as rabies or beaver fever [*Giardiasis*]);
- to maintain or improve biodiversity of both animals and plants;
- to protect sensitive species from overabundant predators or competing species;
- for public safety;
- to safely remove wildlife in urban and suburban areas;
- for reintroducing species to their historical territories;
- for conservation research;
- for environmental and wildlife monitoring;
- for furs and food.

Trapping would continue to occur whether or not the fur and meat is used.

Trapping for fur and food remains an important economic and cultural activity for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people, especially in remote communities. However, in most developed countries such as Canada, human-wildlife conflict is increasing. This is leading to a growing need for wildlife control in both urban and rural areas. Trapping is one of the tools used for this purpose. There are approximately 60,000 trappers in Canada today.

Trapping can respect animal welfare and be the most practical and economical option in dealing with wild animals.

Animals, such as beaver, raccoon, skunk, and many other species are typically nocturnal and do not lend themselves to traditional hunting methods. Trapping is often the only practical way to capture them.

While a variety of options currently exist for dealing with problem wildlife, in many cases trapping animals can be the most effective option for maintaining biodiversity and protecting human health and safety. Furbearers can cause significant costs annually in flood damage, livestock killing, and public health risks. Taxpayers ultimately pay for such costs. Trapping is one of several wildlife management options used to prevent or to stop such damage.

Regulated seasonal fur trapping is a consistent way to manage populations at no cost to taxpayers. Trapping fees and royalties paid by fur trappers also contribute to government revenues helping to offset tax dollars needed to fund government conservation efforts. Without fur trapping, municipal and provincial taxes would have to be raised significantly to pay professional licensed trappers for wildlife control services, and to cover damage claims and more costly alternative management methods.

Properly conducted, trapping has immediate results in reducing animal suffering from hunger or disease, unlike alternatives such as chemical birth control or vaccination baits that can take several seasons to have effect.

For some species, such as raccoons, lethal trapping is preferred for animal welfare reasons over catch-and-release relocation programs. Such programs often lead to starvation for relocated animals unfamiliar with their new surroundings or create nuisance problems in the relocation areas and increase the risk of spreading wildlife diseases. It is for these reasons that in some Canadian jurisdictions it is illegal to relocate wild animals outside their immediate territory, making it impossible to effectively remove problematic animals.

Wildlife management programs that include selective commercial trapping can help to reduce the need for wasteful 'pest' trapping.

For example, while several European countries no longer permit trapping animals for their fur, trapping for other purposes still occurs. European countries collectively trap five times more wild fur animals, such as muskrats, for 'nuisance' or 'pest' control than Canadian trappers do for fur. Unfortunately, these animals are not allowed to be used and are disposed of as waste.

Fur trapping plays an important role in wildlife monitoring, species protection and conservation research.

Capturing wild animals as well as observing changes in the animals and their habitats is a necessary part of wildlife conservation efforts. Trappers and trapping provide an important source of statistical and scientific information. In many cases, there are insufficient wildlife biologists, researchers and volunteers to go out into the wild to gather this much needed information. By submitting their annual capture numbers, animal samples and other local habitat and animal observations, Canadian trappers provide a vital and free monitoring service.

This information is used for wildlife management and conservation efforts, such as:

- To head-off or eradicate wildlife disease outbreaks.
- To set hunting and trapping quotas and seasons (minimums and maximums) at the local and provincial/territorial levels. This is so wildlife populations can be maintained at the optimal levels for that species and habitat.
- To determine species re-introduction and culling programs.

Where do trappers live and work in Canada?

The 60,000 trappers are licensed and regulated by provincial and territorial governments. They exist in all jurisdictions and municipalities in Canada. Demand for their expertise is growing in urban centres where human / wildlife conflict incidences are increasing. Virtually every municipality in Canada calls upon local trappers to assist in animal damage control efforts.

For more information on trapping and furbearing animals go to: www.fur.ca