SASKATCHEWAN TRAPPING REGULATIONS

HUMANE TRAPPER EDUCATION COURSE

UPDATED 2019
FUR HARVEST MANAGEMENT IN SASKATCHEWAN

- Furbearer conservation including all aspects that relate to the harvest of furbearers are under provincial jurisdiction and is managed by the Saskatchewan Ministry of Environment (MoE).

- For management purposes the province is divided into North and South Fur Conservation Areas (NFCA + SFCA).

- While many regulations apply provincially to both the NFCA and SFCA, a number are specific to each so it is important to be aware what the regulations are that apply to your area.
YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR KNOWING THE LAWS THAT APPLY TO WHAT YOU ARE DOING.

THERE ARE CHANGES MADE TO REGULATIONS ANNUALLY.

BE SURE TO CHECK YOUR HUNTING AND TRAPPING GUIDE OR TALK TO A CONSERVATION OFFICER IF YOU ARE UNSURE.
TRAPPING IS INCLUDED UNDER THE DEFINITION OF HUNTING IN SASKATCHEWAN SUCH THAT, UNLESS SPECIFICALLY EXEMPTED, THE RULES THAT PERTAIN TO HUNTING WITH FIREARMS WILL ALSO APPLY TO SHOOTING OR TRAPPING OF FURBEARERS UNDER A TRAPPING LICENCE.
YOU REQUIRE A FUR LICENCE TO HARVEST MOST FURBEARER SPECIES

YOU DO NOT REQUIRE A LICENCE TO HARVEST COYOTES WITH A FIREARM, TO TRAP RACCOON AND SKUNKS OR TO TRAP BEAVER IN RURAL MUNICIPALITIES THAT HAVE PASSED AN OPEN SEASON BYLAW

HOWEVER, REGARDLESS OF THE SPECIES, YOU NEED A FUR LICENCE IF YOU WISH TO SELL THE PELT
WHAT DO I NEED TO GET MY LICENCE?

- YOU MUST BE 12 YEARS OF AGE
- YOU MUST EITHER TAKE THIS COURSE OR
- PASS A CHALLENGE EXAM
- AND
- YOU MUST HAVE YOUR FIREARMS SAFETY/HUNTER EDUCATION CERTIFICATE
- YOU MUST HAVE A VALID SASKATCHEWAN WILDLIFE HABITAT CERTIFICATE.
WHERE DO I GET MY LICENCE?

- SFCA licences are available on-line through the Automated Hunter and Angler Licensing (HAL) system, through all vendors and at ministry offices.
- NFCA and youth licences are only available at ministry offices.
HOW LONG IS MY FUR LICENCE VALID?

- YOUR FUR LICENCE IS VALID FOR THE PURPOSES OF TRAPPING UNTIL AUGUST 31 FOLLOWING THE DATE OF ISSUE.
WHERE CAN I GO TRAPPING?

- IN THE NFCA YOU MUST BE VOTED IN BY MEMBERS OF THE TRAPPING BLOCK YOU ARE APPLYING FOR AND THEN YOU WILL BE ASSIGNED A LINE FOR YOUR USE.
- IN THE SFCA YOU CAN TRAP ON ANY LAND PROVIDED YOU HAVE THE PERMISSION OF THE LANDOWNER. YOU NEED ADDITIONAL PERMISSION OF THE OWNER OR OCCUPANT OF ANY RESIDENCE OR LIVESTOCK HANDLING FACILITY WITHIN 500 M OF YOUR SETS.
- ON CROWN LANDS PERMISSION IS REQUIRED FROM THE APPROPRIATE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE CROWN OR THE CROWN LEASE HOLDER.
WHEN CAN I GO TRAPPING?

- Most Saskatchewan furbearers are protected outside of specified season dates that are intended to cover the period when the fur is prime.

- Season dates for all Saskatchewan species are shown annually in the Hunters and Trappers Guide.

- Some species such as coyotes, beaver (in designated rural municipalities only), raccoon and skunk can be harvested year-round but the pelt will be of little value outside of the colder months.
WHAT IF I WANT TO HUNT FUR ANIMALS DURING AN OPEN BIG GAME SEASON?

- PROVIDED THE PERSON IS NOT HUNTING WITH OR AIDING A BIG GAME HUNTER, A LICENSED TRAPPER MAY HUNT FUR ANIMALS OTHER THAN BEAR IN THE SFCA OR COUGAR PROVINCIALLY DURING AN OPEN FUR SEASON.

- IN THE NFCA A TRAPPER WHO IS CONDUCTING NORMAL BEAR TRAPPING OPERATIONS MAY USE A FIREARM TO HARVEST BEAR. NORMAL BEAR TRAPPING OPERATIONS MEANS THE TRAPPER HAS SEVERAL BEAR TRAPS OPERATING AT ONE TIME AND CHECKS THEM IN A PLANNED AND REGULAR MANNER.
 ARE THERE ANY SPECIES-SPECIFIC REGULATIONS I SHOULD KNOW?

- Coyotes can only be harvested with a firearm unless you are the holder of a fur licence.
- There is no Ministry requirement to hold a fur licence when harvesting beaver in RMs with open season regulations. However, many RMs require that individuals turning in beaver for bounty must hold a fur licence – check with your RM.
- There are minimum calibre requirements to hunt bear or wolf. These are generally larger than .23 calibre but check with a Ministry office if unsure.
SPECIAL RESTRICTIONS FOR TRAPPING BEAR

ONLY MECHANICALLY ACTIVATED FOOT SNARES ARE LEGAL FOR THE CAPTURE OF BEAR IN THE SFCA, FIREARMS MAY ONLY BE USED TO DISPATCH A BEAR ALREADY CAUGHT IN A FOOT SNARE.
SPECIAL RESTRICTIONS FOR TRAPPING COUGAR

- Harvest of cougar is restricted to the use of traps only.

- Firearms may only be used to dispatch an animal already caught in a trap or snare.

- Trappers are required to immediately report harvested cougar to the ministry to receive a permit to possess or sell the animal.
CANN I CARRY A FIREARM ON AN ATV OR A SNOWMOBILE WHEN I AM TRAPPING?

- During an open season for big game, you may carry a .22 calibre (or less) rimfire rifle in a vehicle while conducting normal trapping operations. A ‘vehicle’ includes ATVs and snowmobiles.

- Outside of a big game season, an unencased firearm may be carried on an all-terrain vehicle or snowmobile.
CAN I USE A LIGHT WHEN I AM TRAPPING?

- A PERSON MAY USE A SEARCHLIGHT FOR THE PURPOSES OF CONDUCTING NORMAL TRAPPING OPERATIONS
CAN I USE A ROAD-KILLED ANIMAL FOR BAIT?

- Yes, if to the best of your knowledge the wildlife was not killed illegally.

- You must, within seven days of taking possession of the dead wildlife, provide the wildlife to a wildlife officer for inspection and apply for a free permit to possess the wildlife.
ROAD-KILLED ANIMALS SHOW A HIGHER PREVALENCE FOR DISEASES SUCH AS CHRONIC WASTING DISEASE – FOR THIS REASON PERMIT CONDITIONS REQUIRE THAT THE ANIMALS BE USED AS BAIT WITHIN 100 KM OF WHERE THEY WERE OBTAINED – THIS IS TO REDUCE THE RISK OF SPREADING DISEASES TO NEW AREAS
WHAT TRAPS CAN I USE?

- IT DEPENDS ON WHAT SPECIES YOU ARE TARGETTING AND WHETHER YOU INTEND TO USE KILLING TRAPS, RESTRAINING TRAPS, LIVE TRAPS OR SNARES.
- MOST SASKATCHEWAN FURBEARER SPECIES ARE COVERED UNDER THE AGREEMENT ON INTERNATIONAL HUMANE TRAPPING STANDARDS (AIHTS) WHICH GENERALLY DICTATES THE TYPES OF TRAPS THAT CAN BE USED.
The AIHTS is an agreement between the European Union, Russia and Canada that is intended to ensure that only the most humane traps available are used in the capture of furbearers.

The most humane traps also give trappers their best return as kills are quicker and restrained animals suffer less injury.
AIHTS AND THE FUR TRADE

- THIS AGREEMENT IS A BENEFIT TO TRAPPERS AS IT HELPS SECURE AN OPEN DOOR TO FOREIGN MARKETS AND TO ADDRESS CRITICISM OF THE INDUSTRY AT HOME
WHAT DETERMINES IF A TRAP IS CERTIFIED UNDER THE AIHTS?

- **Killing Traps** are certified based on meeting a required minimum average time between capture and time of unconsciousness (45 seconds for weasel; 2 min for marten; 5 min for all others).

- **Restraining Traps** are certified based on the amount and nature of injuries suffered by a captured animal.

- All testing is conducted at a specialized facility at Vegreville AB and tests must meet rigorous scientific standards.
How do I find out what traps I need for the animals I am after?

- The most up to date listing of certified traps is on the website of the Fur Institute of Canada (www.fur.ca). This list is updated immediately as traps are added.

- An annual list is also published in the Saskatchewan Hunters and Trappers Guide but will not include additions after the time of publishing.
ARE ALL FURBEARERS COVERED UNDER THE AIHTS?

- NO. SASKATCHEWAN SPECIES NOT INCLUDED UNDER THE AIHTS ARE RED AND ARCTIC FOX, MINK, WOLVERINE, RED, GRAY AND FOX SQUIRRELS, LEAST AND LONG-TAILED WEASELS AND SKUNKS.

- SASKATCHEWAN HOWEVER HAS USED PROVINCIAL REGULATIONS TO APPLY AIHTS STANDARDS TO ALL FOX AND WEASEL SPECIES SO REALLY ONLY MINK, WOLVERINE, SQUIRRELS AND SKUNK ARE WITHOUT STANDARDS IN PLACE OR UNDER CONSIDERATION.
IS IT MANDATORY TO USE CERTIFIED TRAPS FOR ALL THE SPECIES COVERED UNDER THE AIHTS?

- NOT NECESSARILY. SOME SPECIES HAVE NOT YET HAD ENOUGH TRAPS TESTED AND CERTIFIED AND FOR THESE IT IS STILL LEGAL TO USE ANY TYPE OF TRAP

- BOTH THE FIC WEBSITE AND THE SK HUNTERS AND TRAPPERS GUIDE ALSO LIST THOSE TRAPS THAT HAVE BEEN CERTIFIED FOR SPECIES WHERE IT IS NOT YET MANDATORY TO USE CERTIFIED TRAPS. THIS LIST ALLOWS TRAPPERS TO PLAN THEIR TRAP PURCHASES AHEAD OF WHEN CERTIFIED TRAPS BECOME MANDATORY FOR THOSE SPECIES.

- NOTE THAT ALL RESTRAINING TRAPS MUST BE MODIFIED TO MEET HUMANE STANDARDS EVEN IF THERE IS NO REQUIREMENT TO USE CERTIFIED RESTRAINING TRAPS FOR A PARTICULAR SPECIES
HOW CAN I MODIFY MY RESTRAINING TRAPS TO MEET HUMANE STANDARDS?

THE SK HUNTERS AND TRAPPERS GUIDE LISTS 3 ACCEPTABLE WAYS TO MODIFY OLD STYLE RESTRAINING TRAPS TO MAKE THEM LEGAL TODAY:

1. OFFSET THE JAWS SO THERE IS A MINIMUM OF 5 MM BETWEEN THE JAWS WHEN CLOSED

2. FASTEN MANUFACTURED PADS OF A RUBBER LIKE SUBSTANCE TO THE TRAP JAWS. DUCT TAPE IS NOT AN ACCEPTABLE SUBSTANCE

3. ADD LAMINATION TO THE TRAP JAWS TO INCREASE JAW THICKNESS TO 9 MM OR GREATER
ARE THERE ANY OTHER RESTRICTIONS ON THE USE OF TRAPS THAT I SHOULD KNOW?

- You cannot use foot-hold traps for beaver, muskrat, otter or mink unless the trap is set so the animal drowns when caught.

- You cannot use foot-hold traps with an inside jaw opening more than 24 centimeters (9.5 inches).

- You cannot trap bears except with mechanically activated foot snares.

- You cannot use hooks or sharp devices to snag or spear furbearing animals.

- You cannot use traps with serrated jaws or teeth to take furbearing animals.
NO – SNARES ARE CURRENTLY NOT INCLUDED UNDER THE AIHTS AND ARE REGULATED PROVINCIALY
WHAT REGULATIONS APPLY IF I WANT TO USE NECK SNARES?

- SASKATCHEWAN RECOGNIZES TWO MAIN TYPES OF NECK SNARES – POWER SNARES AND FREE-HANGING OR COMMON SNARES - AND THERE ARE IMPORTANT DIFFERENCES IN THE REGULATIONS THAT APPLY FOR THE USE OF EACH.

- POWER SNARES ARE DEFINED AS MECHANICALLY ACTIVATED SUCH THAT THE SNARE IS CLOSED BY A SPRING WITH A LEG OR ARM NO LESS THAN 30 CM IN LENGTH OR BY A LEVER AND COIL-SPRING SYSTEM IN WHICH THE SPRING IS NO LESS THAN 25 CM LONG.

- MECHANICALLY ACTIVATED SPRING-LOADED SNARES THAT DO NOT MEET THESE STANDARDS ARE CONSIDERED AS FREE-HANGING SNARES FOR REGULATORY PURPOSES.
WHAT ARE THE REGULATIONS ABOUT USING POWER SNARES?

- POWER SNARES CAN BE USED THROUGHOUT THE PROVINCE

- A PERMIT FROM MoE IS REQUIRED AND IS AVAILABLE AT NO COST FROM ANY MoE OFFICE

- POWER SNARES CAN BE USED FOR ALL FURBEARERS EXCEPT BEAR
Why do I need a permit to use power snares?

- The regulations require that you obtain a permit because the permit contains a number of conditions additional to what are identified in regulation.

- These conditions help ensure that power snares are set in a manner that minimizes risks to people, pets, and livestock.

- These conditions are law and failure to comply with them could lead to charges being laid and to loss of permit rights.
THE MOST SIGNIFICANT CONDITIONS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

- THE PERMIT DESCRIBES THE BREAK-AWAY STANDARDS REQUIRED TO HELP REDUCE INCIDENTAL CAPTURE OF WILDLIFE (eg DEER) AND LIVESTOCK

- THE BREAK-AWAY STANDARD IS THE MAXIMUM ALLOWABLE PRESSURE THAT THE SNARE WILL HOLD BEFORE IT BREAKS AWAY. THE STANDARD THEN DETERMINES WHAT SNARE CABLE WIDTH CAN BE USED DEPENDING ON WHETHER ADDITIONAL SAFEGUARDS ARE IN PLACE SUCH AS A PRESSURE-SENSITIVE S-HOOK

- THE PERMIT ALSO REQUIRES THAT IN ADDITION TO GETTING THE PERMISSION OF OCCUPANTS WITHIN 500M OF A SNARE SET THE PERMITTEE MUST ALSO NOTIFY ANY ADDITIONAL LANDOWNERS WITHIN 1.6 KM (ONE MILE) OF THE SET.
WHAT ARE THE REGULATIONS FOR FREE-HANGING SNARES?

- FREE-HANGING SNARES ARE NOT ALLOWED FOR GENERAL FUR HARVEST IN THE SFCA

- A PERMIT FROM MoE IS REQUIRED FOR THEIR USE AND IN THE SFCA WILL ONLY BE ISSUED TO INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE RESOLVING AN ACTIVE LIVESTOCK PREDATION COMPLAINT
HOW OFTEN DO I NEED TO CHECK MY TRAPS?

- WITHIN 5 KM OF A TOWN WITH 1000 OR MORE PEOPLE YOU MUST CHECK YOUR TRAPS EVERY 24 HOURS.

- ANYWHERE ELSE IN THE SFCA YOU MUST CHECK YOUR TRAPS EVERY 72 HOURS

- IN THE NFCA YOU MUST CHECK YOUR TRAPS EVERY 120 HOURS
WHAT DO I DO IF I HARVEST AN ANIMAL THAT IS NOT LEGAL FOR ME TO TRAP?

- EVERY EFFORT SHOULD BE MADE TO SET YOUR TRAPS IN A MANNER THAT WILL TARGET THE SPECIES YOU ARE AFTER AND EXCLUDE OR DISCOURAGE OTHER SPECIES

- INEVITABLY HOWEVER YOU WILL OCCASIONALLY CATCH SPECIES WHICH YOU CANNOT LEGALLY TRAP OR CAN’T TRAP AT THAT TIME OF YEAR.

- IT IS MANDATORY THAT YOU REPORT THESE INCIDENTAL CAPTURES IMMEDIATELY TO THE NEAREST WILDLIFE OFFICER

- PROVIDED YOU REPORT THE ANIMALS IN QUESTION YOU WILL NOT BE PROSECUTED FOR SUCH ACCIDENTAL CAPTURES.
CAN SOMEONE ELSE TRAP WHERE I AM TRAPPING?

- IN THE SFCA IT IS PERMISSABLE TO TRAP WHEREVER YOU HAVE PERMISSION AND IF MORE THAN ONE PERSON HAS PERMISSION THEY CAN TRAP NEAR YOU.

- IT IS ILLEGAL TO TOUCH OR INTERFERE WITH ANY LEGALLY PLACED TRAPS OR SNARES, UNLESS AUTHORIZED BY THE OWNER TO DO SO.
As a licenced trapper, can I harvest fur animals using just a firearm?

- Firstly, you must be in lawful possession of a firearm. If you are under the age of eighteen, you must obtain a federal minor’s permit to possess a firearm.

- If you qualify as above you can utilize a firearm to harvest fur animals however you are still subject to all regulations governing the use of a firearm for hunting as indicated in the Wildlife Act and/or regulations.

- You can not shoot or attempt to shoot any beaver in the SFCA on any land without the permission of the owner or occupant of the land.
PICK UP ALL YOUR TRAPS AND SNARES!

IT IS ILLEGAL TO LEAVE A TRAP OR SNARE SET FOR A FUR ANIMAL FOLLOWING THE CLOSE OF THE OPEN SEASON FOR THAT ANIMAL

EVEN IF TRAPPING A SPECIES WITH AN OPEN SEASON, SUCH AS COYOTES, DON’T LEAVE TRAPS OR SNARES OUT AFTER YOU ARE DONE TRAPPING. THIS CAN LEAD TO ACCIDENTAL CAPTURES OF LIVESTOCK AND PETS AND PUT ALL TRAPPERS IN A BAD LIGHT.
YES, BUT YOU WILL NEED TO PURCHASE A FUR DEALERS LICENCE

IF YOU ARE THE HOLDER OF A FUR LICENCE YOU WILL ALSO NEED A SPECIAL PERMIT TO HOLD BOTH LICENCES

THE FUR DEALERS LICENCE COSTS $60.00 AND THE PERMIT IS FREE. BOTH THE LICENCE AND THE PERMIT ARE AVAILABLE THROUGH THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT BY CALLING (306) 933-5766 OR E-MAILING lois.koback@gov.sk.ca
CAN I EXPORT MY FURS OR TAKE THEM TO ANOTHER PROVINCE?

- YES - A FUR EXPORT PERMIT IS REQUIRED WHEN EXPORTING FURS OR TAKING THEM OUT OF PROVINCE.
- THE FUR EXPORT PERMIT CAN BE ACQUIRED AT SASKATCHEWAN MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT OFFICES.
IS IT OK TO KEEP THE FUR FOR MY OWN USE?

- YES – SIMPLY RETAIN A COPY OF YOUR LICENCE AS VERIFICATION THE FURS WERE LEGALLY TAKEN.
SO, IS THIS ALL I NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE RULES?

- NO! JUST THE MAIN ONES!


- IF IN DOUBT CONTACT A CONSERVATION OFFICER. REMEMBER THAT IGNORANCE OF THE LAW IS NOT AN ACCEPTABLE EXCUSE WHEN AN INFRACTION IS COMMITTED.
ANY QUESTIONS??

Thanks to Hamilton Greenwood for many of the pictures.