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The Official Publication of Furtakers of America

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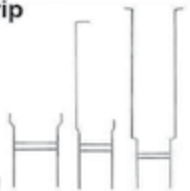


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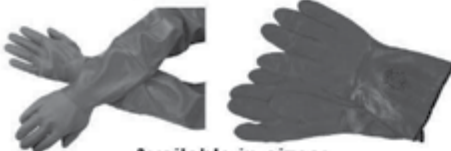
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ON THE COVER:

Mr. Dick Atkins of Pennsylvania with fox number 36. Dick may be 82 years old, but he's still out there chasing tail.

Photo by Alan Claycomb.

FEATURES:

GETTING IN A COYOTE'S HEAD—ARDELL GRAWE ... 12	by Gary Jepson
MOVIN' ON... 14	by E.J. Kelley
TRAPPING GUIDES: HOW TO BE A FUR TRAPPER 16	by Darrel Medlock
WAIT IS A 4 LETTER WORD 18	by The Trout Whisperer
GAME WARDEN LOG 20	by Mike Sells

DEPARTMENTS:

From the Editor.....	5
President's Report.....	6
Business Executive's Report.....	9
Advertiser Index.....	9
General Organizer's Report.....	11
<i>Fur Taker Talk</i> with Mike Marchewka.....	22
<i>Western Predator Control</i> with Scott Phillips.....	26
<i>Urban Animal Control</i> with Rob Erickson.....	27
<i>Outdoor Living</i> with Ron Cauble.....	28
Classified Ads.....	28
Stretcher Board/Upcoming Events.....	29
Chapter and Affiliate Reports.....	30
Chapter and Affiliate Listings.....	32

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The Fur Taker

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Note to Trappers: Regulations vary from state to state, and methods in the magazine may not be legal and appropriate for all areas. It is the trapper's responsibility to see that they conform to local regulations.

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FROM THE EDITOR

Eric Arnold
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Recently, I was asked why a well-known writer did not have any stories in The Fur Taker. "They haven't sent me any," I replied.

As we start 2023, I want to ensure everyone knows that any member can submit articles and photographs for publishing. You don't need to check with me first. If it's important to you, go ahead and write and submit it.

While I prefer to receive submissions done in Microsoft Word and emailed to me, I also understand that not everyone can do this, and that's okay. I am more than willing to accept handwritten or typed submissions and printed photographs mailed to the above address in the column header.

When submitting material, please remember that I need to be able to read the submission. I'm not referring to spelling or grammar here, but rather legibility.

If the article is printed or written in cursive, just because the author can read what they wrote does not mean I can. My handwriting, and most of my printing, is challenging to read for many people. It is one of the many reasons why I prefer to use type instead.

The easiest way to know if I'll be able to read an article is to have someone besides the author (or their spouse) read it first. If they can understand it, the odds are good that I can.

Some members have family or friends type out their articles and mail or email them to me. While I'm all for that, I would rather receive an article I struggle with deciphering than not receive it. As long as I have your name and a phone number to contact you with any questions, I can make it work.

When writing, pretend that you're talking to a friend and write down what you'd typically say. Don't focus too much on grammar and spelling; try not to use abbreviations, as I might not know what you're referring to. As for length, make it long enough to say what you want to say. For publishing purposes, I could use short stories (maybe something funny that happened on the trapline, for example) of around 500 words or so. For longer articles, 1,000 - 1,500 words is good in most cases. I can sometimes supply photographs to go with an article, but if you've got them, send them in.

For photographs, make sure that printed photos are appropriate (i.e., treating the animal respectfully) and do your best not to include blood. I can edit most of the images I receive and remove/replace certain parts, but blood removal is difficult. If you'd like the photos returned, make sure you say so. I don't trust the mail, so if you want the photo back, I recommend making a copy and sending that instead.

As for when the submission will be used, it is hard to say. I try my best to use articles within a 12-month period, but that isn't always possible. I work on a first-in, first-out basis, but the magazine's layout and production cost dictate when something will be used.

We offer membership coupons instead of payment for articles. Feature articles are worth one coupon, while short articles (500 words or so) require two. Coupons can be used by the author for membership renewal or sustaining donor listing, or they can be used as a gift for someone else. Contact me with questions. ❖

YOU COULD WIN!

Just find the FOX!



Hidden somewhere in this issue is a fox just like this one, only he's a lot smaller. If you find it, put your name, address, phone number & page number it's on in an e-mail (editor@furtakermagazine.com) or on a postcard or letter, and send it to The Fur Taker, PO Box 357, Sharon Center, OH 44274. If your card is drawn, contact any of the donors listed below and claim your prize.

This Month's Fox Finder is
**David Steintl of
Missoula, MT**

Nice work! Select the donor from the list below and contact them to claim your prize!

The fox in the December issue was hiding on page 10 in the Duke ad.

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Fur Country Lure (PO Box 312, Lusk, WY 8225) - 1 bottle of lure.

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Jeff Dunnier 5286 Harris Lake Rd, Marshall, TX 75672 - one copy of **Beaver Business** Book (903) 935-3561.

Keg Creek Baits and Lures 1-2 oz. bottle of lure, www.kegcreekbaitslures.com (712) 366-1356.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Jason Wisniewski

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Greetings and Happy New Year, FTA members. The start of 2023 is much like the start of every year for most of us in that we are all likely spending a good bit of time doing the things we love, and that brings us all together as an organization. However, this new year has brought change to the FTA in that President Dave Hastings can look forward to having a bit more time to trap, predator call, and enjoy spending time with his family by taking on the role of Past President. Dave's long-time contributions to the FTA are well known by most and should be greatly appreciated by all furtakers nationwide whether they are members of the FTA or not. Please be sure to thank him for his service and dedication. I'll start by saying thank you for a job well done, Dave! Maybe I should cuss you too for leaving such big shoes to fill.

Likewise, the start of 2023 ended the term of Treasurer Thad

Sickels, who has done a tremendous job keeping our finances straight and providing critical input on all actions that the FTA has taken under his leadership. For those who don't know Thad, I can assure you that he put his entire heart into making sure the FTA was doing what was best for the FTA's members and frugally managing the finances of our relatively small organization. Thank you, Thad, for all of your contributions to the FTA.

. . .

It was just a few short years ago that I sent an email to then editor Dave Hastings providing some encouragement regarding a great idea he had included in the magazine to add some furbearer/trapping science reviews in the Book and Video Reviews section of *The Fur Taker*. After some email exchanges, Dave asked if I would be interested in taking on a more active role in the FTA. After some deep consideration, I replied with "sure" and somehow

was elected to the Board of Directors in the next year or two. In the spring of 2022, Dave asked another question requiring deeper thought. I wrestled with this one a bit more as life was getting a bit busier, and I didn't want to over-commit and do a poor job with the commitments I already had.

The one thing I kept telling myself was, "I don't have time to do this." Having a full-time job, being a father of a soon-to-be 5-year-old, and recently taking on a more active role in our church, I didn't see how I could add something more to the mix. However, the answer I kept coming back to time and again was that this excuse was selfish because nobody has the time to do the job, but it must be done. The next question was, "What makes me so special that I should decline and have someone else volunteer their time?" I also questioned whether I could do the job and realized that I have a ton of respect for Dave and knew his love and dedication for the FTA. If he had confidence in me, then I should too. After wrestling with these questions, I confidently told Dave I would accept the nomination for President if nominated. Now it is 2023, and I am excited but nervous about taking on this

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new role.

Although my official duties didn't begin until January 1, protecting and promoting trapping has no term limits nor recognizes any calendar. As I write this report, I am over 10,000 feet in the air, somewhere between Nashville and Denver, on a late-night flight to Bozeman, Montana, for the 2022 National Assembly of Sportsmen's Caucuses Legislative Summit. This event is a 3-day conference attended by state legislators, wildlife agency directors from around the country, and a number of other sportsmen-related groups. Over the past several years, the FTA and NTA have jointly co-sponsor the event with several conservation-minded groups. This year's sponsorship

includes a joint FTA/NTA booth at the event, an offsite trapping demonstration and discussion, a marten trapping field trip to show trapping as a species restoration tool, and a 30-minute presentation to the attendees to discuss the value of trapping. NTA president John Daniel and I put together a presentation entitled *Deeper than you think: the value of regulated trapping*. In this presentation, we discuss the economic and social impacts that trapping has on supply chains to the costs of coyote predation to ranchers, and public health. Through events like this, trappers have the best opportunities to proactively engage some decision-makers who could vote on future legislation to expand or restrict our trapping rights.

Moreover, events like the NASC Summit provide these decision-makers the information they may need to argue trapping-related decisions before they ever get to legislative floors for votes where deeper-pocketed opponents of trapping may be able to lobby legislators to vote to support their causes. The NASC Legislators Summit is held annually in late November or early December, which falls directly in the heart of trapping and hunting season for many. Although inconvenient for trappers, this event falls at a critical time, just before the new legislative sessions begin in January, so trapping won't be too far back in these decision-makers' minds.

Continued on page 8

FTA COMMITTEES 2022

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Beth Hakala, Chair; Eric Arnold, Gary Jepson

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CONVENTION DEMO COMMITTEE:

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Continued from page 7

Speaking of legislative sessions, several bills have already been drafted at the end of 2022, and I suspect that we will see a number of bills to restrict trapping introduced in the coming weeks and months. The FTA tries to monitor all pending legislation. Still, some will inevitably be missed due to the vast number of bills across the states that will be considered and the irregular introduction of such bills. For this reason, I am putting a call out to our members to keep us informed of any pending legislation in your respective states so we can be ready for it as soon as or before it drops. The best approach is through your state chapter or affiliate's FTA representative, who can pass this consolidated information to us. However, don't hesitate to reach out to me should you need anything for which I can assist at this critical time.

Lastly, I want to encourage everyone reading this report to look up the website **howlforwildlife.org** and become a member by joining the pack. HOWL is one of the best tools we, as trappers, have for making an impact on legislators as bills are dropped. HOWL is a website developed by a sportsman to protect sportsman's rights across the country by providing a simple way for different sporting groups to support one another. This site and its approach make our issues known to other sportsmen that may not be trappers nor know about a particular piece of legislation affecting it. By subscribing and taking action, members can view different pending legislative actions and send pre-drafted, unique letters of support or opposition to decision-makers that can influence legislation. The strength of HOWL will grow through a multiplier effect as more members are added,

so anything you can do to join and promote HOWL to your social networks will greatly increase its members, which increases the voices of trappers. The FTA provided content to HOWL for the D.C. Fur Ban last spring, and 1,829 letters were sent to the DC city council to oppose the bill. HOWL is also a non-profit organization, so I also want to encourage everyone to make a small donation, if possible, to fund the organization, as we surely don't want to see it go away. In the same way that trapping is an essential tool for wildlife conservation, HOWL should be viewed as a critical tool for the protection and expansion of trapping. This is a massive step towards building our army to defend trapping and our way of life.

Don't hesitate to reach out if you need anything from which the FTA can assist, and don't forget to have fun out there on the line! ❖



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BUSINESS EXECUTIVE REPORT

Cristina M. Jones

PO Box 6, Oxford, NJ 07863

(908) 982-8753 office@furtakersofamerica.com



As we head into 2023, I hope all our members are in good health and spirits. 2022 sure flew by, but it gave us a chance to accomplish some good things in the FTA world. We graduated another class through Trappers College. We basked in the beautiful Kansas sun for a great Rendezvous, and the organization signed on to numerous letters of support for conservation efforts across the country. We joined with our fellow trapping organizations to unite against those who wish to see us undone, our website got a makeover, and on and on, I could go.

In the spirit of this season of thankfulness, joy, and giving, I want to take a minute to thank our immediate Past President, Dave Hastings. His time and dedication to this organization are nothing short of heroic. He would likely argue that, but I know the truth. When you serve an organization at this level, you give up a lot for what you believe in. And Dave believes in the FTA. I have joked that he thinks he may be riding off into the sunset, but I still have his number. Dave, thank you for giving your time, heart, and perhaps a bit of your soul to this organization and the cause. The world is better for it, and this organization is as well. It has been an absolute pleasure to serve alongside you, and I wish you many days that your phone doesn't ring, your inbox isn't overflowing and that you get precious time with family and friends and your traps.

We are also closing the chapter for our Treasurer, Thad, who, like Dave, has given beyond measure to the FTA. Undoubtedly, this is one of the most challenging volunteer positions for many

reasons. Thad has served this organization with a steadfast commitment to the bottom line, and it has only strengthened and put us on a course for betterment. It has been an honor to serve alongside a volunteer who has worked tirelessly to shore up the footing of this organization. Thad, thank you for finding time to give to this organization; you will be missed.

We will usher in a new president, treasurer, and directors. The Executive Board will gather in Alabama to set a path forward for this year and the years to come. It's both an exciting time of year and a busy one!

With all that good, there is also a bit of sadness. In the trapping world, we lost some dear friends, volunteers, and supporters last year. I ask that we all take a moment to remember their loved ones, their trapping or hunting buddies, and their fellow chapter or affiliate members.

It is also important to note that this is a time of major legislative action. We will likely spend the next few months or more working with chapters, affiliates, and groups across the country to fight to protect and preserve trapping. This is in addition to the already active fights going on across the country. Before the new year, we faced attacks in New Jersey, working in Montana, Minnesota, New Mexico, and more. If something pops up in your state, do not hesitate to reach out to let us know.

I wish our members and their loved ones a happy, healthy new year. Thank you to all who generously gave to the FTA, who purchased merchandise, who shared social media posts or commented, and to those who participated in

fundraisers and the membership drive. Without you, the FTA could not work to educate, support, defend, and protect our way of life.

A REMINDER to all as they are out on their trap lines, and working in their fur sheds, make sure you think about what photos you could enter in the **Photography Contest** at Rendezvous.

Don't forget to gather those antlers! While walking your trap lines this winter, don't forget to collect those shed antlers to donate to the **Antler Drive** to support the cause at the Rendezvous in Wisconsin. This is a simple way to help fund the cause.

Have a question? Need information? I am available via email at: office@furtakersofamerica.com or by calling/texting the office phone: (908) 982-8753. I am happy to help answer any questions or issues you may have. ❖

Advertiser Index

<i>Beaver Business</i>	23
Duke Traps.....	31
E. J. Kelley.....	14
FTA Rendezvous.....	18
FTA Trappers College.....	ISBC
F&T Trading Post.....	17
Forsyth Lures.....	23
<i>Fur-Fish-Game</i>	16
JC Conner.....	13
Jepson DVDs.....	12
Keg Creek Lures.....	22
Lenon's Lures.....	15
Lone Wolf Lures.....	16
Mr. Pete Book	21
NWPWC/Phillips.....	26
On Target.....	27
PCS Outdoors.....	ISFC, 1
Pingley's Lures.....	25
Renno's Lures.....	13
Schmitt Enterprises.....	11
Sells Water Trapping Video.....	20
Sterling Fur.....	13, 18, 26
Top Lot Stretchers.....	11
Waddell.....	21
WCS.....	BC

TRAPPING KEY MESSAGES

Research has shown the following four messages are the most persuasive with the public. Use these messages whenever you have an opportunity to talk about trapping.

1. The kinds of wildlife that are trapped are abundant. Regulated trapping does not cause wildlife to become threatened or endangered.

- No T&E species are legally trapped except for research or reintroduction programs.
- Furbearer populations and harvest levels are monitored by professional wildlife biologists who enact science-based regulations ensure species are not depleted.
- Many wildlife populations naturally reproduce a surplus of animals each year that can be removed from the wild without harming the population.

2. Trapping is a highly regulated activity.

- Trapping regulations are science-based and set by professional wildlife biologists.
- Trapping laws are strictly enforced by wildlife conservation officers.
- Regulations addressing harvest seasons & bag limits ensure species aren't overharvested or taken when females have dependent young
- Regulations limiting trap size, daily trap check requirements, and mandatory trapper education help ensure trapping is humane.
- Regulations limiting trap size, set type and set location as well as mandating certain trap components (i.e. snare B.A.D.) help ensure trapping is selective.

3. State and federal wildlife agencies have made significant efforts to ensure trapping is humane.

- They've spent over \$40 million in recent decades in the U.S. and Canada to identify and promote the most humane traps. These traps pass internationally recognized animal welfare standards. In the U.S., this program is known as Best Management Practices (BMPs) for Trapping.
- Traps used today are modern, and contain many components intended to ensure animal welfare.
- Many regulations are intended to help ensure trapping is humane including limits on trap size, daily trap check requirements, and mandatory trapper education requirements.
- Wildlife biologists use traps to live-capture animals for research and reintroductions. This would not be possible if traps excessively harmed the animal.

4. Regulated trapping provides many benefits to society.

- Damage management - Helps maintain balance between wildlife and people.
 - Used to address damage to agricultural crops, livestock and human property.
 - Used to protect human and pet health and safety.
- Population management - Helps keep furbearer populations in check so they don't become overabundant and negatively impact their habitat or less common species, or result in issues with disease, starvation, or property damage.
- An important component of threatened and endangered species restoration and protection.
- An important component in the lifestyles of many people.
- Trapping is a significant component of modern wildlife management. As such, the premier associations of professional wildlife biologists (The Wildlife Society) and wildlife veterinarians (The American Association of Wildlife Veterinarians) both have standing position statements in support of trapping. The Association of F&W Agencies which represents all 50 state F&W agencies also supports regulated trapping.

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GENERAL ORGANIZER REPORT

Dave Eckels

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(724) 348-6721 dleckels@verizon.net



Happy New Year! Welcome to 2023 and, with it, a new year to start fresh and make plans. The FTA schedule is always packed with planning during the first half of the year. In the next couple of issues of this magazine, you will certainly see a few ways that you, as a member, can make a difference.

Cory Van Driel will be asking for nominations from our members for officers and directors for this year. Cory asks every year but gets less participation than he feels he should. Please consider nominating someone to one of the positions up for election this year.

Charlie Mascheck will also be asking our members for nominations for our National Awards. Once again, read through the award categories and if you know someone worthy of nomination, please do so. Many members work their tails off each and every year for the FTA, and Charlie needs to know about them. There is also a category for Chapter and Affiliate of the year. If one of our Chapters or Affiliates did something outstanding during the last year, make sure you nominate them. All our National Awards will be presented at the 2023 Fur Taker's Rendezvous in Jefferson, Wisconsin.

Speaking of the Rendezvous, have you made your plans yet? The guys and gals in Wisconsin are busy planning, and you'll see updated ads and social media posts about the rendezvous in the coming weeks and months leading up to the event. The Wisconsin Trappers always put on a

great show with a great group of volunteers, and they're working on lots of things you'll want to see. Sure, I realize gas prices are higher than we'd like, and fur prices are certainly lower than we'd like, but make your plans. Look over the area around the Rendezvous or somewhere along the way, and plan a vacation around your trip. It's one you won't want to miss.

Also happening in Wisconsin, during the National Council Meeting, will be bids on the 2025 FTA National Rendezvous. Virginia is on the clock for 2024. Where will we be the following year? If your Chapter or Affiliate is thinking about hosting the Rondy, contact me for detailed guidelines for the event. The deadline for a bid is in May, but getting a plan together and asking questions is always better early. Most of our Chapters and Affiliates have meetings early in the year so that discussions can occur. A Rendezvous is a lot of planning, but I can tell you first-

hand that the volunteer group that hosts a rondy becomes a much closer group. Being a part of that "Team" that does the planning, then seeing it happen in front of their eyes, does wonders for all involved. Hopefully, we'll be in your neck of the woods for 2025. If you have any questions about hosting a rendezvous, get in touch with me; email or phone will work.

Last but not least, in the first half of this new year would be Trappers College. Yes, I realize the college happens in September, but sign-ups are now. Traditionally the class fills up early, and with Covid restrictions fading a bit, I expect that trend to continue. Now's the time to jump in if you've thought about it over the years. Hope to see you there. ❖



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GETTING IN A COYOTE'S HEAD

REMEMBERING ARDELL GRAWE

by Gary Jepson



Ardell Grawe

I am not sure whether the year was 1970 or 1971, and neither was he. That was the year I got acquainted with Ardell Grawe. Ardell recently passed away from liver cancer.

I had been trapping for about three or four years in an attempt to be professional. I wasn't quite sure what professional meant because I had always considered the value of the pelt when I tried to trap an animal. In any case, I was spending as much time as I had available trapping and making a part of my living from the fur I caught.

At the time, my biggest effort was for beaver under the ice. Beaver had a very good market value, as did mink. Red fox were beginning to show promise, and coon were so-so. Coyotes had very little value, but they were almost non-existent anyway. I had taken a few with coyote getters in the bounty days.

All my beaver trapping was done under the ice, so the time before freeze-up that had good fur was spent on mink and fox.

My method of catching fox

was to take part of a jack rabbit, cottontail, chicken, or other meat with hair or feathers and dig a shallow depression for the bait. I used a fairly long chain on a trap driving the trap stake through the bait to hold it in place. Then I would place and cover the trap and chain on one side of the bait and push the loose dug-up dirt on the other three sides, leaving the bait exposed on the trap side. It worked fairly well, but I caught as many hind feet as front feet.

I had read some articles on dirt holes and received Hawbak-ers Lure Catalog in the mail. I had had no success with dirt holes except to throw a piece of rabbit or skunk down a fresh badger hole and set on the dirt mound. That worked very well.

I bought and used Hawbaker lures and urine, or some I made myself for use on coyote getters. I also used urine in a limited way, but I had no idea whether or not it was working.

Red fox were available in big numbers, but with my methods, it was hard to get enough places suitable for that kind of set.

Our local electric utility company put out a magazine to all its patrons. In that publication was an ad by A. M. Grawe for Grawe's Lures and Trapping Supplies at Wahpeton, North Dakota. I promptly gave him a call. This was my first contact with Ardell Grawe.

My brother and I had decided to trap together and make a long line for fox, coyotes, and bobcats. The first season was fairly disappointing, except for the beaver.

We realized we didn't have nearly enough country and ordered ten dozen traps. Our tools were fairly primitive, and we didn't have anything like a pack basket or such. After my initial phone call, we decided to drive to Ardell's place and do some shopping. We got to his place about mid-afternoon.

Ardell was coming in from checking early-season traps. He was trapping fox to cage and collect urine from. He would later skin them after cold weather.

The conversation went to trapping and never changed the rest of the day. The subject of dirt holes came up. We went to his garden for easy digging, and

	<p>SNARING THE ELUSIVE COYOTE & BOBCAT Coyote and Bobcat Snaring with Professional Trapper Gary Jepson. You'll see basic snaring, set construction, locations, catches and remakes. You'll also see the types of snares, equipment and transportation Gary prefers. These methods are designed for maximum take of bobcats or coyotes with minimum cost and effort by the trapper.</p>	<p>The Book is \$24.00</p>
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	<p>TRAPPING THE ELUSIVE COYOTE Coyote Trapping with professional trapper Gary Jepson. Gary explains in detail the coyote family structure along with the how, when and where. You'll see Gary describe the concepts of location, construction and attraction in trapping the most intelligent canine in the world. You'll view locations and see how using the proper type of attraction will bring coyotes right to your set. Finally, you'll witness the outcome of following Gary's proven methods!</p>	<p>Gary Jepson 250 114 Ave. SW Killdeer, ND 58640 (701) 863-6535</p>
<p>Each video is \$39.95 ALL ORDERS "plus s & h" Online at www.furtaking.com or</p>		

he showed us his version of a dirt hole.

He dug a typical conventional dirt hole some steeper than forty-five degrees. He set a 1 1/2 Victor coil spring in front with about a two-inch high backing to the hole and about half a teaspoon of lure in the hole and sprinkled urine over the dirt pattern.

I was very impressed that all he thought necessary to attract the animal was a small amount of lure. The next thing I was impressed with was that he placed several sets close together. I was also impressed that he had caught 325 fox the fall before. A thing he would not do again during his hard trapping years. After that, it was always, more often than not, around six hundred. He had also been to Arizona late in the season for coyotes and bobcats.

His plan for this season was to go to Mississippi the coming winter for 'coon, fox, and red wolf.

He was a top-end lure maker. He made four kinds of fox lure, a canine bait, two types for bobcats, two types for coyotes, two for beaver, and one for 'coon, mink, and muskrat.

He had taken trapping instructions from Bill Nelson, who was famous at the time. From this, he developed an eye for location that was infallible. He was high-speed in putting in sets. All in all, he could get over more country in a day than anyone else could.

This skill and speed made him one of the top fox trappers in the country. His ambition was endless.

Ardell was involved in Fur Takers of America from its very onset. He and Joe Tennyson, the longtime President of Fur Takers, were very good friends. He lived in North Dakota for quite a few years before he moved to his new house about four miles from Breckenridge, Minnesota. He was very active and instrumental in starting the North Dakota Fur Takers Chapter there. He was deeply concerned about the quality of trapping on a professional basis.

His approach to conducting his

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lure and supply business was to attend the national rendezvous of both national organizations and as many state association conventions as possible. While at the Fur Takers national rendezvous, he entered the bear trap setting contest and the fox trap setting proficiency event. He won the bear trap setting contest at least twice, maybe more. The proficiency contest was his several times. Once or twice, the outcome was fairly controversial.

In his business aspect, he also bought some fur, but it did not have the attraction to him as trapping and lure-making did. Private

trapping instructions were also available when he had time, but he wanted to be very thorough and often had too many projects going.

Ardell's life revolved around trapping in every way possible. He contributed much to the industry and other trappers. We were very good friends throughout this adventure. Adios Amigo! ❖

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Movin' On...

by E. J. Kelley

“**R**hubarb, strawberry, and blueberries; two crusts with an oatmeal crumble topping,” Maggie explained. I walked into the house and asked, “Wow, what do you have in that oven? The windows are open, and you’re going to have grizzly bears up here with odors like that floating around,” I said. With reruns of ‘Little House on the Prairie’ on the T.V. in the background, I had just scraped a couple of dandy skunks and put on stretchers; the overwhelming feeling of utter contentment filled my heart and soul. There seem to be many moments and days that fit that description since our move to our little piece of heaven on the prairie. Now not every moment of everyday life is like that. Now and then, the thorns

are felt within the roses. As a fur trapper, nowadays more than ever, I feel the added stress and pressure of a poor-to-non-existent fur market. I like a challenge once in a while but come on now!

Maggie and I had just returned from a nuisance beaver call. A fellow from our congregation at church asked if I’d stop and see if I could help. His property and house sit on the banks of the Clarks Fork River. We stood along the bank as he talked about the recent floods earlier this summer and explained how the river used to be. “There’s where the beaver lodge was before,” he said as he pointed across the river. I could see why they would build there. “Okay,” I said.

Maggie and I headed along the rocky river bed, now silted with black sand. A lot of deer tracks and a very fresh sow grizzly and cub tracks interrupted our travel. Even with a large caliber handgun across my chest, it doesn’t bring much comfort. We continue upriver to the property line fence and on through to the neighbors. Not one cut tree, twig, track, or peeled stick was to be found. When we returned to his house, we explained that along with silt, rocks, and boulders, the flooding also displaced the beaver that were

here. He understood. We visited a bit more and headed home.

Maggie also went along with me to look for elk late that afternoon. She rarely accompanies me as her list of endless chores fills all of her time in and around the house. I do appreciate it when she does, as it is nice to have her along to visit with and enjoy the scenery. Plus, this way, she isn’t forced to sit there and listen to all my stories when I get home!

September of 2015, my plans were exactly the same as the previous years. I would be in, or on the way, to North Dakota on October 1. I had to pack the truck and trailer early this year. Maggie’s oldest son, Ben, was getting married at the tail end of September. Now you might be thinking, “Yeah... so what?” Well, the wedding was taking place in Jamaica! I can tell you that this ole’ country boy was feeling way out of place and HOT! I thought I would turn into a big pool of bacon grease. It was interesting to see the different environments and people. The wedding was terrific, along with the food! I even smoked a wedding cigar with Maggie’s son and his new in-laws. I looked hard but found absolutely nothing to trap down there.

We returned to Iowa, and I took one more day to double-check things before heading to North Dakota. Arriving there, it was business as usual. Park trailer, set up camp, and go trap. Two days into it, everything caught up to me. I went down and didn’t make a move for two days. The trapping would have to wait until I recovered. Looking back in my record book, the first coyote was caught on October 8. I don’t know how many traps I had out, but they had ample time to cook.

Darn slow start! Maybe it was a blessing, though, as I still felt pretty run down. It was caught on a newly formulated lure, also. That was a bit of good news: next coyote, October 11. “Oh boy,” I thought. “What’s going on?”

I didn’t record weather conditions, nor do I recall off the top



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of my head. Keep on trucking, as the saying goes. On October 14, I checked 43 traps; I had started keeping track of traps checked because of a very slow catch. This day, two coyotes made it back to camp. I was scratching my head as to what was causing this very slow catch. The three following days yielded 12 coyotes, several foxes, coon, and skunks. Now we're cooking! I chalked up the slow catch to the fact that sometimes they just won't bite. We have all experienced that no matter what we are trapping.

I was experiencing good results from the new lure I had put together and an early-season bait I was using. It had been developed specifically for coyotes transitioning into a more meat diet. The meats of the same critter had varying stages of fresh-to-the-slightest taint (this being the third season of testing). I took a chance and also used this bait in some very harsh winter conditions in Northern Iowa with, surprisingly, about the same results. I was very pleased, to say the least!

The following three checks yielded ten more coyotes. By now, it was October 20. Time, once

again, was slipping away on the calendar. The long-range forecast wasn't in a trapper's favor either, but I don't put much stock into the weatherman more than a few days out. However, it was a possibility. Hoping my good catches would continue, I kept trucking right along.

The next day, two coyotes and a fox were caught. This filled the two small freezers I had in my stock trailer. I was very fortunate that the ranch I stayed at once had a family-run butchering business and a very large walk-in freezer that they kept going. A few more days passed, and eight more coyotes were caught. The forecast was evidently correct as the threat of bad weather was approaching. Time to pull the pins.

It would take two days to pull up. On October 25, another three coyotes came to camp. I had sixty-two traps to pull, and

many of them were double-staked on the last day. "Don't screw up your back," I told myself. The change of weather was in the air, but not here yet. I had two days left; one to pull and one to pack up and head back to Iowa. On October 26th, I managed to pull all the traps and Lord only knows how many pins. I was pretty much played out after that! After returning to camp, all traps and stakes were put in their barrels. The only thing left was to skin the six coyotes that came back to camp. ❖



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In addition to the application, we will ask for a short paper telling us about yourself, your career goals, and how this scholarship will help you achieve those goals. The Charles Dobbins Scholarship Committee will determine the successful applicant. The winner will be announced at the 2023 Fur Takers Convention. Applications must be postmarked by April 15, 2023, to be eligible. Applications can be downloaded from the Fur Takers of America website – (<http://furtakersofamerica.com/scholarship.html>)- and mailed to the Committee Chair listed below.

Please send completed applications to:

Cory Van Driel, PO Box 516, Isle MN 56342

Phone: 320-676-1912 (Leave a message) • Email: erminetrapper@yahoo.com

TRAPPING GUIDES & MAGAZINES

by Darrell Medlock

How to be a Fur Trapper

This little book is part of the Little Blue Book series. It was written by Raymond Spears and published by E. Haldeman-Julius of Girard, Kansas.

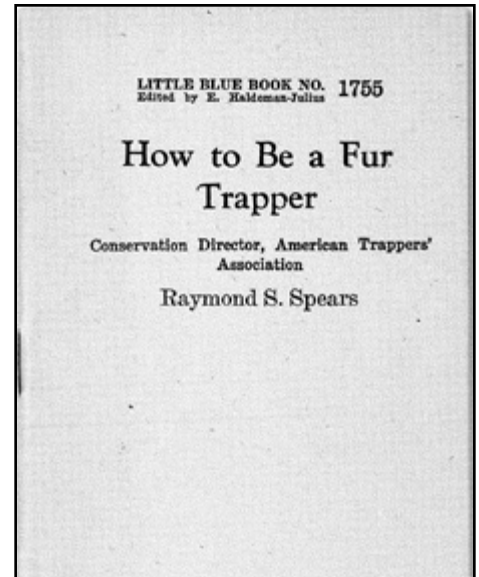
It says it is copyrighted but has no date. However, the front cover says Spears is Conservation Director of the American Trapper's Association, making it around 1934.

It is 5 X 3 3/8 inches and has 32 pages. The cover is yellow.

There are a couple of pages about the value of fur caught in various states and a little on prime and unprime furs and hides.

It has three pages about finding the right place to make a set and five on the bait to use for each animal.

There are several pages on prospecting for fur and the trap size to use. He recommends larger traps than I would use, except for the smaller animals.



He uses much more room condemning poison than on sets for the animals. You can learn how to find places for your sets but only a little about actually making sets.

Spears wrote several books and dozens of magazine articles. Because of this, rather than the information on making sets, \$5 to \$7 would be a reasonable price. ❖



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WAIT IS A 4 LETTER WORD

by The Trout Whisperer

We both have the same itch, in the very same spot, right between our respective ears.

The itch is in a place neither of us can scratch right now because trapping season where we live is still three months away.

I can see in my mind's eye a big old well-furred, perfectly prime coyote out there, sitting on its haunches, thinking how it will outsmart me this season, and me thinking, how not to get skunked.

Traps that need fixing are done, baked, boiled, dyed, and

fried. They're so ready, steel willing and able, and just like us stuck on hold, like a night latch, without a fox foot around anytime soon. We wait.

We have picked up and set down each other's traps so much that it's not fun anymore to go through them for the umpteenth time. If folks could see how smooth after loads of sanding my stretcher boards are, they'd think I was bored, and they'd be right. Same with all our new bottles of can't miss potions. I can almost quote some ingredients from

memory, and my nostrils have a pretty good clue about what's in some of them. Like a genie in Aladdin's lamp, they want out, but before giving off any scents, they will have to wait, just like us. ❖

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Friday, June 23

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FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

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A Call For 2023 **NATIONAL AWARDS NOMINATIONS**



Since its formation, the Fur Takers of America has been blessed with countless dedicated people working to preserve our way of life. Many of their names have gone unknown but each is to be commended for the countless hours and miles they have donated to preserve our heritage. It is time they be acknowledged for their service.

Each year the Fur Takers takes nominations from the membership for several of these individuals to receive acknowledgment. The FTA National Awards Committee is entrusted with the responsibility of accepting nominations. If someone is nominated for more than one award, the Secretary and Nominations Committee will determine for which award the nominee will be a candidate. This decision will be based on number of nominations received, information received about the nominee, and whether nominee fits the criteria. People may receive the Hall of Fame and American Heritage Award only one time.

Hall of Fame (2 given each year) Someone, alive or deceased, who has been instrumental in the formation of and implementation of the ideals of Fur Takers of America. He or she is someone who has been or is actively involved with FTA for a number of years. An individual may receive this award only one time.

American Heritage Someone, a group or individual, who has actively worked to preserve the heritage of trapping. This could be through financial donations or donations of time and talents above and beyond the call of duty. Nominee does not have to be a member of the FTA. An individual or group may receive this award one time only. Current officers/board members are not eligible for this award.

Fur Taker of The Year This person is a member of FTA who has done something special/outstanding for Fur Takers this past year. Make sure nominee tells us what he/she has done.

Distinguished Service Anyone who contributed to FTA in a unique manner either this past year or has done so over a number of years should be nominated for this award. Nominee does not have to be a member of FTA.

Chapter of The Year Chapter that has done something special/outstanding during this past year should be nominated for this award. Give specific details.

Affiliate of the Year Affiliate that has done something special/outstanding during this past year should be nominated for this award. Give specific details.

To make nominations, mail the person's/group's name, award they are being nominated for, and some information telling us why you believe they should be considered for the award. Nominations will be accepted before May 15, 2023 to allow time for voting and having plaques made. Nominations will not be accepted over the telephone. The awards will be presented at the FTA National Council meeting during the FTA National Rendezvous in June. Submissions may be mailed to;

Charlie Maschek, 115 North Mathews Rd., Greenwood, IN 46143 (317) 881-3075 hoosiertrapper@aol.com

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GAME WARDEN'S CASE LOG

Reminiscences of Retired Iowa Warden,
Mike Sells



In the old days, the only thing issued to a game warden was his badge. He wore his own clothes, drove his own car, used his own boat, and carried his own gun if he wanted to carry one.

The first state cars were issued starting in 1953. They were bare-bones vehicles without any accessories. Some officers weren't happy about issued cars because they had bought cars to use for work and were counting on the five cents per mile reimbursement to help pay for the vehicle.

The first 2-way police radios were loaned to the game wardens from the local sheriff, who

also gave them their radio call numbers. That call number was always preceded by the county number. For example, I was 51-7. Jefferson County is number 51 alphabetically among Iowa's 99 counties. In the 1960s, the state started issuing low-band radios to game wardens, so the sheriff's radios were returned to them. In 1977 we switched to a high-band radio system which provided far better coverage. Often with the low-band radio system, we could not call out for help if we needed it.

When we went with the new high band system, we also changed our radio call sign program to get us away from the local sheriff's system, which had caused us some problems. In several counties throughout the state, the local sheriff didn't like the game warden and revoked his radio call sign. That forced the game warden to seek a radio call elsewhere. With our new system, our central office in Des Moines issued the radio call numbers. Three sections within the Iowa Conservation Commission had law enforcement authority and were issued radios. Those sections were the Parks Section, the Waters Section, and the Fish and Game Law Enforcement Section. To distinguish what section was calling, the Waters Section

utilized the 100 series of numbers, the Parks Section used the 200 series, and Fish and Game LE operated the 300 series. My radio call sign then went from 51-7 to C-351. On the radio, the C stood for Conservation, and 351 meant that I was from the F&G LE Section (300 series) and I was from county 51 (Jefferson).

It was in 1966 when the state started issuing uniforms. For quite a few years before that, the state prescribed what you would wear, but they didn't issue it. Then starting in 1967, the state issued handguns to game wardens. The first ones issued were Smith & Wesson Model 28 in .357 Magnum caliber. Even though the state issued the handgun, it was not required to be worn while on duty. When I came on, very few game wardens routinely carried the handgun.

By the time I came on in 1975, game wardens were pretty well equipped, and new items were issued yearly. When pocket tape recorders were issued in 1976, they were a big hit. Now we could record conversations with people without them knowing they were being recorded. People were always reluctant to say much or admit to anything with a visible recorder. The pocket recorders made it a lot easier. Of course, pocket tape recorders were soon challenged in court, but they were upheld due to Iowa's one-party consent law.

In 1982 we traded in our Model 28 S&W revolvers for new S&W Model 686 Stainless Steel revolvers with night sights. By then, I was a district supervisor and handed out the new handguns at a district meeting. One of the officers proclaimed that the handgun was the most valuable piece of equipment ever issued. Another officer disagreed and stated that the pocket tape recorders were the most valuable. There ensued a lively conversation with each officer expounding on his reasoning. At one point, I told them that I felt they were both wrong. In my opinion, the high-quality Bausch and

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Lomb binoculars we were issued served a game warden even better than the handgun or the tape recorder. They both looked at me like I was crazy and then resumed their argument. Everyone else was quite bemused. Those two officers never changed their minds, nor did I.

I can think of numerous cases I made every year that might not have been made without the aid of those binoculars. One time I was driving across the Des Moines River on an old rickety one-lane bridge when I saw something that looked odd way down the river. I grabbed my binoculars and saw a man taking fish out of a fish trap. He got a ticket for running an illegal fish trap. With the naked eye, I wouldn't have been able to see him lift the trap and empty it of its catch. Another time, on the same river, I watched a man wading in a shallow riffle as he crossed nearly to the far shore. Then he laid down in the river, slid into a little deeper water, and lifted a fish trap. Fifteen minutes later, I met him where he went in and relieved him of a burlap sack that contained nine nice catfish. My binoculars made it possible to watch his every movement while he was checking the fish trap.

I have previously written about making the duck case, where the guys hid an over-limit of ducks in a burlap bag amongst their decoys. Again, my binoculars made that case—the same way with the deer camp we had under surveillance for six days. We were secreted in heavy woods on a high hill overlooking the deer camp. We quickly learned that small compact binoculars that are easy to carry are not worth a darn when looking through them for long periods. We had a couple of different brands, and none of them were nearly as good as our full-size B&L 7X50 Navy binoculars. I even prefer them to our spotting scopes that give you a close-up look. The spotting scopes were just as hard to look through for extended periods as the small compact binoc-

ulars are. I think I have made my point; to me, the binoculars were the most valuable piece of equip-

ment I used on an almost daily basis. ❖

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FUR TAKER TALK

Tricks, Tips, and Musings
with Mike Marchewka

Not too old to learn.

I was recently contacted by my local Fur Takers Chapter 17-1 President Dan Schweisthal, asking to help run a trapping booth at a new outdoor event. A fairly new sporting organization called Learn To Hunt was hosting an educational/fundraiser right here in my hometown of Crystal Lake, Illinois. Dan was busy hosting an IDNR Trapper's Ed. class and couldn't do both, so I agreed to help out. I reached out to several trapping supply dealers hoping to sponsor a few raffle prizes for the event and, as usual, got a fantastic response. The Kaatz Bros., Duke Trap Co., Paul Dobbins, and the Ico Tec game call company responded with donations. A big Thank You to those companies! Ron Peters from Fur Takers called and offered to help me at the

event. If you don't already know Ron, he is the Governing Board Chairman for FTA and lives in Wisconsin Rapids, Wisconsin. He made a tremendous effort in making the drive to and from this event. Thanks again, Ron! The event ran smoothly, and lots of questions about trapping, trappers, and the different laws were asked. Overall, it was a very good night, and Ron and I agreed that this organization would continue to improve in its presentation.

New Duke traps.

Duke Trap Company has come out with The Duke Pro Series 8.5 coil spring trap. The trap comes in two versions. One version of the new trap has a regular closed jaw designed in a thick cast of malleable steel. While designed to be a wolf trap, it can double as a beaver trap. The other trap version utilizes thick, offset, malleable jaws and is much better suited for dry land wolf trapping. The Duke 8.5 trap has an OUTSIDE jaw spread of eight and one-half inches, but the INSIDE jaw spread is seven and three-quarters of an inch, so check your state laws. The trap is a tank of a trap! The spring system is a four-coil rig that is super stout! The trap comes base-plated, and center swiveled off to a heavy chain that has a heavy end swivel. Check these new traps out!

Mouses?

The English language has unusual rules on how some

words should be pronounced, applied, and even spelled. I'll use the common words two and too as examples. They are pronounced the same but have different meanings. One is a number; the other can mean, in addition, permissible, possible, or excessive. Other words are spelled very differently in different situations. I recently completed a nuisance animal job that could be an example of a necessary word change in the English language for multiple (I mean a number in the hundreds) mice. I say the word should be MOUSES instead of MICE! How the word MICE came from MOUSE, I'll never know. Back to the trapping story.

A client called asking for help controlling SOME rodents on his recently purchased property. I asked for a couple more details and gave him my setup and inspection fee price, and he agreed. So I drove out to see what was happening. Upon arrival, the house appeared pretty standard at first glance. The structure was older, probably a 1970s build. The 15 acres it sat on was very well-kept and picturesque, and it was probably the reason for the purchase. I met with the client, and he took me around the property; things looked good.

I expected to have a tour of the house, but instead, he led me to the back of the property, and we entered a large storage barn. As he opened the door, I caught a strong odor of rodent urine and droppings. "This is where we have the rodent issue," he said. We walked into the next room of the building, and all I saw were MOUSES! These suckers were all over the dirt floor, and some were even on the walls. I thought I was in the movie *Ben* for a minute. He looked at me and must have caught my surprised look. "What do you think?" he asked. "I think you have a 'MOUSES' problem," I replied. He nervously laughed, and I stopped counting "mouses" at 60 because some of the rodents ran under some boxes and boards and reappeared running

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Marty Smith
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up the wall. We walked out of the building, and I started asking questions like, "Did you do a walk-through" of the storage building before you agreed to purchase the property? Have you noticed any rodent activity in the house? Have you tried to remove any of the rodents yet? And how do you feel about killing these critters?"

According to my client, he did not do a walk-through of the storage building. The previous owner told him that he had some expensive items in the building and did not want anyone inside. He did walk the outside perimeter but did not notice any rodent activity. He didn't notice any activity in the house, but he only has been on the property for a month. He did say that the house and building had been vacant for about six months due to some financial delays he experienced with the loan. He said that he hadn't tried controlling the rodents yet and had no issues with killing rodents. We scouted around the outside edge of the 15 acres and walked the house's perimeter. No evidence of rodents was found. In my mind, I thought something was luring these mice to the building. I quoted him a price, and he quickly agreed. I returned to the truck and grabbed a bucket of 12 traps, bait, a box of glue boards, a hammer, and my nail apron. I also grabbed my .22 rifle and a box and a half of .22 caliber rat shot (very fine shot), and a five-gallon bucket. I would bring more equipment tomorrow.

My client was eager to help, and I showed him how to operate the single-shot bolt action rifle. He had hunted squirrels and rabbits as a kid, so he was familiar with the gun. He started shooting at the far end of the building while I set traps at the other end. I tacked a few glue boards up about two feet to the wooden beams that supported the building and put a dab of sweet coon lure in the middle of the sticky board. The snap-type traps were placed randomly along the dirt floor where several tunnels came together. As

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you can probably guess, there were a lot of tunnels. The traps were baited with a Q-tip amount of generic peanut butter. By the time I finished setting out the traps and glue boards, my client had already killed ten mice, and there were six more critters in the traps and boards. All the dead critters were dropped into the bucket (we used gloves). We made another check and had five more. My client and I took turns shooting and finally ran out of ammo. Eleven more critters were killed and placed in the bucket. I would bring more ammo tomorrow. I instructed my client that I'd be back tomorrow with more equipment.

The next day, I checked traps and glue boards and had 12 more rodents. Some had been cannibalized. The traps were reset and rebaited. The glue board caught mice were dead, so I just rolled them up and tacked up new glue boards, and baited them. My client had already begun shooting. I grabbed the box of

additional traps, bait, and glue boards and started setting out more equipment in the next room. That's when I stumbled upon the food source that drew these rodents to the building. It was a large bag of wild rice covered up by some boxes. The canvas bag

Continued on page 24

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Continued from page 23

used to hold the rice was riddled with holes, and most of the rice slipped through the holes. There must have been several generations of mice that had used this food source and the protection of the building to breed and have their young. I showed my client the rice and explained my theory on the high number of rodents. He dropped another eight dead critters in the bucket, handed me the rifle, and left to grab a shovel and some garbage bags. I continued setting traps and then started shooting. When he returned, I dropped five more dead critters in the bucket and then checked the traps. Only three mice were caught, and they were dropped into the bucket.

The client filled up two garbage bags and cleaned up the remains of the rice pretty well. I noticed that he had a big burn pile stacked up high from cleaning up branches and leaves from the property. I recommended that the rice, the bag, the surrounding boxes, and the bucket of mice be extinguished in the fire. He got the fire going while I shot more rodents and checked traps. I left for the day but returned the following day to check traps and shoot any visible mice. The traps held six rodents, and I only shot three more. We were starting to make a dent in the population. Before I left, all the traps were rebaited. After a week of trapping and shooting the remaining population of mice, we had totaled 96 dead. I sold my client some traps and a few glue boards so he could continue the necessary work. He was very satisfied with the time and effort that was put in. In my thirty-five years of trapping, I had never seen that many rodents in one place at one time except in pictures and film.

New owner.

If you don't know yet, veteran Kansas trapper and expert fabricator Lee Steinmeyer sold his popular dispatch tool, The Death

Ray, to Kendall Obermeier of NO-BS Lures. Kendall will now take over the manufacturing and dealership of these fine tools.

Just another piece of the puzzle or bag of tricks.

I think it is fair to say that trappers want to be able to utilize ALL of the tools available to them when in the field attempting to catch wild furbearers. This "bag of tricks," as I call it, basically encompasses tools and strategies others have tried and proven successful. In these lean times of record low wild fur prices and high fuel prices, thoughts of how to run a trapline and not have to take a loan from the bank get a trapper to thinking. Let me throw a few out some thoughts for consideration.

Trap check laws. Each state has mandated times when a trapper must check and remove a captured animal from the trap/snare/cable restraint. Science has proven that good equipment can vastly reduce damage to captured animals in foothold traps IF the foothold traps include extra swiveling points, wide jaw faces, and strong trap springs. Some states mandate a daily or 24-hour check. Others have a 36-hour check, and still, others have longer checks. Why the differences? Is it due to the different regions of the country? The weather? Is it people's perceptions? Is it roaming domestic animals?

Can I throw this out? WHY are the legal, licensed trappers responsible for others' actions/feelings? The trapper has done everything right, but others still limit them. It is obvious that under the right conditions, a trapper can cover more ground and run more traps for LESS cost. In today's low fur market and higher fuel and out-of-pocket expenses, this makes sense or CENTS.

Snares are another widely discussed tool amongst trappers. Some states prohibit snares, while others restrict where the snare can be placed. For instance, some states allow snares only in the water and not on land. The

type of lock that can be used on snares is also mandated. Some states require certain locks and prohibit others. Again why? Allowing the use of this tool will allow fur trappers to harvest (control animal populations) more effectively.

Another thought is the time to begin and end the harvest of wild fur. The old saying was to start trapping in any month that has an "R" in it. That usually meant that some trappers would start in late September or October. That would be fine in some areas of the country, but in others, that is too early as warmer temperatures might cause spoilage issues. But from a strictly population control point of view, it would work well as there would be fewer weather-related issues. These points are meant to give some perspective on what we are facing these next few seasons. There will be fewer fur trappers out in the fields due to costs. It might be time for state DNRs to consider some of these factors to encourage more trapping participants to get back in the field to control the wild furbearers populations. And if rule changes are made, research those results to possibly add tools to the fur trappers to increase their bag of tricks.

Great information.

The old-time, well-written Harding trapping books may have already crossed your reading table. I believe many trappers have enjoyed these historic pieces of trapping literature and dreamed of what it would be like to trap back in those days. You know, when the money from your wild fur check could buy a few weeks supply of food and pay the monthly bills. Perhaps my favorite Harding book is *Steel Traps*. This book introduced me to the different styles of foothold traps that were offered to trappers back in the day. Well, now there is a website that will allow you to peruse the other Harding books. Go to www.Gutenberg.org to see the many editions of these wonderful books. Now there will not be the same feeling you

will get when holding and reading the actual Harding books, but you can see which ones you like, and then you can purchase them at the many trapping supply dealers that advertise in this magazine.

Musk-A-Tier

I got a nuisance beaver call this past summer from a new client. It was from a village about thirty miles away. The road commissioner from that village called complaining about a flooded road going back into a city dump. He had gotten my name from another road commissioner that I trap for; he was desperately trying to resolve the flooding problem. After answering a barrage of questions, he told me that at least two other local trappers had tried trapping these beaver. He also said that since the dump was in an unincor-

porated area, his crew had taken potshots at the beaver trying to alleviate the issue. I quoted him a high price, not wanting to get involved with this affair, and he accepted anyway. It took me a week to finally put the bracelets on this lone beaver. I figured it wouldn't go into a 330, as that's what the other trappers had tried. So I decided to stick to the footholds. There wasn't a dam present, and the beaver was living in a deep bank den.

Well, maybe this beaver didn't know that the lure it was smelling was concocted for muskrats, but I didn't care. I finally caught that old bachelor! I used

a new muskrat lure that Jack Hill from Lone Wolf Lures had sent me. Musk-A-Tier is a minty smelly lure. Jack tells me there is no actual mint in it, but it is effective on ALL water animals. All I can say is that it put a big smile on one village commissioner's face. It works. ❖

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NORTHWEST PREDATOR & WILDLIFE CONTROL

by Scott Phillips



There are a lot of areas that are good snare locations, but when they are first found, they don't look like a good spot. When I was in South Dakota, I had the great opportunity to snare woven wire fences about 97% of the time. This made snaring a lot easier with a lot less work. Other states I have been in don't have this much sheep fence. The predators are still there and cross fences, but most fences are barbed wire, all from three to

six strands, the first being harder to snare because of the limited guiding or fencing to make the coyotes or other predator cross where you want them to. There are other great locations besides crawl unders at fences. Some of these take a little more work, such as trails.

Trails have a lot of different animals traveling them, so you have to take precautions such as using a jump stick so the deer jump over your snare instead of

ducking into it. Fences can be the same. Antelope aren't great fence jumpers like deer are, so blocking down holes is very important. The younger antelope can go through a small crawl under a fence.

Great locations for snares are washes or creeks under fences. Out west, these washes can be quite large. I have even added sheep fence to the barbed wire in some locations to make a good barrier. Some of these fence additions can be up to 30 yards wide.

Remember, many of these washes will get a large amount of water flow at times, so when I add wire, I tie off the top solid, but I leave the bottom of the wire tied lightly. When a gusher comes along, the wire will become free at the bottom like a flap, allowing water and debris to flow downstream. Tying the wire solid will create a dam of debris and blow out the fence. But by making a flap with the fencing, it will release downstream. You will have to fix the added wire occasionally to make a good barrier, but that is how it goes. It all takes work.

Another great tool is tumbleweeds; they can be used to block fences but will "blow out" during a gusher. When this happens, collect more tumbleweeds to fill the voids back in. When a catch is made, you will have to fill in around the catch circle again. It takes work, but when you see how it makes great locations, the work will be well worth the effort. I have used these methods in ten different states and have had great results in all of them. Building locations on the line will pay off in the long run and increase your catch. A lot of this work can be done pre-season but don't be afraid to put in a little more work on the line to increase your success. ❖

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URBAN ANIMAL DAMAGE CONTROL

With Rob Erickson



In the previous issue, we discussed determining hourly and daily rates. We'll look at different ways of pricing services and jobs in this issue.

When setting prices, knowing how you want to charge for that service is important. For example, are you going to charge a service fee, along with a per animal and/or per trip fee? Maybe the service will be charged at a flat rate, hourly rate, hourly plus materials, or by linear/square feet. Will you be charging a consultation/inspection fee, and how do you want to handle travel?

I'm sure there are even more choices based on how you break down the services offered.

When choosing how to charge for a service, I recommend checking the laws and regulations involved with the service area.

Certain services, such as bat exclusion, bird netting installation, and Canada Goose harassment, tend not to have daily time requirements/restrictions. On the flip side, groundhog, skunk, and raccoon traps may need to be checked daily. Additionally, there may be requirements that once the operator is notified about an animal in a trap, they have X number of hours to remove it. This can be troublesome, especially with job sites that require the animal to be removed within an hour or two of capture.

Other restrictions to consider include who has to perform the trap check and whether or not trap checks can be conducted via electronic devices. All of this affects how much it costs to provide the service you're being hired to perform.

Generally, most operators charge a service and per animal fee when removing problem animals. The benefit of this pricing model is that the more animals you catch, the more money you should make. The con to this model is that if you don't catch any animals, or if it takes a longer than expected timeframe to catch an animal, you will have additional expenses involved with trap checks and trap maintenance.

If you decide to charge a flat fee for problem animal removal, the benefit is that the client knows exactly how much the service will cost but may not like the fact that they are on the hook for that dollar amount regardless if any animals are captured.

As a side note, when charging per animal, I recommend that operators charge a service fee that covers their cost to perform that service in addition to the per animal fee. This way, your expenses are covered regardless if you catch any animals. For flat fee

jobs, I recommend that operators set a specific number of days for the job. This legally allows the operator to remove their equipment once the specified number of days has expired. It's also a good selling tool that enables operators to give a discount if the service needs to be extended or performed within a short time of the original service.

I charge a per trip fee for problem animals except for bats, birds, beaver, and coyote. Over the years, I've found that this offers the best of both worlds with per animal and flat fee. It's easy for the client to understand that regardless of how many traps are present or animals caught, they only get charged when I have to make a trip to their property.

As for the trip itself, it doesn't matter if I'm going there to do an inspection, reset a fired trap, remove a captured animal, add or remove equipment, or pull the sets and finish the job.

While per trip works best for me, there may be better options for anyone reading this. Operators must choose the best pricing method for the service being sold and the laws governing how that service must be conducted. ❖

INNOVATIVE SKUNK CONTROL



By
Rob Erickson

Follow Wildlife Control Expert Rob Erickson as he guides you through groundbreaking odorless skunk control methods never before shared with the public. With over 10,000 skunks to his credit, Erickson is the undisputed national expert in urban odorless skunk removal. Innovative Skunk Control describes in clear detail how to deal with skunks in all possible urban situations. Includes removal methods for skunks damaging lawns by digging for grubs, skunks trapped in window wells and inside buildings, and skunks roaming the neighborhood. Stopping skunk grubbing damage on golf courses and commercial properties is described at length. The book also includes a recipe for skunk odor removal, and a description of skunk biology and behavior.

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OUTDOOR LIVING

With Ron Cauble
The Old Woodsman



When you get older, you never know how the old body will hold on and keep going. Well, I got done splitting wood and went to the doctor. He said I had a bad hernia. He's setting me up for an operation in January sometime. It looks like I'll be down for about six weeks. I was going to trap some muskrats, but the season will be over by the time I can go.

I've seen lots of mink tracks. Soon as they come back in price, I can catch several. I saw several gray fox killed on the road and a red fox last week by my house. If the coon market returns, it will keep a person busy skinning road kills. Years ago, I would take road-killed coons home and skin out what was good. Several big males sometimes weighed 25 pounds or more.

Never skin any fox of any kind without gloves and especially mink

in my country, without spraying for ticks. They can cause lots of problems unless you keep them off.

I've been seeing lots of beaver coming back on the small creeks and causing lots of problems in the culverts, corn, and bean fields. I've been prospecting in five counties, and they're everywhere, even in towns next to the Ohio River. They stop up the city drainage tiles and flood the roads.

I remember a beaver in the street in downtown Mitchell. They called me to come to get him. When I got there, he was by an open water drain and didn't know how to get back in. He was about 24 pounds. I walked up to him, grabbed his feet with my gloves, and put him in my trap box. I took him out in the country and turned him loose in a little creek. I put him on the creek's edge, and he swam down a little piece, came back, slapped his tail on the wa-

ter, and headed downstream. I saw him that fall up creek, and he swam right by me and stopped. He wasn't mean and went on his way. I never saw him again.

I've had many things like this in my life as a trapper, and I love to be out there every day. I hope the fur prices come back soon, as there are opossums everywhere.

I remember getting .35 to .50 cents for big ones in the 50s. That seemed like a lot of money when I was young. Then in the 80s and 90s, I sold several every year for \$5 to \$8. A friend and I caught hundreds at an \$8 nose count. I don't look for them to return; they're only used for trim. The skunk in the early days of my trapline brought \$7.50 for star and .75 to \$1 for striped. Now they want the striped ones for hats. Some buyers are up to \$12 on the big ones.

I learned how to catch skunks by watching where they lived and what they ate. Where I lived, the cattle left piles of poop, and when it dried, the skunks would turn them over for the grubs. I'd put my trap in front of the cowpie and put a drop of lure on top, catching several each night. Numbers were what I was after. I always had 25 traps out on several farms. Skunks loved to get in corn cribs for mice and also in chicken houses. They would den up when it was really cold and stay a few days until it warmed.

One summer when busting wood I encountered a large number of carpenter ants. I filled a quart can full and froze them for winter. Now you wonder what for. Well, I made a big mound of dirt on the edge of the woods, dug out a hole in the center, used a few drops of lure, and put them on the hill. I set two traps on each side for the fox. I'd seen where foxes tore up ant hills in the summer. When I ran this set the following day, I had a gray fox in one trap and a skunk in the other. I only caught the one gray, but I took two more skunks.

I'd better get; it looks like rain. I'm a little late, but Merry Christmas to all my old-time buddies. ❖



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January 7—Iowa Trappers

Association Fur Auction. Boon County Fairgrounds. Doors open at 7:00 AM, with the auction starting at 9:00 AM. Limited to 60 sellers. To reserve a seller spot, call Dave Phipps at (515) 591-8214 or Craig Sweet at (515) 306-9385 after December 1st.

January 14—Minnesota Trappers Association Winter General Membership Meeting.

Forestview Middle School, Baxter, MN. A fun-filled day for the entire family, trapping supply dealers, fur buyers, pelt handling contests, trapping demos, food concessions, and more. For more information, contact Brian Fischer at (507) 276-6322 or Bert Highland at (218) 600-7585.

January 14—Minnesota Trappers Association Legal Defense Banquet.

American Legion Club, Brainerd, MN. Come join us for an enjoyable evening out with your trapper friends for great food, a chance to win some fabulous prizes, and to support the MTA Legal Defense Fund. For more information, contact Dale Jindra at (218) 821-1236, or for tickets, call Katelyn Jindra at (218) 820-5797.

January 20-22—Idaho Trappers Association Fur Sale.

Elmore County Fairgrounds, Glens Ferry, ID. For more information, contact Rusty Kramer at (208) 870-3217.

January 21—Southern IN Fur Takers Chapter 7C Fur Sale.

Jerry Barnett's farm in Folsomville, IN. No commission. Straight \$5.00 lot fee starting at 9:00 AM. Call Jerry at (812) 202-0217 or Don Kolley at (812) 664-4746 for directions or more information.

January 28—Indiana State Trappers Association Fur Sale.

Old Friendship Church, 12255 Friendship Road, Tennyson, IN 47637. Contact Byron Tiede for information and Lot Number purchase at (219) 863-3803.

FEBRUARY

February 3-5—Florida Trappers Association Women and Youth Training. For more information, visit <https://floridatrappor.org/events>.

February 4—Michigan Trappers



Predator Callers Association Fur Sale. Fairgrounds, Marshall, MI. For more information, go to www.mtpca.com.

February 4—Southeast Indiana Fur Takers Chapter 7G Fur Sale. 597 W Becks Mill Road, Salem, IN. Doors open at 9:00 AM. Call Cody at (812) 844-2246 with any questions.

February 4—U.P. Trapper's Association Eighteenth Annual Mid-Winter Trappers Workshop for kids and beginning trappers. Hermansville, Michigan. Free trapping supplies for all kids attending. Trapping demos, fur buyer, and supply vendor will be on hand. Kids will be getting trapping items to take home. Contact Mike Lewis at (906) 774-3592 for more information.

February 11—Indiana State Trappers Association Fur Sale. Miami County Fairgrounds, 1079 W 200 N, Peru, IN. Contact Byron Tiede for information and Lot Number purchase at (219) 863-3803.

February 16-19—Florida Trappers Association Predator Training. For more information, visit <https://floridatrappor.org/events>.

February 25—IN FTA Chapter 7 Fur Auction. LaGrange Country Fairgrounds, LaGrange, IN. Doors open at 7:00 AM for grading. The auction starts at 9:00 AM. Fur buyers will need to bring their license. For more information, contact Gary Walchle at (260) 463-1529 or Joby Morr at (260) 242-4140.

MARCH

March 3-4—New Mexico Trappers Association Fur Sale. Estancia, NM. Contact Shelly at (575) 649-1684 or email gypsytrapper@yahoo.com.

March 10-12—Idaho Trappers Association Fur Sale. Elmore County Fairgrounds, Glens Ferry, ID. For

more information, contact Rusty Kramer at (208) 870-3217.

**SEND YOUR
UPCOMING EVENTS TO:**
editor@furtakermagazine.com

Please make sure to include your organizations name with your submission.

**Remember: Deadline for
submissions is the 1st
of the month preceding
publication.**

For example, to be in the December issue, materials must be received by November 1.

CHAPTERS & AFFILIATES

Make your event famous at
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Get those great photos of events going on, chapter activities, fur sales, great catches and have them posted on the FTA Website for all members to see!

**WE WILL ALL ENJOY
CHECKING THEM OUT!**

Send photos to dleckels@verizon.net with "For the FTA Website" in the subject.

(And never forget that the Anti trappers are always watching, and looking for photos that don't present animals respectfully!)

CHAPTER & AFFILIATE REPORTS

E-mail reports to editor@furtakermagazine.com or mail them to FTA Editor, PO Box 357, Sharon Center, OH 44272 (Remember: deadlines for submissions are the **1st of the month preceding publications**. For example to be in the January issue, materials must be received by December 1.)

WSTA Affiliate #33

Greetings from Wyoming! I hope all of you are well and having a good trapping season. The Wyoming Trappers will be hosting the NTA Western Regional conventions June 2-3, 2023, in Rock Springs, Wyoming.

WSTA will have a fur sale February 17-18 at the Chandelle event center in Riverton, WY. Contact Phil Phisterer at 307-851-0261. That's all for now.

Stay safe! Thank you!

E.J. Kelley

WSTA Region #1 director

FTA Affiliate #33 Representative
307-645.3008

ID Trappers Assoc. Affiliate 5-C

Early November was super busy for me with coaching football deep into the playoffs, fall farming, my regular job, and of course, my own trapping. Later in November, I took a trip to see my son and grandkids in California for a week. Now I have been trying to catch up with my ITA duties.

Fur sales are quickly approaching on January 20-22 and March 10-12 in Glens Ferry, Idaho, again. Commission fees are the same as they have been for five years. The only thing we are thinking of doing is cutting off Thursday due to coyote prices dropping. As I just said, coyote prices are looking rough, and it personally breaks my heart. That being said, everything else is looking at least as good as last year except beaver, marten, and bobcats are looking like they are slightly up from last year. The craft market is driving things again, and I have already been getting calls from fur buyers needing muskrats, beaver, otter, marten, bobcats, and wolves. Think outside of the box for these craft buyers: round muskrats, muskrats with tails on, cased beaver, beaver skinned with tails skinned out, square raccoons, porcupines skinned open with quills/guard hair and all,

opossums with tails left on, squirrels, woodchucks, etc. I'm not saying do 200 round muskrats or 25 possums with the tail on, but if you try a few, you will be happy with the results.

Certain animals do better with properly skinned out feet on them for the wall hanger trade: brown belly bobcats, marten, otter, fisher/lynx/wolverine/ringtail cat (where legal), wolves, color phase coon, color phase coyotes, cross fox, kit fox, nice furred badgers and other specialty furs. Again, don't bring 50 marten with the feet on them and expect them all to get a premium but try a few. The skull market is still interested in most skulls. Obviously cleaned and whitened skulls bring a premium but frozen raw skull can still be marketed as well. We also have a lot of interest in horns, claws, ivories, mounts, tanned fur and taxidermy items. If you have traps you would like to sell, we also put those on our silent auction as well.

The ITA counts on income received from the fur sales to pay to keep our association running. Please come and support the event even if you don't have fur to sell. If you haven't attended a sale before we run them like a mini convention. There will be tailgaters, lure/trap vendors, food vendors, trapping demos, fur handling demos, Fish and Game trapper ed classes, Fish and Game speakers, live auction of donated items, swag for sale, potluck, a live band, and a general membership meeting. It is a great time and usually we have more people at a fur sale than our conventions! Please come and support the sale!

The grizzly lawsuit is still in the discovery phase, but we are already starting to rack up lawyer bills. Please remember that the antis don't care about fur or gas prices, they have an endless amount of money to spend on these lawsuits. Banquets, fur

sales, conventions and other things are nice to have your club put on, but the main purpose of the ITA is to PROTECT TRAPPING. If we get defeated in this lawsuit it will effectively end wolf trapping in 80% of the state. We are teaming up with Fur Takers of America and the National Trappers Association and are paying 1/3 of the bill. To keep things clean for taxes, all donations for the Idaho lawsuit need to be made out to the National Trappers Association and clearly designated "Idaho Lawsuit" in the "for" line on the check.

The board and I are working on the logistics and promotion of the FBU Banquet on April 1 in McCall and the United Trappers of Idaho convention in St Maries on June 9-11.

There are several dog release clinics, and sportsmen shows coming up next spring we need volunteers for. Also, my president position and two director spots are up for reelection this spring. All three of us are running again, but it doesn't mean you cannot throw your hat in the ring. If you are interested in volunteering for an event or for a board position, please let me know.

New 2023 Sustaining membership patches will be in soon! Keeping the tradition from the past three patches, the new bobcat patch was created from an actual trapped animal. For \$25, you can sign up for an ITA sustaining membership. This gets you a limited-edition patch and a listing in our Idaho magazine. Sustaining membership is a way to give a little "extra" back to the ITA but does not make you a regular member and does NOT get you the *Idaho Trapper* magazine. I'm sorry if there was any confusion with that.

Christmas is coming up, and give a membership or sustaining membership to a loved one as a gift. Consider handing a flyer out to fellow trappers you see out on the line. Our membership numbers are faltering, and we need your help pushing membership.

Thank you

Rusty Kramer

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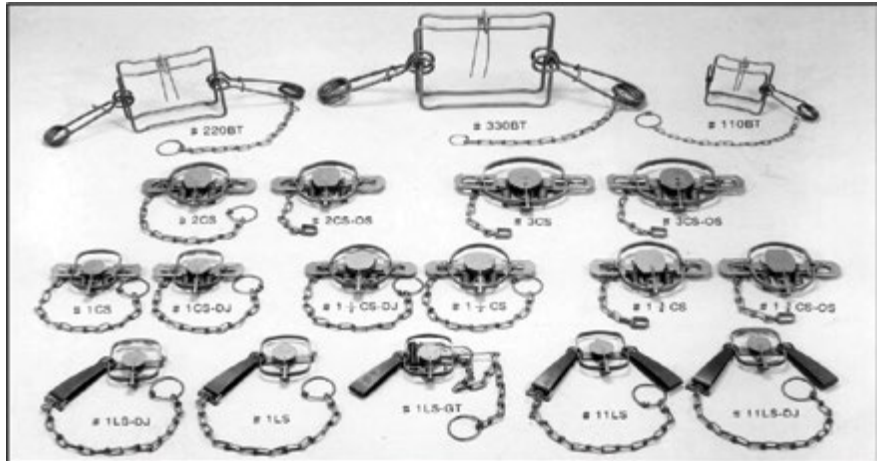
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NOTE TO CHAPTERS & AFFILIATES:

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