

Fur Taker Magazine Writer's Guidelines

Fur Taker Magazine is a monthly publication committed to serving the needs of the members of the Fur Takers of America. The *Fur Taker* does not pay for feature articles nor do we commission articles. We are a not-for-profit organization; we understand that good writing has value, but it just isn't our mission. Rather, we offer a one-year membership coupon for informative articles, with photo support, selected as features. Many of our writers prefer not to accept the coupon, or if they do, they donate it to someone interested in learning more about trapping or a school library. It's just one of many ways of donating to the organization. In certain cases, we will also trade articles for ad space. Contact the editor for more information regarding this.

TOPICS

We're continuously looking for how-to articles on all aspects of trapping and outdoor living. Our primary need is for specific, practical information that our readers can apply to their own traplines and outings.

Proper equipment selection and use (traps, attractants, vehicles, etc.) treating animals humanely, disposing of carcasses, and other nuts-and-bolts aspects of trapping are all good topics. We also want natural history topics, such as coyote territorial behavior, skunk home range size, or any other animal behavior information that will increase the understanding and effectiveness of our members. We need family and lifestyle-oriented articles too.

Our regular departments are focused on specific areas (for example, *Urban Animal Control*), and are written by contributing editors. However, this does not mean we won't use more articles in these same areas.

If you have an idea for an article and feel it would make an interesting read or benefit the membership, write it and submit it for consideration. I've found that when someone feels strongly about a specific topic, they tend to produce some fantastic work. If you are unsure if the topic would make a good article, I still recommend writing it and submitting it for consideration. This allows me to review the article and use it or make recommendations. For example, if you want to send an article about wolves, make sure there is information regarding equipment and sets needed for trapping wolves at a minimum. Don't send an article about why wolves need to be protected, as that is not the focus of this publication. I've never had an issue with duplicating articles as everyone's perspective is unique, but there may be some time between it being accepted and when it prints. For example, I might already have two articles on raccoon trapping and may not print another for a while.

ARTICLE GUIDELINES

Articles can be almost any length and there is no submission word limit; however, the shortest we print is around 500 words while the longest are around 2,500 – 3,000 words. A good rule of thumb for a feature article is to be around 1,500 to 2,000 words. If the information is coming easily don't stop until you have it all down, regardless of length.

Aside from feature articles, we also have a need for shorter pieces from 500 to 1,500 words, describing a brief incident or containing an interesting fact or useful tip. And we're always looking for short, humorous pieces.

Be as specific as possible. Avoid vague statements like, "Put the trap in a good trail near the den." What exactly is a good trail? What type of terrain features or vegetation help you identify it as such? What type and size trap is best? How is it positioned? And exactly how far from the den? Include as much specific detail as possible. It is easier to edit out extra material than have to ask you for more information to fill a topic out.

If you mention certain products, companies, books, Internet resources etc., be sure to include information on how to contact those resources. Our members may want to learn more about the product or topic of your article.

A good way to find out about our topic needs is to read a back issue of the magazine. There is a free issue available online at <http://furbakersofamerica.com>.

A GOOD STORY (Writing Tips Courtesy of Former Editor, Dave Hastings)

Teaches something while giving information. It doesn't have to be brilliant or brand new. Many of our readers are young people or beginners who are not so young. Still others have been at the game for a long time. Give readers something to take to their trapline.

Is honest. Tell the truth. When I first considered this job, I consulted Tom Krause, who has been editing for years. "Tell the truth," was the first bit of advice he offered. I share it with you. If the idea came from someone else, give him or her credit. If you only caught seven 'coons, please don't make it seventy.

Has some organization. Try the old-fashioned outline to start. Divide the information up into its significant parts and write a paragraph or two about each part. Chronological order is also fine for some subjects. Write an intro that "invites" a reader and write a conclusion that lets us know clearly that you are done. A simple plan is, "Tell 'em what you're gonna do, do it, and then tell 'em what ya did."

Gets specific. Articles about wanting to trap, or having a good attitude are OK occasionally, but mostly I like to read specifics; even if I don't trap that particular animal. "Trapping is fun" is a title I would certainly agree with, but I would probably not read the article it refers to. "Urine Application For Fox Sets" or "Improved Drowning Locks For Beaver" or "Making Possums Pay" are much more attractive.

Details are critical. A snare article should, for example, explain clearly the cable choice, lock style, support system, etc. New or unique sets, different tools, specific applications that many trappers may not know. These are the things people will learn from and enjoy reading.

Comes from a writer who knows what he is talking about. Write what you know firsthand, and what you have done often enough that you are confident that it is "tried and true."

PHOTO/ILLUSTRATION GUIDELINES

Although photos and illustrations aren't essential if the article contains good information, they help greatly. Before getting out the camera, make sure to wash off any blood and position the animal in a respectful position when possible. Take plenty of photos including different distances and angles. Shoot one horizontal and then one vertical view of each shot. It's common to shoot a whole series of shots (20 or more) as only a handful may be OK, with only one or two usable for print. Send all available quality photos as it gives me a selection to choose from.

Photos taken for magazine cover consideration need to be in color and shot in vertical (portrait) mode. They must be large enough for the cover (8 ½" x 11") and of a high enough quality to print properly (300 DPI). It is almost impossible to print a photo taken from a cell phone for the cover even when the phone settings have been changed to their highest settings or special apps have been downloaded. I recommend using a regular digital camera instead set to the highest JPG mode. Photos from most digital cameras made after 2010 will work without a problem, but for some older models, a 12-megapixel camera is the minimum for adequate cover reproduction in the magazine.

Digital images are preferred provided they are of good size and resolution, but I can scan most printed photos provided they are on photographic paper and proper size (8 ½" x 10" or larger for covers and 4" x 6" or larger for article support).

When submitted for the cover or use with an article, photos become part of the package and are subject to use at any time in print as well as all digital formats by Fur Takers of America.

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

As we are a not-for-profit, to keep our costs as low as possible, we prefer articles, images, and photos submitted electronically to ***ftaeditor@furtakersofamerica.com***. Send the article as an attached file in either Word or Pages format and the images in JPG, PSD, or TIF format. If you do not have either of these word processing programs, type the article in the body of the email. For those that do not have email capability, a hardcopy can be sent to our editorial address (see below). When sending hardcopy, make sure it is legible to my eyes. Ideally, this will either be a printed copy that was typed or printed. Articles written in cursive take longer to review and may be inaccurately transcribed if we have issues reading it or rejected.

When writing in a word processing or email program, make sure to hit the "Enter" key between paragraphs to separate your thoughts and press the "Tab" key to indent the paragraph. Also, there is no need to insert two spaces between the end of one sentence and the beginning of the next. This is the old typewriter style, and the extra space has to be manually deleted.

Occasionally I get an article typed all in capital letters or has no capitalization or formatting (this commonly happens when using a speech recognition program incorrectly). Please do not do this, as it means the article will automatically be rejected.

Make sure your name and address are included with all submitted materials as we need to know who to credit. If you would like your disks or print photos returned, please include a prepaid return envelope with your original submissions.

Send disks, large digital files, print photos, and drawings by U.S. Postal Service to our editorial address (see below). I highly recommend Priority Mail with delivery confirmation – the stiff cardboard envelopes protect photos and disks, Priority Mail gets here much faster, and it's good to know when it was delivered.

Send inquiries or articles for consideration to:

Eric Arnold, Editor
Fur Taker Magazine
PO Box 357
Sharon Center, OH 44274
(330) 350-2161
Or via email at ***ftaeditor@furtakersofamerica.com***.

Spend some time and put your ideas in writing! You'll get a kick out of seeing your material in print, and you'll be doing a great service to the Fur Takers of America!