

Wildlife Society supports regulated trapping on public land

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The Wildlife Society, Montana Chapter

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The Montana Chapter of the Wildlife Society (MT TWS) supports continued regulated trapping on public and private lands for sustained harvest of species of furbearers and other non-game as an effective method of managing Montana's wildlife. MT TWS recognizes that regulated trapping is important to many people who desire to live close to the land and take personal responsibility for their uses of animals. Further, MT TWS promotes trapper education programs that inform trappers and the public about best management trapping practices and ethics, values and responsibilities of trapping in Montana.

The Wildlife Society is an international professional organization of scientists, managers, consultants and others, and promotes sustainable management, conservation, and research for wildlife populations and habitats. The Wildlife Society's mission is "to inspire, empower, and enable wildlife professionals to sustain wildlife populations and habitats through science-based management and conservation." MT TWS believes that regulated trapping on Montana's public and private lands is consistent with the principles of conservation and provides a biologically sustainable, safe and ecologically sound method of managing furbearers and other non-game species.

Specific to Montana, trapping regulations have been publicly discussed and adopted as law by the Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) Commission for 100 years. Trappers must adhere to an extensive set of trapping rules. Regulations and quotas are based on established professional wildlife science and management experience along with data from populations in Montana to provide sustainable levels for wildlife populations across all Montana lands. Trapping can be a primary tool of most wildlife damage management

programs and an important technique in wildlife research. Regulated trapping can be an important way for biologists to collect information about wildlife. This data can provide information important in understanding changes in distribution of species and the status of populations on public and private lands locally, regionally and/or statewide.

Trapping is part of our cultural heritage that provides income, recreation, and an outdoor lifestyle for many citizens through use of a renewable natural resource. Both trapping and hunting provide opportunities for fostering stewardship values and connecting to the outdoors. Trapper education to foster ethical and humane trapping practices is required in some circumstances in Montana and strongly encouraged in all others. FWP encourages all trappers to participate in the Trapper Education Program and supports the effort to make trapper education mandatory for all first-time trappers.

-- Montana Chapter, The Wildlife Society, executive board: Mark Ruby, president; Brent Lonner, past president; Vanna Boccadori, president-elect; John Waller, secretary; and Megan O'Reilly, treasurer.