



Photo Credit: Erinn Klewsow-Webb

2026 WISCONSIN TRAPPING REGULATIONS

Al Nickel and Scott Mcauley (WCTEP instructors) mentored Trenton Bauer (UW-Madison Fur School graduate) in under-ice beaver trapping. Eager to harvest a beaver, the group braved the negative 20-degree weather to make beaver sets. All their hard work, and many layers of warm clothes, paid off when Trenton harvested his first beaver the next morning!

A heartfelt thank you to all WCTEP instructors. Your passion and dedication to teaching future trappers has created many memorable experiences like this to students throughout Wisconsin. If you've ever considered becoming a mentor or a WCTEP instructor, now is the perfect time to get involved and help create moments like these for new trappers!

REPORT NATURAL RESOURCE VIOLATIONS

CALL or TEXT **800-TIP-WDNR** (800-847-9367)

Toll-Free, Statewide, 24-Hour, Confidential



PUB-WM-002-2026

This pamphlet gives you a summary of Wisconsin's trapping laws and how they affect you. For complete trapping and hunting laws, consult the Wisconsin State Statutes Chapter 29 or Chapter 10 of the Administrative Code of the Department of Natural Resources.



CONTENTS

Definitions.....	3
Animals Protected At All Times	4
Trap Checking Requirements.....	4
Remote Trap Checking.....	4
Methods.....	5
Jawed Trap Regulations	6
Body-Grip Trap Regulations	7
Colony Trap Regulations.....	8
Cable Restraint Regulations.....	9
Foot-Activated Cable Restraint Regulations	10
Snare Regulations	11
Possession Restrictions	11
License And Permit Information	12
Game Management Units	14
Seasons And Bag Limits.....	17
Beaver.....	17
Coyote, Raccoon, Red And Gray Fox.....	17
Fisher And Otter.....	18
Bobcat.....	19
Mink And Muskrat.....	21
Trapping Along Roadsides.....	22
Trapping Navigable Waterways.....	22
Trapping On DNR-Owned And -Managed Lands.....	22
Trapping On Managed Forest Law And Forest Crop Law Lands.....	22
Trapping In State Parks	22
Trapping On Federal Lands	23
Marten Restoration Areas Open To Forms Of Dryland Trapping	24
Best Management Practices.....	25
Trapper Education Course.....	25
Trapper Education Coordinators	26
Questions?	28

DEFINITIONS

Body-Grip Trap: a steel trap designed to allow the animal's head, neck or torso to enter the trap opening and be held by compression of the jaws when sprung.

Cable Restraint: a cable noose used for restraining furbearing animals that does not allow the device or trapped animal to reach unfrozen water.

Cage or Box Trap: a trap that is designed to allow an animal to enter the trap enclosure, be captured and remain alive inside the cage or box-type enclosure until it can be released unharmed or reduced to possession by the operator of the trap. This trap may not be used as a water set.

Capable of Submersing: a set designed to allow the trapped animal to travel to water of sufficient depth to cause irreversible complete submersion.

Colony Trap: an enclosure-type device that allows for the capture of one or more furbearing animals in a single setting as a submersion set.

Enclosed Trigger Trap: any trap with a push- or pull-activated trigger located inside an enclosure and recessed $1\frac{1}{4}$ inches or more from an opening that is no greater than $1\frac{3}{4}$ inches in diameter. The diameter of the opening is measured as the straight-line distance across the opening between the two inside points that are farthest apart. If the opening is square or rectangular, this measurement must be made from the two opposite corners that are furthest apart.

Foot-Activated Cable Restraint: a passive- or spring-activated cable noose used for restraining furbearing animals by the foot that does not allow the device or trapped animal to reach unfrozen water.

Furbearing Animal: for the purpose of this pamphlet, bobcat, fisher, otter, coyote, raccoon, red fox, gray fox, mink, muskrat, beaver, skunk, weasel, woodchuck and opossum are included in this definition.

Green Pelts: a skin that has not been removed from the carcass or the pelt of any furbearing animal that has been removed but has not been tanned or fleshed, stretched and dried.

Jawed Trap: a trap designed to catch an animal by the foot but does not include enclosed trigger traps, cable restraints or body-gripping traps.

Non-Submersion Set: any trap set that is capable of capturing an animal and not capable of submersing the captured animal.

Raw Fur: the undressed or untanned skins or pelts of any furbearing animal that have been stretched and dried.

Reverse-Bend Washer Lock: a mechanical washer lock with a minimum outside diameter of $1\frac{1}{4}$ inches and includes a bend in the washer sufficient enough to allow the lock to relax or release pressure on the captured animal when the animal stops pulling. Pictured below.

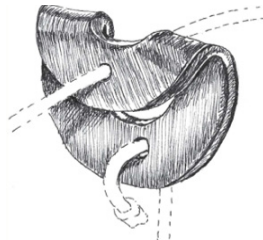


Photo Credit: Natalene Cummings

Snare: a wire noose used for restraining furbearing animals in a water set.

Submersion Set: Any trap set capable of capturing an animal and capable of submersing the captured animal. A body-grip trap is not a submersion set when more than one-half of the trap is located above water after the trap has been fired.

Water Set: a trap or snare that is set or staked in a manner to permit the trap, snare or trapped animal to reach unfrozen water.

PROTECTED WILD ANIMALS

The following wild animals are designated protected and have no open season: badger, Canada lynx, cougar, flying squirrel, American marten, wolverine and any other species designated protected, endangered or threatened.

UNPROTECTED WILD ANIMALS

Opossums, skunks, porcupines, red squirrels, woodchucks and weasels are unprotected and may be trapped year-round by persons possessing a trapping license. A trapping license is not required for landowners or occupants trapping unprotected species causing damage or which are otherwise a nuisance.

TRAP CHECKING REQUIREMENTS

TRAPPING HOURS: Except in state parks, it is legal to set, place, check and operate traps from 12:00 a.m. (midnight) to 11:59 p.m. (24 hours a day) when the appropriate season is open. See page 22 for state park trapping hour restrictions.

- A person who is not the operator of a trap and does not have a valid trapping license or authorization may check a trap. If the person physically checking the trap will also be setting, resetting or handling the traps, removing the animals from the traps, or possessing furbearing animals caught by trapping, that person shall possess a valid trapping license or authorization for the species being targeted unless that person is otherwise exempt.
- All captured animals must be removed from the set once the trap is checked unless it is an under-ice set.

Trap Type	Non-Submersion Set	Water Set	Submersion Set	Under-Ice Set
Checking Requirement	Once each day*	Once each day	At least every 4 days**	None

**Weasel boxes that use a body-grip trap, have no opening larger than 1 3⁄8 inch in diameter and are anchored to an immovable object shall be tended within a four-day period following the last tending of the set.*

***Trappers must monitor water levels to ensure the trap qualifies as a submersion set.*

REMOTE TRAP CHECKING

Trap checking requirements may be met by the use of technology. This includes drones when flown in a legal manner.

In order for remote trap checking to be utilized, the system must meet the following criteria:

1. It has a control unit or remote camera that reports the trap status to a centralized application at least once every 24 hours.
2. It must be able to provide notifications of trap closures or activity at the trap site and system health issues within one hour of detection via email or text-based messaging systems.

3. It must have on-demand capabilities for determining signal strength and battery condition via a remote system check-in.

When the control unit reports a trap closure or the camera sends a photo of an animal in a trap, the operator of the trap shall physically visit the trap within 24 hours of the time the trap was reported closed or the photo was received.

If the control unit or camera of the remote trap checking system fails to report its current status within a 24-hour check-in period or reports a system health issue, the operator of the trap shall physically check the trap within 24 hours of the last communication with the device. The trap operator must follow in-person trap checking requirements until the technology is working again.

The operator of the trap shall keep records of notifications from the remote trap checking system for as long as the camera or the control unit is in use. If requested by the department, the operator of the trap shall provide the records of notifications from the remote trap checking system.

METHODS

All live furbearing animals taken during the open season for such species shall be released unharmed or dispatched immediately and made part of the daily bag. It is unlawful to keep such animals alive after their capture unless you have first obtained a DNR permit, license or authorization to possess the animal alive.

Note: A trapping license does not allow the possession of live wild animals obtained by trapping.

You may not:

- Set any trap for which a trapping license is required, unless a metal tag is attached to the trap. The tag must be stamped or engraved legibly with the name and address of the operator or with their customer ID number. Heavy-duty stamped tags are recommended;

Note: Landowners trapping under the landowner exemption do not need to tag traps.

- Possess any trap for the purpose of catching furbearing animals other than a jawed trap, cage/box trap, enclosed trigger trap, body-grip trap, cable restraint, foot-activated cable restraint, snare or colony trap. Cage or box traps shall be constructed so that no additional animals may enter the trap after an animal has been captured until that animal is removed and the trap has been reset;
- Place any set or sprung trap, snare or cable restraint for furbearing animals during the closed season, unless conducting nuisance wildlife control work;

Note: Using stakes or other devices to mark a trap site prior to the season opener is not allowed on DNR-managed lands and is not recommended on other public lands. It does not legally reserve the site for the person placing the stake or markers.

Note: Cable restraints can only be used for nuisance wildlife control work during the closed season if a permit is issued by the department.

- Take or attempt to take beaver, fisher, mink, muskrat or otter by any means other than trapping or snaring. It is illegal to dispatch a fisher, mink, muskrat or otter by means of a firearm or spear. Beaver may be dispatched by firearm only if held in a trap or snare;

Note: Landowners, occupants or their family members who live with the landowner or occupant may take beaver by firearm on their land. Shooting hour restrictions apply.

- Operate trap sets that permit the trapped animal to reach water *except* when the muskrat, mink, beaver or otter trapping season is open in the zone you are trapping in or unless using a commercially manufactured enclosed trigger trap;
- Set, place or operate more than 3 feet above the ground any trap or device designed or used to capture or kill birds;
- Use sight-exposed bait consisting of feathers, animal flesh, fur, hide or entrails within 25 feet of any trap, snare or cable restraint, except for enclosed trigger traps and cage traps. Sight-exposed bait is any bait that can be seen from directly above;
- Place bait or scent for furbearing animals during the closed season, except for efforts specific to nuisance wildlife control;
- Physically damage or destroy any mink den, muskrat house, muskrat feeding house or beaver dam (DNR publication WM-007 Beaver Damage Control Guidelines, <https://widnr.widen.net/content/m10ch9z9t4/pdf/beaverdamage.pdf>);
- Place on the ice any artificial house or den (not including weasel boxes) for the purpose of catching any furbearing animal; or
- Molest or take traps, cable restraints, snares or trapped animals that belong to someone else.

JAWED TRAP REGULATIONS

No person may:

- Set, place or operate any jawed trap with teeth unless such traps are located completely underwater at all times;
- Set, place or operate any jawed trap with a jaw spread width of more than 7 inches on dryland or 8 inches in the water from the opening of the trapping season until Nov. 30. After Nov. 30, traps with a jaw spread of 8 inches or less may be placed on both dryland or in the water; or
- Set, place or operate any jawed trap with a jaw spread smaller than 5 ½ inches as a water set, except when the muskrat or mink season is open in the zone in which you are trapping.

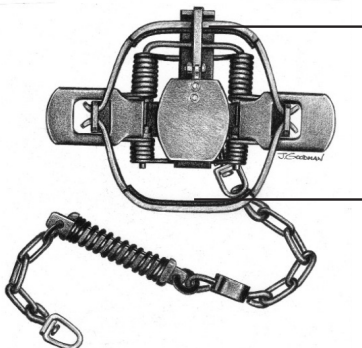


Figure 1. Spread width for a jawed trap is measured from the widest points on the outside of the jaws as shown above. Photo Credit: Joe Goodman.

BODY-GRIP TRAP REGULATIONS

No person may:

- Set, place or operate any body-grip trap that is **60 square inches or less**:
 - On dry land, unless the maximum vertical jaw measurement is 7 ½ inches or less when set. The vertical measurement is taken from the widest points on the trap in the set position (Figure 2).
 - As a water set, except when the muskrat or mink season is open in the zone in which you are trapping;
 - Set, place or operate any body-grip trap greater than 60 square inches in the following locations:
 - Within 3 feet of any federal, state or county road right-of-way culvert unless completely submerged in water;
 - Within 3 feet of any woven or welded wire fence; or
 - Within 100 yards of any building devoted to human occupancy without the owner's consent.
 - Set, place or operate any body-grip trap greater than **60 but less than 75 square inches**, measured from the widest points on the outside of the jaws (Figure 3) as a:
 - **Water set**, unless at least half of the set trap is located underwater at all times;
 - **Elevated set**, unless the trap is placed at least 5 feet above the surface;*
 - **Bottom entry enclosure set**, unless the entire opening of the enclosure is no more than 7 inches above the surface;
 - **Baited and/or scented set in or on the ground**, unless the trap trigger is within an enclosure with openings no greater than 50 square inches for a 7-inch recess or an opening of 8 inches high by 10 inches wide with a 10-inch minimum recess from the enclosure openings; or
 - **Unbaited and/or unscented trail set**, unless the trap is within an enclosure that provides openings no greater than 10 inches high and 10 inches wide and is recessed a minimum of 15 inches from the enclosure openings.
- *Surface is the first surface that is ground, ice, crusted or packed snow or any other hard material beneath the trap or opening. For the purposes of this section, "enclosure" means any single-unit device that creates a barrier to the trap allowing entry only through designated openings.
- Set, place or operate any body-grip trap that is **75 square inches or larger**, unless ½ of the trap is located underwater at all times.

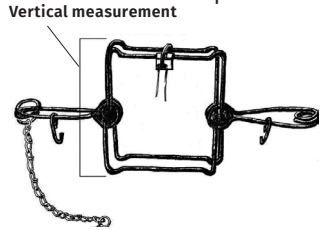


Figure 2. An example of how to measure the vertical height measurement of a trap when set.

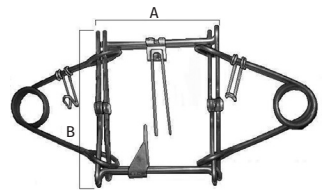


Figure 3. To determine the maximum square inches of an unset trap, multiply the maximum width of the trap jaws (A) by the height of the trap jaws (B). Body-grip trap designs vary.

Body-Grip Trap Size	Dry Land	Water
Less than or equal to 60 square inches	Legal	Legal
Between 60 and 75 square inches	Legal if enclosed or at least 5 feet off the ground	Legal
75 square inches or greater	NOT legal	Legal

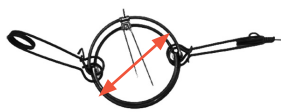


Figure 4. The diameter of a trap is the measurement from one side of the round trap to the other side.

Square Inches of Commonly Available Round Body-Grip Traps:

Diameter (inches)	Total Square Inches
6	28
7	38
8	50
10	79
12	113

COLONY TRAPS REGULATIONS

Colony Traps: Mink that are incidentally captured in colony traps placed for muskrats can be retained.

Enclosure-type devices that allow for the capture of one or more animals in a single set are only legal to use for trapping muskrat.

You may not:

- Set, place or operate a colony trap with a length exceeding 36 ½ inches or with a height or width exceeding 6 ½ inches (Figure 5). If using a round (tube-shaped) trap, the diameter cannot exceed 6 ½ inches;
- Set, place or operate a colony trap within 3 feet of any culvert;
- Place bait, including scent, in the trap or at the set location;
- Set, place or operate a colony trap that is not completely underwater; or
- Use a colony trap in conjunction with any fencing, netting or other material placed in the water (including other colony traps) that create an underwater obstruction designed to force or channel any wild animal into the trap.

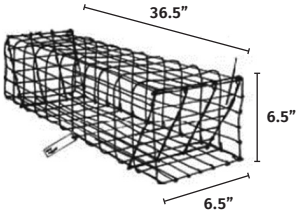


Figure 5. No person may set, place or operate a colony trap with a length exceeding 36 ½ inches or with a height or width exceeding 6 ½ inches.

CABLE RESTRAINT REGULATIONS

You may not:

- Set, place or operate cable restraints for any species other than fox, coyote and bobcat. Cable restraints may only be placed, set or sprung during the open trapping seasons for the previously listed species;
- Use cable restraints for removal of nuisance wildlife except for during the open seasons for coyote and fox;
- Stake a cable restraint in a manner that allows the restraint device to reach any part of a fence, rooted woody vegetation greater than ½ inch in diameter or any other immovable object or stake that could cause entanglement;
- Set, place or operate any cable restraint, regardless of the size of the loop, in the following locations:
 - Within 3 feet of any federal, state or county road right-of-way culvert;
 - Within 3 feet of any woven or welded wire fence; or
 - Within 100 yards of any building devoted to human occupancy without the owner's consent.
- Set, place or operate any cable restraint with the bottom of the loop less than 6 inches or greater than 12 inches above the first surface beneath the bottom of the set cable restraint loop (Figure 6), where the surface is ground, ice, crusted or packed snow or any other hard surface;
- Set, place or operate any cable restraint unless the noose cable and noose attachments conform to the following specifications (Figure 7):
 - The cable length may not exceed 7 feet;
 - The cable must be galvanized aircraft cable and include a swivel;
 - The set must be non-spring activated with the exception of the foot-activated cable restraint;
 - The cable must be made of multiple strands of wire, with a diameter of ⅜ inches or larger;
 - The set must include a breakaway device or be stop-rated at 350 pounds or less;
 - The set must include a relaxing reverse-bend washer lock with a minimum outside diameter of 1¼ inches; and
 - The set must include cable stops affixed to the cable to ensure that the portion of the cable that makes up the noose loop may not be longer than 38 inches or less than 8 inches.

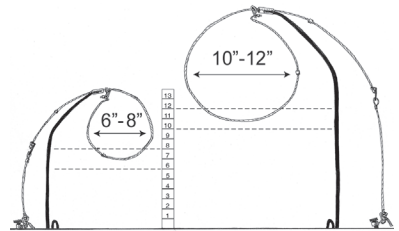


Figure 6. Loop heights and size vary depending on the intended species: coyote, bobcat or fox. Multiple swivels are recommended on a cable restraint. However, only a single swivel is required.



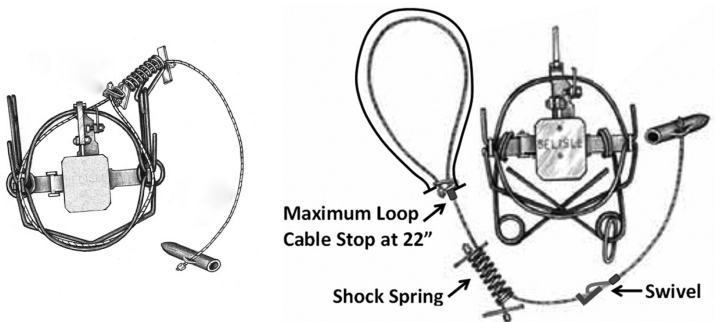
Figure 7. The maximum and minimum loop size for cable restraints is easily measured by circumference. The minimum loop stop is set at 8 inches and the maximum loop stop is set at 38 inches from the reverse-bend washer end of the cable. This results in a loop no smaller than 2½ inches in diameter and no larger than 12 inches in diameter.

FOOT-ACTIVATED CABLE RESTRAINTS

You may not:

- Set, place or operate foot-activated cable restraints for any species other than fox, coyote and bobcat;
- Set out or place a cable restraint, whether set or sprung, on public or private land, except during the following dates:
 - Dec. 1, 2026–Jan. 31, 2027 for bobcat; and
 - Dec. 1, 2026–Feb. 15, 2027 for coyote and fox.
- Use foot-activated cable restraints for removal of nuisance wildlife, except for coyote and fox during the dates listed above;
- Stake a cable restraint in a manner that allows the restraint device to reach any part of a fence, rooted woody vegetation greater than ½ inch in diameter or any other immovable object or stake that could cause entanglement;
- Set, place or operate any foot-activated cable restraint unless the noose cable and attachments conform to the following specifications:
 - The cable length may not exceed 7 feet, must be ⅜ inch or larger and consist of multiple wires;
 - The set must include a breakaway device or stop rated at 350 pounds or less;
 - The set must include a roller or barrel in-line swivel that ensures that the portion of the cable that makes up the noose loop may not be longer than 22 inches; and
 - The set must include an in-line shock spring.

Figure 8. Foot-activated cable restraint. The maximum loop stop is set at 22 inches from the lock.



SNARE REGULATIONS

You may not:

- Set, place or operate any snare, regardless of the noose size unless half of the snare noose is located underwater at all times.
- Set, place or operate any snare, regardless of the size of the noose, in the following locations:
 - Within 3 feet of any federal, state or county road right-of-way culvert unless completely submerged in water;
 - Within 3 feet of any woven or welded wire fence; or
 - Within 100 yards of any building devoted to human occupancy without the owner's consent.
- Set, place or operate any snare unless the noose cable and noose attachments conform to the following specifications:
 - The cable length may not exceed 5 feet;
 - The cable must be galvanized aircraft cable;
 - The cable or wire diameter may not exceed $\frac{1}{8}$ inch;
 - The cable must be non-spring activated; and
 - Must include a swivel.

POSSESSION RESTRICTIONS

You may not:

- Possess the green pelts of any bobcat or otter beginning longer than seven days after the month of harvest unless the pelt has a valid certification tag attached;
- Possess any mink, muskrat, fisher or otter pelt that has been shot or speared;
- Possess any raw fisher, mink, muskrat or otter pelt at any time without a current trapping or fur dealer's license or other appropriate special license or permit issued by the DNR;
- Ship fur unless the outside of the container is marked with the number and type of species being shipped and the name, address and trapping license number of the shipper;
- Transfer to another, give, trade, sell or purchase a raw pelt or unskinned carcass of any bobcat or otter without a certification tag being attached and locked to the head portion of the pelt; or
- Purchase any raw fur without a fur dealer's license. However, you may obtain written authorization from the DNR to purchase raw fur without the need to purchase a license if only for the purpose of making garments for yourself or a member of your family.

LICENSE AND PERMIT INFORMATION

Note: Reduced rates are available for first-time license buyers. Visit dnr.wisconsin.gov/permits for more information.

GENERAL TRAPPING AUTHORIZATIONS

	Resident	Non-resident
Trapping License*	\$20	\$150
Youth trapping License (Under 16)**	Free	Free
Mentored Trapping License***	\$10	\$10

*A certificate of successful completion of the Wisconsin trapper education course may be used by a resident in place of a trapping license for the trapping license year in which the certificate is issued.

**Youth trapper is required to work with a licensed supervisor trapper

*** Requires license and mentor trapper

Note: Wisconsin allows trapping by non-residents except for residents of HI, MN and Washington DC.

ADDITIONAL APPLICATIONS TO TRAP CERTAIN SPECIES (Deadline to apply for an upcoming season is Aug. 1)

Species	Patron License Holders	Trapping License Holders
Bobcat	\$6	\$6
Fisher	Included in license cost*	\$3

*Conservation Patron license holders still need to register their application choices.

COMBINATION LICENSES

Trapping licenses for the 2026–27 license year expire on March 31, 2027

	Resident	Non-resident
Conservation patron license*	\$165	\$620
Conservation patron junior license*	\$75	\$77
Conservation patron Purple Heart license*	\$10	\$161

*Conservation patrons license includes trapping license and a fisher application among a variety of other hunting and fishing approvals. It does not include a bobcat application.

ACCEPTABLE FORMS OF PROOF:

Any of the following are considered valid forms of proof:

- Conservation Card.
- Valid Wisconsin driver’s license.
- A department-generated PDF file displayed on an electronic device or the physical hard copy license.

Trappers must carry hard copies of department-issued bobcat permits while trapping.

REPRINTS AND DUPLICATES:

- Reprints of licenses can be obtained free of charge by visiting a DNR service center and through the Go Wild licensing website at gowild.wi.gov. License agents also provide reprints for a \$2 processing fee.
- Permit duplicates must be reprinted through the DNR by calling 608-228-0765.

YOU MAY NOT:

- Transfer your license, permit, harvest authorization or tag or allow its use by anyone else except as provided on page 16;
- Carry any trapping license, permit, harvest authorization or tag issued

to anyone else.

TRAPPER ED REQUIREMENTS

- All trappers must obtain a trapping license with the exception of trappers younger than 16 years of age working with a supervising trapper. A minimum age of 10 years is recommended for successful completion of a trapper education program.
- All trappers must complete the Wisconsin trapper education course (see page 25) prior to purchasing a license, unless trapping under youth supervised or mentored trapping program rules (see below) or under one of the statutory exemptions listed on page 26.

LANDOWNER PROVISIONS

The owner or occupant of any land and any family members* who live with them do not need a license to:

- Trap coyote, beaver, fox, muskrat, raccoon, woodchuck, rabbit and squirrel on the land year-round; or
- Live trap with cage or box traps for beaver, coyote, fox, woodchuck, rabbit, raccoon and squirrel on their land at any time in cities, villages or other areas where the discharge of firearms is unlawful. Live-trapped animals must either be humanely killed or be released on unenclosed private land with the landowner's permission within 24 hours.

Note: Live-trapped animals cannot be released on DNR-owned and managed lands.

**Family members who do not live with the owner or occupant of the land but who are siblings and/or children of the owner and are under the age of 18 may also hunt or trap these species on that property without a license.*

YOUTH SUPERVISED TRAPPING

Youth under age 16 may trap without a license under the supervision of a licensed trapper, even if the youth has not completed trapper education

Note: Youth who are trapping under supervision may apply for, purchase and use bobcat and fisher trapping permits. Youths trapping without a license will need to add the otter harvest authorizations in Go Wild (gowild.wi.gov) in order to pursue this species since they aren't purchasing a license. All traps used must be tagged with supervisor's information.

Alternatively, youths under age 16 who wish to trap alone must complete trapper education, purchase a trapping license and tag their traps with metal tags as described on page 5.

MENTORED TRAPPING PROGRAM

Youth under age 16 do not need a license to trap with a mentor. See Youth Supervised Trapping above.

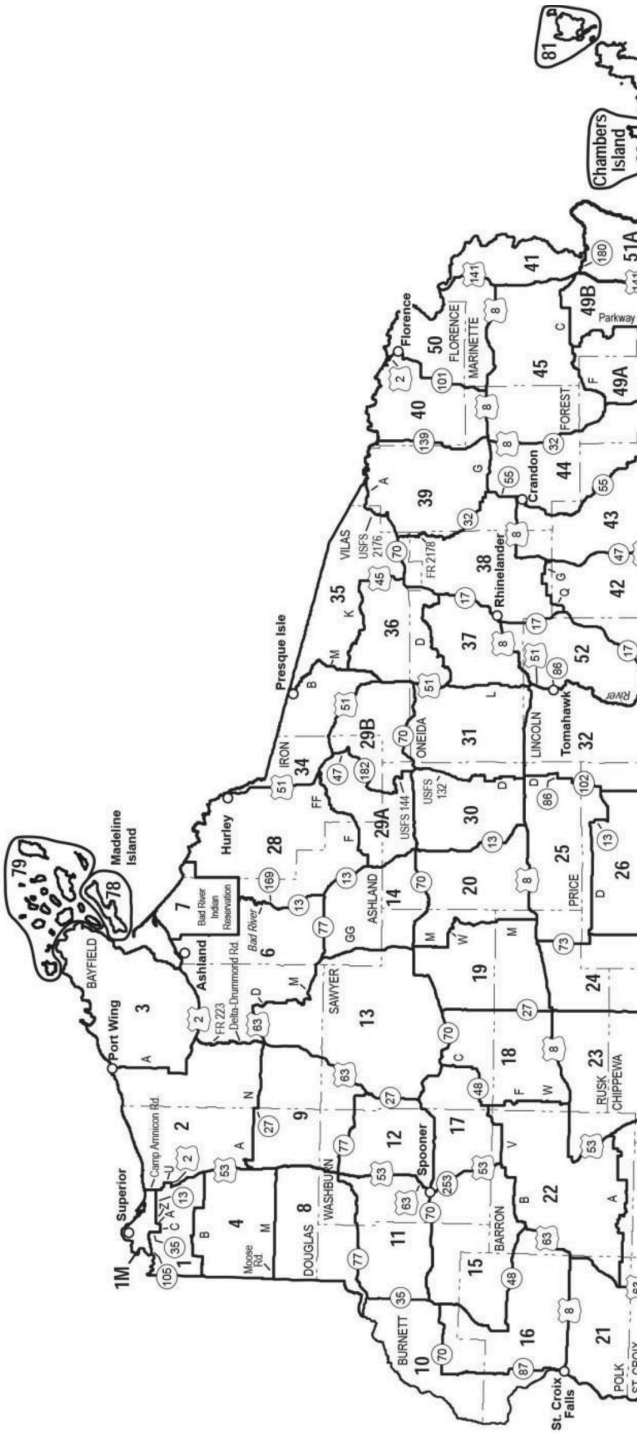
Anyone age 16 years and older who wishes to trap in Wisconsin and who has not completed trapper education must possess a valid mentored trapping license and trap with a mentor, unless exempt from the trapping license requirement.

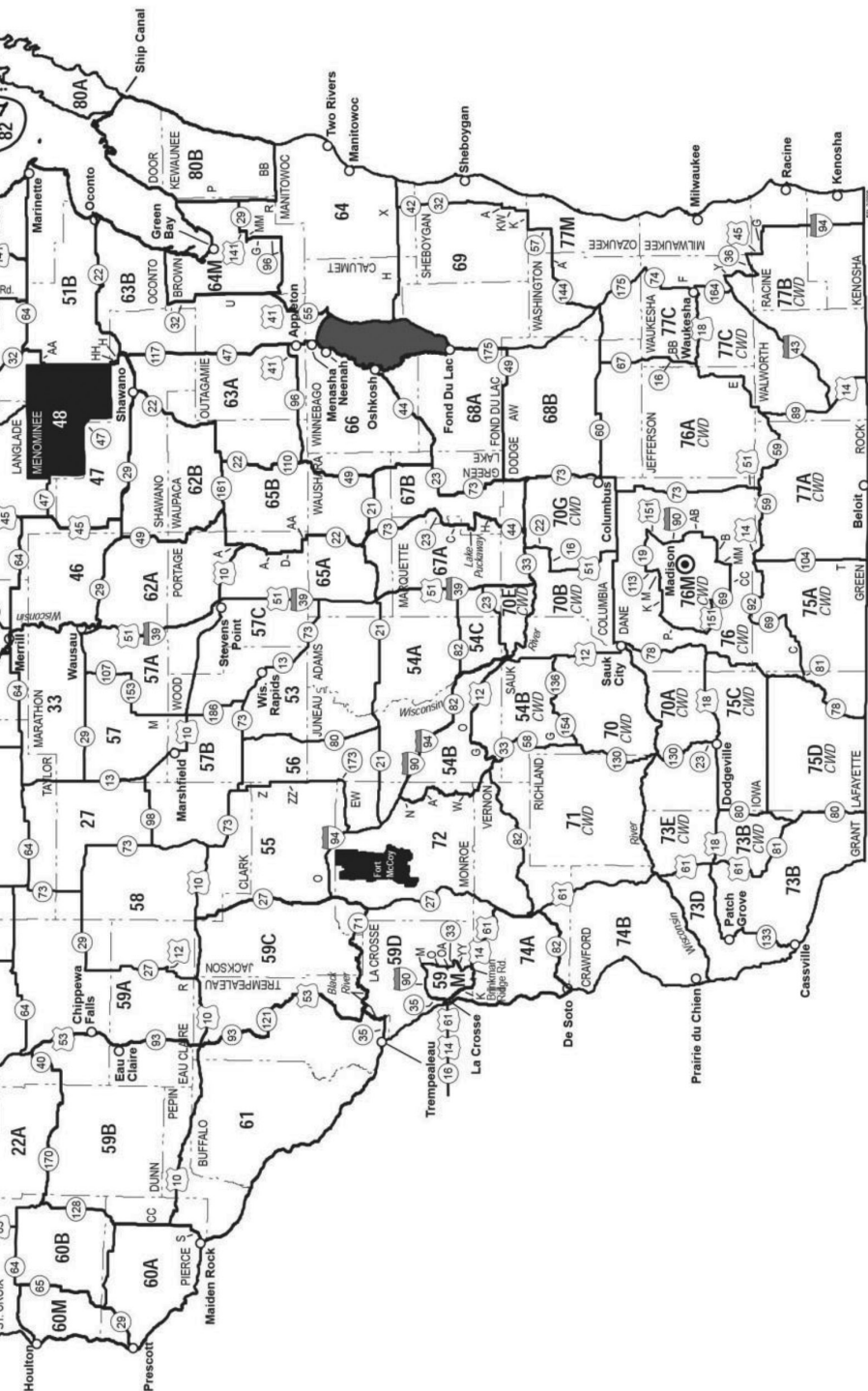
A mentee may only receive **two mentored trapping licenses per lifetime**. Each trapping license is valid for one trapping season.

A mentee may not trap a fisher or bobcat under a mentored trapping license. A mentee may apply for bobcat or fisher preference points while holding a mentored trapping license. However, if the mentee applies for the drawing for one of these species and is awarded a permit, the mentee must complete trapper education and purchase a regular trapping license before they may trap under the authority of the awarded permit. A mentee may assist the mentor in trapping a fisher. A mentee holding

GAME MANAGEMENT UNITS

When reporting a bobcat, fisher or otter harvest, trappers and hunters will be asked to determine the game management unit (GMU) of harvest. GMUs are similar to previously-used deer management units and are outlined below. Visit dmr.wisconsin.gov/topic/Trap/TrappingRegistration to download a PDF of Wisconsin's GMUs.





a mentored trapping license may still apply for and receive a bobcat harvest tag if hunting bobcat, in which case a small game hunting license must also be purchased.

If using the same traps, both the mentor and mentee must tag the traps with a metal tag stamped with the name/address or customer ID. This does not apply if the mentee is under age 16.

If the mentee alone tags the traps, then the mentee and mentor may operate the traps only when both mentor and mentee are present.

The mentor must be 18 years of age or older and be the parent/guardian of the mentee or authorized by the parent/guardian of the mentee if the mentee is under 18. The mentor must remain in visual and verbal contact with the mentee and must hold a current valid trapping license or be exempt from this requirement.

The mentor can take more than one person trapping provided the mentor can safely and adequately serve as mentor for all mentees.

ANIMALS CAUSING DAMAGE

During the closed season, a DNR permit may be required to remove nuisance animals. Visit dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/WildlifeHabitat/damage, DNR publication WM-007 Beaver Damage Control Guidelines (dnr.wisconsin.gov/tiny/3821) or contact the DNR call center at 888-936-7463 for more information.

SPECIAL REGULATIONS: BOBCAT AND FISHER

Permit Applications and Preference

Points: Permit applications can be submitted at gowild.wi.gov, or at DNR service centers or license agents. Trappers can submit their application choices for bobcat and fisher at the same time they pay the application fee for each species.

Applicants have the option of applying for a preference point only or may

enter into the drawing for a permit(s). If an applicant makes the choice to be entered into the drawing and is selected for a permit, the applicant will lose all preference points, even if the permit is not used.

Applicants who fail to apply for either a preference point or a permit at least once during any three consecutive years will lose all previously accumulated preference points.

Note: Conservation Patron license holders who did not submit application choices for fisher with the purchase of a license must apply online or at a DNR service center.

Applicants who apply for a bobcat permit must choose a zone and period of preference.

Transfer of Bobcat or Fisher Permits: A person who has been awarded a bobcat permit or fisher harvest authorization may apply to transfer that permit or authorization to a youth under the age of 18 or a person holding a valid Class A, B, C or D disabled permit no later than 15 days before the open season. The person receiving the permit will retain their accumulated preference points. A youth or disabled permit holder may only be the recipient of each type of transferred permit once. Please visit dnr.wisconsin.gov/permits/permitttransfers.html for more information and to download a permit transfer application (Form 9400-607).

SPECIAL REGULATIONS: ASSISTING TRAPPERS WITH DISABILITIES

A person that holds a current class A, B, C or D hunting permit may be accompanied by and receive assistance from a person who possesses a valid trapping authorization. This includes assisting with trap setting, trap checking, tagging and registration of these species if the disabled person has been issued the appropriate approval to do so. The accompanying person shall comply with all trapping rules and laws.

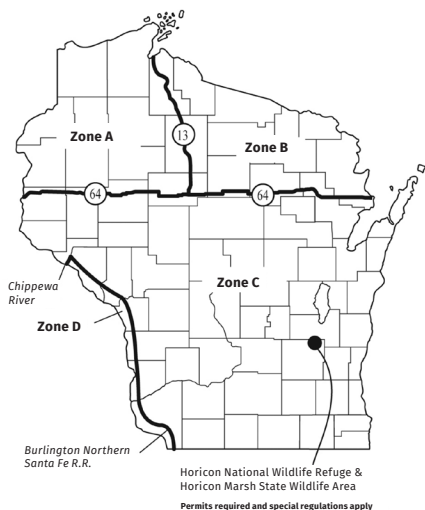
BEAVER

SEASON DATES

Zones A and B: Nov. 7, 2026 – April 30, 2027

Zone C: Nov. 7, 2026 – March 31, 2027

Zone D: Dec. 7, 2026 – March 15, 2027



APPLICATION AND LICENSE REQUIREMENTS

What you need to trap beaver:

- A current and valid trapping authorization is required unless exempt under landowner provisions. See page 13 for more information.

SEASON LIMITS

No bag limit statewide.

COYOTE, RACCOON, RED AND GRAY FOX

SEASON DATES

The following season dates are valid statewide:

Resident Raccoon: Oct. 17, 2026 – Feb. 15, 2027

Nonresident Raccoon: Oct. 31, 2026 – Feb. 15, 2027

Red and Gray Fox: Oct. 17, 2026 – Feb. 15, 2027

Coyote: Oct. 17, 2026 – Feb. 15, 2027

APPLICATION AND LICENSE REQUIREMENTS

What you need to trap a coyote, raccoon or red or gray fox:

- A current and valid trapping authorization is required unless exempt under landowner provisions. See page 13 for more information.

SEASON LIMITS

No bag limit statewide.

Note: During the closed season for raccoon, licensed trappers may retain for salvage any raccoons taken incidentally while trapping for beaver in the portions of the state open for beaver trapping. See rules listed under “trap size and placement restrictions” on pages 6-7.

Mississippi River Zone

Federal Lands: On federal lands within the Mississippi River Zone (see page 21), the coyote, raccoon and fox seasons open when the muskrat and mink seasons open.

FISHER AND OTTER

FISHER

SEASON DATES

All Zones: Oct. 17, 2026 – Jan. 3, 2027

See map on page 20.

APPLICATION AND LICENSE REQUIREMENTS

What you need to trap a fisher:

- Fisher application
- A current and valid trapping authorization
- A valid, unused fisher harvest authorization

SEASON LIMITS

Special zones only by permit(s).

Season Limit: one fisher per harvest authorization.

SAMPLE COLLECTION

The department will collect the lower jaw from harvested fisher. Trappers selected to provide a jaw sample will be contacted via mail and provided a sample kit prior to the season.

REGISTRATION

- Harvested fisher must be registered via GameReg by 5 p.m. the day following recovery. Register online at gamereg.wi.gov (fastest and easiest method) or by phone at 844-426-3734 (844-GAME-REG). Be prepared to indicate which game management unit (pages 14-15) the animal was harvested in. Following registration of a fisher via GameReg, all registration requirements are complete.

OTTER

SEASON DATES

North Zone: Nov. 7, 2026 – April 30, 2027

South Zone: Nov. 7, 2026 – March 31, 2027

See map on page 20.

What you need to trap an otter:

- A current and valid trapping authorization
- A valid, unused otter harvest authorization

SEASON LIMITS

One otter per harvest authorization. Harvest authorizations are valid statewide.

Federal Lands: On federal lands within the Mississippi River Zone (see page 21), the otter season does not open until the muskrat and mink seasons open. Federal rules do not allow trapping on federal refuge lands after March 15.

REGISTRATION

- Harvested river otter must be registered via GameReg by 5 p.m. the day following recovery. Register online at gamereg.wi.gov (fastest and easiest method) or by phone at 844-426-3734 (844-GAME-REG). Be prepared to indicate which game management unit (pages 14-15) the animal was harvested in.
- Following successful registration of river otter via GameReg, a CITES tag will be sent to the trapper's address listed in Go Wild. Upon receiving the CITES tag in the mail, the trapper must immediately affix the CITES tag to the head portion of the otter pelt to certify that the animal was harvested legally. After the CITES tag has been attached, all registration and certification requirements are complete.

BOBCAT

SEASON DATES

Period 1: Oct. 17 – Dec. 25, 2026

Period 2: Dec. 26, 2026 – Jan. 31, 2027

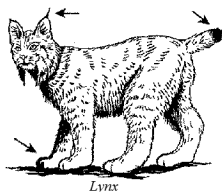
See map on page 20 for bobcat zones.

What you need to trap a bobcat:

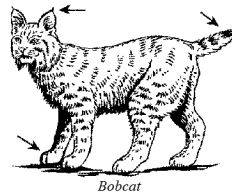
- Bobcat application
- A current and valid trapping authorization
- A valid, unused physical bobcat harvest permit
- Only holders of a regular license, youth license or youth under 16 with a supervisor may be issued a Bobcat permit and tag.

Canada lynx, a rare visitor to Wisconsin, are listed as a threatened species by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Please help us protect this unique animal through your careful observation. See illustrations below. If you observe a Canada lynx, report it immediately at apps.dnr.wi.gov/wildlifeobservation/ or by contacting the DNR call center at 1-888-936-7463.

Lynx are distinguished from bobcat primarily by the tips of their tails, which are completely black. Only the upper half of the tail tip is black on the bobcat. Lynx also have larger ear tufts, are lighter in coloration, have large, densely furred feet and have less distinct tracks than bobcat.



Lynx



Bobcat

SAMPLE COLLECTION

This year, the department will collect lower jaws from all bobcat harvested during time period 2. See page 20 for additional details.

SEASON LIMITS

Hunting and trapping only allowed by permit. One bobcat per permit. Individuals must carry hard copies of department-issued bobcat permits while trapping or hunting.

REGISTRATION

- You may not possess or have under control any bobcat carcass unless you immediately validate, attach and seal your pelt tag through the opening of the animal's mouth to the opening of its eye, immediately beneath the skin. See instructions on the pelt tag for further details. The pelt and DNR registration tags shall remain attached to the pelt until removed by a fur dresser or taxidermist at time of preparation.
- Harvested bobcat must be registered via GameReg by 5 p.m. the day following recovery. Register online at gamereg.wi.gov (fastest and easiest method) or by phone at 844-426-3734 (844-GAME-REG). Be prepared to indicate which game management unit (pages 14-15) the animal was harvested in.
- In addition, the harvested bobcat pelt and carcass must be presented to a warden or other approved DNR staff within seven days after the month of harvest to have the pelt certified.

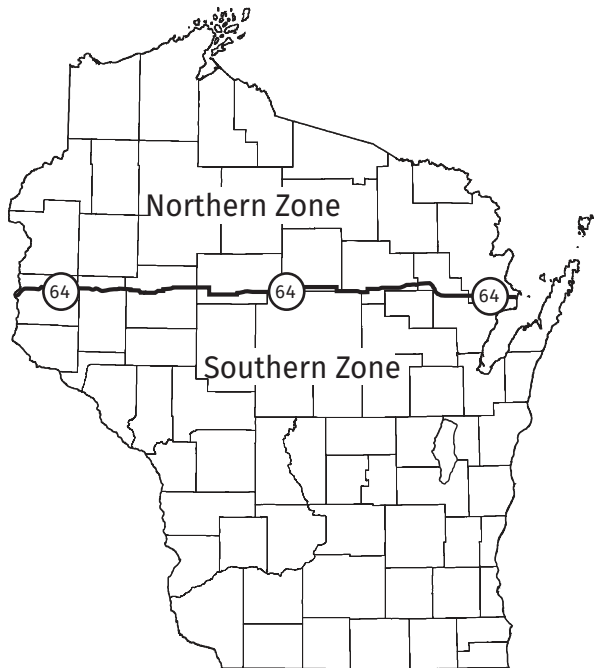
- Before presenting a bobcat pelt to a warden or other approved DNR staff, you must skin the animal and separate the pelt from the carcass. Be sure it is thawed out on the day of certification so that a certification tag can be attached. This does not need to be completed before certification for specimens going to a taxidermist, but you must retrieve the carcass from the taxidermist and deliver it to the DNR within 30 days of registration.

Note: These animals must still be registered and certified prior to taxidermy. To certify your harvest, contact a conservation warden or other authorized DNR personnel. Visit dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/Trap/TrappingRegistration or call 888-936-7463. A bobcat must have a CITES tag sealed to the pelt prior to being transferred to a taxidermist.

- You may not possess a bobcat pelt longer than seven days after the month of harvest without certifying the pelt with an authorized DNR representative.
- This year, the department will collect a section of the lower jaw from all bobcat harvested during time period 2. The lower jaw must be removed and placed in a plastic baggie, along with the jaw tag, prior to certification. Specific instructions for cutting the lower jaw and preparing the sample for submission have been mailed to all bobcat trappers and hunters who drew a time period 2 permit. If a full bobcat skull is submitted, it will not be returned by the DNR. After completing all certification steps, the remainder of the carcass can be retained for personal use or properly discarded.

BOBCAT, FISHER AND RIVER OTTER MANAGEMENT ZONES

Note: If the annual harvest quota for bobcat, fisher or river otter is reached before the respective season end date, the season may close early. It is the hunter or trapper's responsibility to determine the status of a bobcat, fisher or river otter season prior to attempting to hunt or trap in a particular zone. Call the hotline at 855-299-9653 for harvest number updates. Information on early season closures or trapping in general can be found on dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/Trap.



MINK AND MUSKRAT

SEASON DATES

Northern Zone: Oct. 24, 2026 – April 15, 2027

Central Zone: Oct. 31, 2026 – March 22, 2027

Southern Zone: Nov. 7, 2026 – March 15, 2027

Mississippi River Zone:* Nov. 9, 2026 – March 7, 2027

What you need to trap mink and muskrat:

- A current and valid trapping authorization is required unless exempt under landowner provisions. See page 13 for more information. Mink are not included in landowner provisions.

SEASON LIMITS

No bag limit statewide.

Note: During the closed season for muskrats, licensed trappers may retain for salvage any muskrats taken incidentally while trapping for beaver in the portions of the state open to beaver trapping. See rules listed under “trap size and placement restrictions” on pages 6-7.

*Permits are required and special regulations apply. See page 23 for more information.

MINK AND MUSKRAT MANAGEMENT ZONES



TRAPPING ALONG ROADSIDES

Most roadsides are owned either by the state or by the local unit of government. However, in some cases, the adjoining landowner still maintains ownership of the underlying land. Trappers must have permission from the owner of the land underlying any public road, street or highway right-of-way area before trapping the location. The Wisconsin Department of Transportation (DOT) has a policy that trapping is not allowed on DOT-owned roads. Some DOT retention ponds may be open to trapping. Contact DOT for details.

TRAPPING NAVIGABLE WATERWAYS

Trapping on private land in Wisconsin, including on the beds of navigable waters, may constitute a trespass (enforced by the county sheriff's department). Trappers need to obtain permission before trapping on any private land, even if entry is by public waterways and the trap is placed or staked in the water.

TRAPPING ON DNR-OWNED AND -MANAGED LANDS

No person may destroy, molest, deface, remove or attempt to remove any natural growth or natural or archaeological feature except that edible fruits, edible nuts, wild mushrooms, wild asparagus and watercress may be removed by hand without a permit only for the purpose of personal consumption by the collector.

Generally, it is not permissible to cut willow stems. However, you may cut willow stems with a diameter of 2 ½ inches or smaller from species that are not endangered or threatened if you intend to use them for personal, non-commercial use, such as for trap stakes.

TRAPPING ON MANAGED FOREST LAW AND FOREST CROP LAW LANDS

With permission of the landowner/property manager, trapping is allowed on lands enrolled under the Forest Crop Law program and lands designated as "open" under the Managed Forest Law program.

TRAPPING IN STATE PARKS

Trapping is allowed in all state parks except Copper Culture, Cross Plains, Governor Nelson, Heritage Hill, Lakeshore and Lost Dauphin state parks, Hank Aaron State Trail, Fischer Creek State Recreation Area, Havenwoods State Forest and Lapham Peak and Pike Lake units of the Kettle Moraine State Forest. A state park sticker or pass is required for all vehicles in any state park. Trappers may enter a state park or state trail property up to one hour prior to sunrise and remain on the property until 11 p.m.

Trapping in state parks is only allowed for species when their season is open and only during either of the following time periods: Nov. 15 – Dec. 15, 2026 and April 1 – May 4, 2027.

You may not:

- Use traps that are not placed completely under water unless the traps are enclosed trigger traps;
- Place or check traps past 11 p.m., remain on the property past 11 p.m. or enter the property prior to an hour before sunrise for the purpose of trapping;

Note: Trappers who are registered campers staying in a designated campsite are not required to leave the campgrounds but may not use other areas of the park after 11 p.m.

- Set, place or check traps located within 100 yards of designated trails or designated use areas, such as picnic areas, campgrounds and beaches, or in any area in the park closed to trapping indicated on that park's trapping area map; or
- Trap during the closed season for any species.

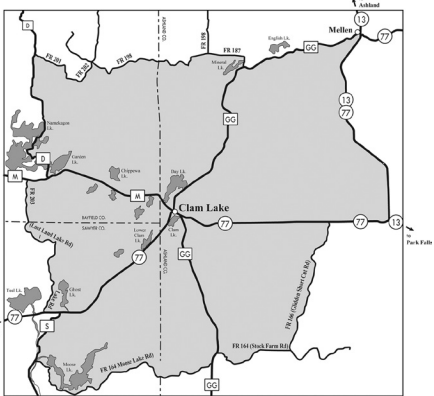
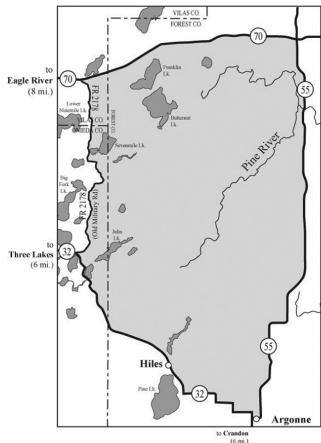
For more information on regulations specific to state parks and maps of areas open to trapping within individual parks, visit dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/parks/hunt.

TRAPPING ON FEDERAL LANDS

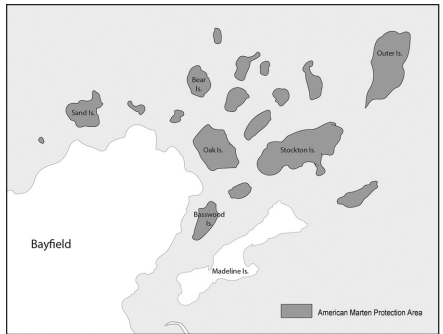
- Horicon National Wildlife Refuge and Horicon Marsh State Wildlife Area: Trapping at these locations is authorized on a permit system only and special regulations apply. Permit details are available at fws.gov/refuge/horicon.
- Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge: Special trapping permits are required. For more information, contact: Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge Headquarters, 51 E. 4th Street, Winona, MN 55987.
- Apostle Islands National Lakeshore: Access permits are required for the Apostle Islands National Lakeshore. For information, write Park Superintendent, 415 Washington Avenue, Bayfield, WI 54814.
- Trempealeau National Wildlife Refuge: Trapping is authorized on a permit system only and special regulations apply. For more information, call 608-539-2311 ext. 16 or visit fws.gov/midwest/trempealeau or write Trempealeau National Wildlife Refuge, W28488 Refuge Road, Trempealeau, WI 54661.
- Necedah National Wildlife Refuge: Trapping is authorized on a permit system only and special regulations apply. For more information, call 608-565-2551 or write Necedah National Wildlife Refuge, N11385 Headquarters Road, Necedah, WI 54660.
- St. Croix National Scenic Riverway: Trapping is restricted in the St. Croix National Scenic Riverway. For more information, visit nps.gov/sacn/planyourvisit/trapping.htm. The National Park Service has specific regulations on these sites to inform the public of special federal regulations already in place.
- Fort McCoy: Fort McCoy conducts its own trapping seasons, independent of the DNR's seasons. Anyone interested in trapping on Fort McCoy must have the appropriate Fort McCoy permit/harvest authorization and applicable State of Wisconsin trapping approvals. To purchase Fort McCoy approvals, register game harvested on Fort McCoy, or for season dates and regulation information, visit ftmccoy.isportsman.net.

MARTEN RESTORATION AREAS OPEN TO FORMS OF DRYLAND TRAPPING

In the areas of the Pine River and Clam Lake marten restoration areas (indicated in gray below), cable restraints, cage or box-type traps, weasel boxes with an opening 1 3⁄8 inches or less and footholds with a pan tension device of 4 pounds or greater may be used on dryland for species that have an open season. No other traps on dryland are legal within the gray highlighted areas of the Pine River and Clam Lake marten restoration areas.



In the areas indicated in gray on the map of the Apostle Islands to the right, cable restraints and cage or box-type traps may be used on dryland for species that have an open season. No other traps on dryland are legal within the gray highlighted areas of the Apostle Islands marten restoration areas.



PLEASE CONTACT THE DNR ABOUT INCIDENTAL TAKE

The scientific use of these carcasses improves our understanding of these species and the use and/or sale of salvaged pelts improves our trapper education program.

If incidental catch of a protected species occurs, please contact your local conservation warden or call 800-TIP-WDNR (800-847-9367) as soon as possible for instructions on how to release an animal or, if dead, how to transport it to the department. A protected species is any species for which the season is closed, for which there is no open season or for which a person has no possession authority.

Note: American marten are a rare and a state-endangered species. Please call 800-847-9367 to report their restraint and release or incidental take as soon as possible. If you catch a marten in a cage trap, please call 608-592-7025 so that department staff can potentially obtain scientific information about that animal. If you intend to trap near a known marten population, please review the marten brochure. Visit dnr.wisconsin.gov/Education/OutdoorSkills/TrapEd and find "Avoid incidental marten" under "Supplemental Materials."

BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

Trappers and state wildlife agencies continue to develop best management practices (BMPs) for trapping in the United States. Trapping BMPs are documents that identify techniques and traps that address the welfare of trapped animals and allow for the efficient, selective, safe and practical capture of furbearers. BMPs are methods to improve trapping by developing recommendations using sound science. They are developed through actual field tests and careful data collection. The information is provided to state agencies and trappers for voluntary use in their trapper education and furbearer management programs.

WHY ARE BMPs NEEDED?

BMPs are needed to:

- Ensure the continued responsible management of wildlife resources;
- Continue the process of improving traps and trapping methods to maintain and improve animal welfare;
- Maintain public acceptance of trapping through a reduction in real and perceived problems associated with trapping; and
- Sustain regulated trapping now and in the future and to maintain the integrity of furbearer management programs throughout the United States.

Regulated trapping will only prosper and continue if the trapping community and natural resource agencies work together to improve harvest systems and promote the humane treatment of animals. Thanks for your support!

For additional information on BMPs, please visit fishwildlife.org/afwa-inspires/furbearer-management.

TRAPPER EDUCATION COURSE

WISCONSIN COOPERATIVE TRAPPER EDUCATION PROGRAM

Visit dnr.wisconsin.gov/Education/OutdoorSkills/TrapEd for information on the Cooperative Trapper Education Program of the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and Wisconsin Trappers Association.

WHY TRAPPER EDUCATION?

We believe that trappers create a good image when they engage in responsible and ethical pursuit of our furbearing resource. Trapper education teaches new or inexperienced trappers ethical trapping procedures, the most humane trapping methods, the history of trapping in Wisconsin and North America and basic wildlife management principles. It is also important for trappers to learn and understand the importance of maintaining good relationships with landowners, other outdoor enthusiasts and managers of our natural resources. The Wisconsin trapper education course provides a solid beginning to trapping education, an education you will use everyday on the trapline.

Scan for more information
about becoming a trapper
education instructor



dnr.wi.gov/tiny/3041

WHO MUST ATTEND?

All first-time trappers must complete the Wisconsin trapper education course prior to purchasing a trapping license. It is recommended that you be at least 10 years old to attend this class. Class size may be limited, so early registration is recommended. No late applications will be accepted.

Note: You must have a DNR customer ID number prior to the first class. Call 888-936-7463 or visit dnr.wisconsin.gov/GoWild/customerNumber.html to obtain this number.

See youth supervised and mentored trapping details on page 13 for opportunities to trap without trapper education certification. Persons who purchased a Wisconsin trapping license on or before May 12, 1992 or who are actively engaged in farming in Wisconsin as defined by State Statute 102.04(3) and who are current Wisconsin residents are exempt from completing trapper education.

CORRESPONDENCE COURSE AND ONLINE COURSE

A five-week correspondence course is available for students who cannot attend the regular trapper education course. For more information, contact Mike Widner at the number or email address listed below.

TRAPPER EDUCATION COORDINATORS

WCTEP Statewide Coordinator

Jim Binder
E8126 Church Rd.
New London, WI 54961
920-250-2515
wctep1@gmail.com

DNR Statewide Coordinator

Erinn Kiesow-Webb
473 Griffith Ave,
Wisconsin Rapids, WI 54494
608-228-0765
Erinn.KiesowWebb@wisconsin.gov

WCTEP Correspondence and Online Course Coordinator

Mike Widner
108 Mary St.
Boscobel, WI 53805
608-356-3621
trappereducation@yahoo.com

Please Note:

Many trapper education instructors and coordinators are volunteers and their availability varies. Please be patient when contacting them or trying to enroll in trapper education courses.

WISCONSIN COOPERATIVE TRAPPER EDUCATION DISTRICTS

District 1

Jacob Hart
11552 Crosstown Rd
Grantsburg, WI 54840
715-663-0519
jakehart84@gmail.com

District 2

Ed Dubuque
7602 CTY X
Chippewa Falls, WI 54729
715-559-6539
trappered39@gmail.com

District 3

Casey Rustan
D3trappered@gmail.com

District 4

Shawn Bazile
N11950 CTY E
Tigerton, WI 54486
715-535-2794
fattrapper67@gmail.com

District 5

Junior Prudlick
P.O. Box 505

Strum, WI 54770
715-695-3675
prudlickdj@triwest.net

District 6

Al Nickel
2663 Green Grove Lane
Nekoosa, WI 54457
715-570-8718
afivecents@yahoo.com

District 7

Dennis Halbach
N9202 CTY W
Malone, WI 53049
920-375-0781

Gary Alexander
N5419 HWY 22
Montello, WI 53949
608-369-2010

District 8

Daniel Cichantck

2917 S 19th St
Manitowoc, WI 54220
920-901-9449
trapperdanc@yahoo.com

District 9

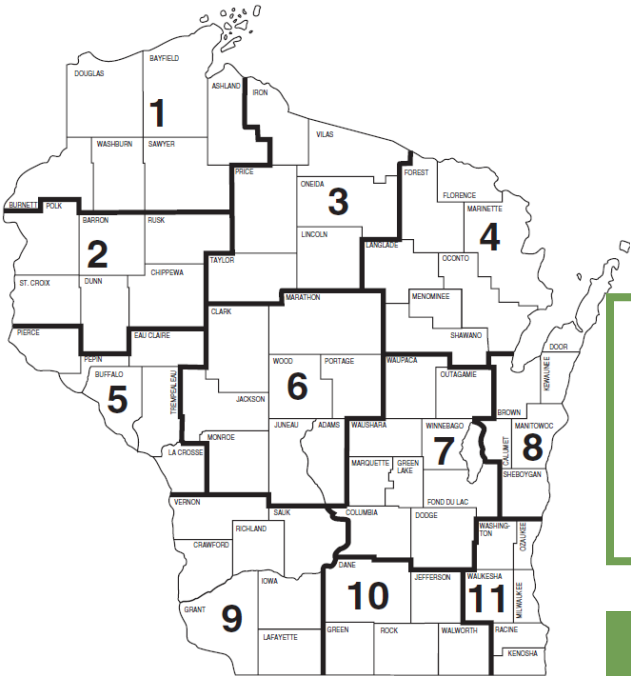
Dennis Knuth
217 Clark St
Reedsburg, WI 53959
608-495-2752
Demak1072@gmail.com

District 10

Larry Meyer
11921 E Pioneer Rd
Whitewater, WI 53190
262-903-0798
larrypmeyer@msn.com

District 11

Scott Schoenike
1621 Drexel Blvd.
South Milwaukee, WI 53172
414-704-1596
sschoenike@wi.rr.com



dnr.wi.gov/tiny/1221

Scan for more information
about trapper education

QUESTIONS?

Visit dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/Trap

Buy your licenses online at gowild.wi.gov

Or buy from one of our license agents. To find an agent near you, visit the DNR website at dnr.wisconsin.gov/permits and click "Visit An Agent" or call 1-888-WDNR-INFO.

(1-888-936-7463)

TTY access via relay - 711

General mailing address:

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

P.O. Box 7921,

Madison, WI, 53707

The content of this pamphlet was prepared by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. Part of the printing costs were paid for by:



Wisconsin Trappers Association

P.O. Box 305

Oregon, WI 53575-0305

wistrap.org

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources provides equal opportunity in its employment, programs, services and functions under an Affirmative Action Plan. If you have any questions, please write to Chief, Public Civil Rights, Office of Civil Rights, U.S. Department of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20240.

This publication is available in alternative format (large print, Braille, etc.) upon request. Please call the Accessibility Coordinator at 608-267-7490 for more information.