

Fall News from the Montana Fur  
Harvesters

# MONTANA FUR HARVESTERS

September 2022

Fall issue 2022



**President's Message**

**Update on Martin Regs**

**Dealing with CWD**

**Wolf Trapping Seminar**

**Snaring Video Available**



## Montana Fur Harvesters

### 2022 Fall Magazine

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*Cover Photo; A winter Ermine checking out what's up. Below The Doble kids out water trapping. Sage, Dillyn and Sawyer*

## Great turnout for the 2022 Advanced Wolf Trapping Seminar near Kalispell



## Notes from the president.

Enthusiasm is high in Northwest Montana

Fall is in the air and it is here already. Boy time flies. What a busy summer this has been. After our Spring Fur Shows, the Kalispell Sportsmen Show, the Kalispell Gun Show and Fur Handling Clinic Then it was the grueling five day show at the Flathead Fair. The Kalispell fall gun show was a good one for us. All of the events were well attended.

It was a very successful year for fund raising and getting out in front of the public. The fair attendance was a little down from a few years ago but we still recorded over three thousand visitors to our booth. Best of all, we gained some awesome new members that really stepped up at the booth. I was hoping for a little down time but that hasn't happened yet.

It is glaringly evident that elk numbers are over objective in parts of Montana and under in others. The obvious common denominator is the number of wolves. Regions 1, 2 and 3 of Western Montana host 90% of the wolves in the state. A more aggressive approach is needed to bring down the numbers in these regions. Our Fish Wildlife and Parks Department did not make these laws but were tasked to implement them. Sportsmen from here sent in a lot of comments as we worked closely with FWP throughout the process. Thanks to all that took part in it.

## Foundation For Wildlife Management

In response of the fact that most wolves are here in regions One, Two and Three, the reimbursement has risen to \$750 for each legally harvested wolf in those regions. The \$500 will still be in effect for the rest of the state.

**On the legal front!** The good thing is not many changes to the regulation this season. Now the Wolves and Furbearers are in the same regulation book. Whatever you do be sure to read the regulations carefully and check with your local game wardens.

Lawsuits have been filed in opposition to FWP's changes even though they are not responsible. The antis were threatening and crying during the FWP Commissioners meeting in Helena. Now our biggest concern is the democrats at the federal level.

Remember that in future elections, be careful who you vote for.

Snaring for wolves completed the first season without much controversy or many bi-catches. Only 20 wolves were reported as caught by snares so fears of wiping out the wolf population was unfounded. Over the years snaring caused very little controversy. However, with the spotlight on wolves, all eyes are upon us. To be ethical and responsible is of most importance.

We need to emphasize to trappers that not all private landowners want to have snares on their lands. Some block Management lands do not allow snaring. We stress to all trappers to make sure the landowners do allow snares before placing them.

No further FWP **Wolf certification classes** are scheduled at this time. Keep checking fwp.mt.gov website in case another one is planned.

Another note, **Mandatory Trappers Education** is required for this season for anyone not having at least three prior Montana trapping licenses. We are down to our last Trapper Education Class for the year. It will be in Bozeman on November 19<sup>th</sup>. We have completed classes in Missoula, Helena, Billings and Kalispell.

Make sure that you get your trapper license prior to the start of the Bobcat season, December 1<sup>st</sup>. You can't trap bobcats if you don't, seems that it is a common violation each year. **Tom Fieber** 🐾



A happy Mick Brown, from Charlo with one of his catches from the muskrat trapping class.





## Advanced Wolf Trapping Seminar

Demand was high for the Advanced Wolf Trapping Seminar this summer. The number of attendees was more than expected and we ended up serving lunch to right at 100 including the kids. Thanks to Mort Hill and Russell Swindell from F4WM for doing the lunch. We started at 8:00am and ended at 5:00pm. Working with FWP and the new **Advanced Skills Program** we had a great turnout. This skills program was just set up by FWP and I believe this was the first seminar, it turned out great. The goal of the program is to give people a chance to receive advanced training for all kinds of outdoor activities. For future events check them out at, <https://register-ed.com/programs/montana/248-montana-advanced-hunter-ed-outdoor-skills>

Trappers and others interested in learning about what we do took in the whole day. We had successful trappers and a wolf hunter put on demo's on how they harvest wolves.

**Scott Ramsay**, who trapped in Idaho since 2011 did demos on wolf behavior and snaring. Scott's knowledge as a biologist, trapping for years really helped people understand wolf behavior and how to



take advantage of it. Sharing his experience on snaring over that time also had good information on how to avoid bi-catches.





**Jerry Shively**, of Thompson Falls, shared his success trapping with only a few footholds. He started out with 3, MB 750s and averaged 1 wolf a season. He did this all on private land within a few minutes from his home. He proves that age and other limitations can't prevent someone from harvesting a wolf. His catch per trap has to be the best ratio in Montana. I am sure that he was an inspiration to many in the crowd who would love to harvest a wolf with limited time and equipment.



**Jay Sheffield**, or Libby is a successful wolf hunter who has harvested wolves by calling and stalking. Jays' demos always draw lots of attention. People are looking for better ways to harvest wolves and Jays experience has proven effective. His talks are entertaining as well as educational.

Our mission to reduce the number of wolves requires that we recruit all the methods and help that we can. Helping big game hunters to take wolves while in pursuit of other game is important. While trapping success is much higher than wolf hunting, incidental take by hunters statewide is usually higher than that of trapping. Thus, educating hunters to take advantage of opportunities while in the field will benefit our landscape for all. It is our job to let hunters know that as a \$40 member of the Foundation 4 Wildlife Management, they will reimburse legally harvested wolves from \$500 to \$750. Be sure that each hunter carries a \$12 wolf tag whenever in the field. Also, you keep the wolf.



**Ezra Schwaim**, game warden covering regulations.



**Paul Antczak**, of Marion, was also on hand putting on demos on equipment and tools to trap wolves and another one on how and where to set wolf traps. Paul always puts on great demos that crowds really pay attention to. Paul's success over the past few years trapping wolves is passed on to everyone. Paul also sells some baits and lures along with some trapping equipment that has worked for him.



Paul's ability and willingness to reach a crowd and pass on his knowledge makes for a great event.

FWP Region One Wildlife Manager, **Neil Anderson** gave a talk about the status of wolves and ungulates here in Northwest Montana. Neil is always willing to reach out to the sportsmen groups and keep us updated on what's going on. Game warden, Ezra Schwaim of Lincoln came over for the day to cover regulations.

**The event** was well beyond what we expected. We even had to make a Costco run for additional food for lunch. During lunch, Justin Webb from the Foundation 4 Wildlife Management talked about their program. Prior to lunch we held a wolf howling contest, Paul Antczak was able to convince the crowd he could call in a wolf. The prize was a tee shirt that Paul donated to a family in attendance. We had some really good raffle items that went home with people.

We are getting requests for more of these advanced seminars and plan on hosting more after trapping season ends. Trappers and other guests traveled from around the state and many from Idaho to attend. A special thanks to Dillon Tabish of FWP for getting out a great press release on the event.

**Tom Fieber** 🐾

### **Dogs running loose in the woods**

This is an issue that Montana needs to get the word out to the public. I have witnessed several instances where pets could have been accidentally shot or have been.

This fall a young lady was out bear hunting in the South Fork of the Flathead. She picked up a wolf tag in case they ran into wolves. Eleven miles from anywhere they did come upon a pack that they thought were wolves and she shot one. Unfortunately, it turned out someone had abandoned at least 17 husky/malamute cross dogs, some with parvo. The lack of responsibility of the dog owner was to blame not the hunter. Even under the circumstance, it brought on an assault on the hunter community.

Another time two of us were returning to our vehicle after chasing a wolf pack. The road back to the highway took us back over the upper country above where the wolf tracks were headed earlier in the day. We had just about reached the highway, coming around a corner we spotted a large white wolf sitting on the road about seventy yards away at the next corner. I stopped and pointed it out, we looked at it a little hesitant to shoot. Things weren't quite right. About that time a black one came from around the corner and walked up to the white one. I was sure the black one was a wolf but now the white one turned his head sideways and it did not look right. Being not sure if they were wolves or large dogs, we

decided not to shoot at that point. About fifteen seconds later a car came around the corner. Thank goodness we hadn't shot.

The young lady started to load them into her car, we drove down to meet her and explain what had just happened. Larry very politely suggested that she would be wise to put something orange on the dogs for their safety. She very belligerently said it was our job to identify our targets not hers. She sped off in a huff. It should be apparent to dog owners that dogs are canines and wolves come in all colors. People that do follow behind their dogs with cars on mountain roads please mark them with something that sets them apart from a wolf or coyote. One person said that he spray paints his, another puts an orange vest on theirs, some keep an orange collar on year round. Anything would be smart to do, nobody wants to shoot someone's dog and most people don't want their dogs shot,

At our age we aren't as fast as we were, chances are that someone younger and maybe not as experienced would have shot in that situation. It would have been tragic for everyone had that happened. Most pet owners are responsible and do take measures to avoid problems. Hope to get word out to pet owners to take precautions.

Please make sure that if you have pets outdoors in wolf season, protect them. Don't rely on someone else, mistakes can and have happened. Always make sure that you have pets in close control and have orange vests or large collars that will show up from long distances. Public lands are for everyone not just pet owners. It's your responsibility.

**Tom Fieber** 🦌

## **FREE! Salvage Tags for roadkill.**



Nationwide, chances are 1 in 170 that you will file an animal collision insurance claim this year (Montana is 1 in 47 odds). Our big game animals are most active around dusk and dawn. Your chances of hitting a deer

double in November, when love is in the air. Deer are particularly vulnerable to becoming road kill because of their eye sight. Their eyes adjust well to low light conditions, but a car headlight literally blinds them and they may freeze mid stride. (Thus, a deer in the headlights....)

The best thing you can do is to adjust the time of day that you drive or slow down during the window when animals are most likely to be out. Pay attention to road kill hot spots where animals might hide before dashing across the road.

Road killed animals cause more problems, than just being unpleasant to view. A carcass in the road presents an unexpected obstacle causing distracted drivers to swerve, which could result in another accident. Road kill also attracts predators. Eagles may eat on a carcass until they are too engorged to fly and either become road kill themselves or are killed by other predators. It is critical to get road kill off the road.

Animals that are killed on the road can be safe for humans to eat if processed soon after death. It would not be wise to eat an animal lying in the heat for an extended period or if the flesh is mangled, bloodied or dirty. There are benefits from eating road kill: it's organic, grass-fed, hormone and antibiotic free, gets bodies off the road and the price is right!

The road kill I found next to my driveway was in good shape. The impact was to the ribs leaving most of the meat good for human consumption. I also planned to keep the rest of the animal for bait. This was my first salvage tag and the process turned out to be very easy.

In 2013 the law was changed to allow for the salvage of deer, elk, moose, and antelope killed by a motor vehicle. The process is the same to pick up an animal you did not hit. You are required to remove the entire animal. Parts and viscera cannot be left at the site. You have 24 hours to apply for a salvage tag and the permit is free.

### **How to get a salvage tag:**

Go to the website [myfwp.mt.gov](http://myfwp.mt.gov)

Click-> "Buy & Apply- License and Permit Information"



Scroll down to "Vehicle-Killed Wildlife Salvage Permits"

Read the following rules and click "Go to Permit Application"

For the location, the application requires a latitude and longitude coordinate before being able to submit. Once the application is complete, you will receive the tag by email.

Look out- at the next potluck I'm bringing Chili con Carnage!

**Kim Davie**, MFH Treasurer 🐾

## Montana Trapper Education Classes

This is the first year that you need to get certified to buy a trapping license in Montana. For anyone who has not had three previous trapping licenses, you will need to take the online class as well as the fielded day course. So far, we held in person field day classes in Missoula, Helena, Billings and Kalispell. Our next and final class will be held in Bozeman on November 19<sup>th</sup>. For those of you who are grandfathered in with three previous licenses but would like to trap wolves, make sure that you are certified to trap wolves. I believe there will be one more online class offered this season.

**Tom Fieber** 🐾




## Wolf

**Trappers,** for me I am packing trap setters for several brands of traps. I have MB 750s, TS 85,

NO BS 850 and a few Bridger #5. I built some setters myself over the years, but they won't work on the 850's. Seems I would not have the correct one at each set. This summer at the wolf seminar, Cliff Simmons of Victor donated a set of universal trap setters that they sell at Off the Grid Trap supplies (see ad) or go to [www.trappingsuppliesmt.com](http://www.trappingsuppliesmt.com). They sell his for \$34.95

a set. Cliff uses thumb screws to adjust for each brand, so they are locked in place.



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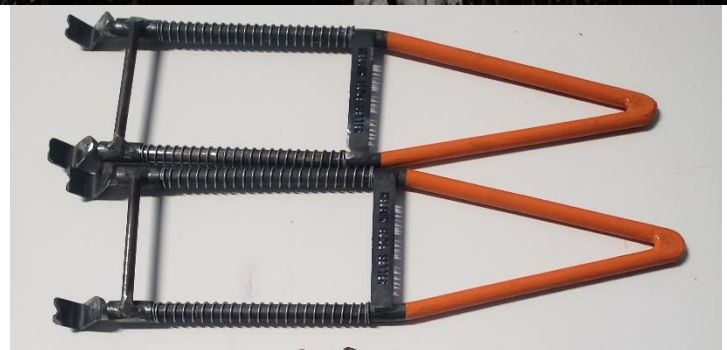
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**Bernie Nelson** in Idaho also makes a universal setter that looks good. His has springs that self-adjust to different brands of wolf traps. He sells his for \$50. You can reach him at 1+509-571-1946. Both are good to have on the trap lines

**Tom Fieber** 🐾



**WE PROMOTE AND PRESERVE FUR HARVESTING AND ITS HERITAGE IN MONTANA AS BOTH A SPORT AND AN INDUSTRY THROUGH EDUCATION AND REGULATORY ACTIVISM. WE SUPPORT FUR HARVESTING AS A SUSTAINABLE USE TOOL FOR WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT, AND FIGHT TO PROTECT AND PRESERVE WILDLIFE AND HABITAT. WE WORK WITH MT FWP TO SUPPORT THEIR MANAGEMENT GOALS.**

**Activities\*\*\*\*\***

**Active with FWP shaping regulations that shape our trapping.**

**Trapper Education**

**Booths at Family Forestry Expo**

**School Shows**

**Northwest Montana Expo**

**Newsletters**

**Local County Fairs**

**Fur Handling Clinics**

**Public events**

**✕ Montana Fur Harvesters represents Trapper, Houndsmen and Predator Hunters**

**✕ Consider becoming a member of The Montana Trappers Association and The National Trappers Association. Every dollar raised will help to fight for trappers across the nation. Go online to their websites to join.**

## **Memberships run from January 1 to December 31**

Please Complete this form and send to: MFH, PO Box 3482, Kalispell MT 59903

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## **Montana Fur Harvesters**

**Tom Oar** from Troy Mt. was able to attend the Advanced Wolf Trapping Seminar in Kalispell this summer. It was great to meet Tom and have him share the day with us. **Scott Smith** from Ferndale and Tom took a moment for a photo.



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## Charter Members

\$100 or more !

The following members have gone the extra mile to support MFH. Without this commitment, it would be hard to publish this and host the fur shows.

**Tom Gilmore**, Tom has donated more time and merchandise to trapping organizations than most. His Fur Handling Clinics in Libby are top notch.

**Bill Boehme**, Bill has been supporting us as a charter member for years. He is a great seminar instructor and a real member of the trapping community.

**Linda Tutvedt**, Linda not only joined as a charter member but offered muskrat trapping on her property this fall. Her generosity was really appreciated by the kids and instructors as well.

**Josh Jurek**, Josh raised \$400 at the Palooza that he donated back to MFH. Josh is a dedicated trapper and a great artist.

**Dan Thingelstad**, Dan has donated several wolf pelts that he donated back the proceeds and helps run booths. His work on the Fisher denning Box project was above and beyond.

### **Raven Van Den Bosch**

Raven came for the Squarehead Palooza last summer from Virginia. She is a true friend of the trapping community nation-wide and a joy to be with.

**Ed Schweitzer**. Ed attended our booth at the Kalispell Gun Show and signed up as a charter member. This is deeply appreciated.

**Montana Fur Harvesters** works closely with local FWP personnel. Game warden, **Jon Obst**, is one of the first to work with trappers and is a valued asset to the trapping community. He knows trapping, regulations, how traps function, what trappers are dealing with.

Wildlife biologist, **Jessy Coltrane**, has been heading up the fisher denning box project in the Cabinet Mountains. She has been great to work with and is a hard worker herself. Wildlife manager for region one,

**Neil Anderson**, he has been another one that attends public meetings and sportsman events. He has been working to address road and trail issues as well as other issues that affect sportsman. Neil really listens to people's concerns and acts on them.

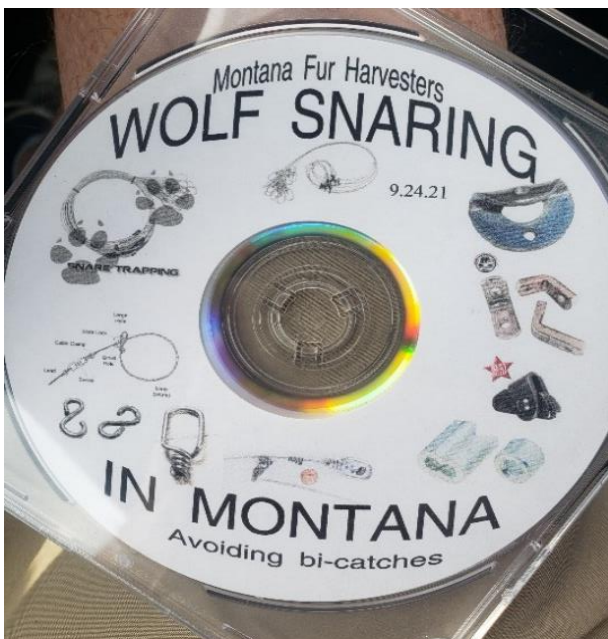
Biologist, **Tyler Parks** in Region Two is also very good to work with. Tyler runs the region 2 spring trapper meetings and is a member of the trapping education committee.

**Dillon Tabish** from Region 1 is always doing what he can to get things organized and get out press releases.

**Nathan Kluge** is our new Furbearer biologist for FWP in Helena. Nathan has been active at the Trapper Education Class and has been really good to work with and knowledgeable as a trapper.

These are just a few of the many local personnel that I work with and appreciate.

**Thanks to each and every one of them!**



This popular video is a must see for anyone thinking of snaring in Montana. I have sent them out to Alaska, Idaho and Montana. If you can't make one of your local classes, at least take time to view this before you start buying or making snares. It could save you money from buying wrong supplies or worse making a bad set.

**To purchase a video:** Pick one up at a local class for \$20 and save \$5 postage or Send a **check** for \$25 in the mail to, Tom Fieber, 507 Bayview Dr, Polson Mt 59860. For **Credit Card** sales at \$25. Send me your contact info then call me at 406-250-3386

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## Idaho Report from Justin Webb, F4WM Executive Director

In my September report I delved into the 2009 Delisting Rule as it was written by the US Fish and Wildlife Service as well as the recovery goal, management objectives and current populations of Wolves in the Northern Rocky Mountain Distinct Population Segment (NRM DPS). This area, you may remember, spans all of Montana, Idaho, Wyoming, Eastern 1/3 of both Oregon & Washington, as well as a portion of Utah... With that, I challenged you all once again to share the information with 5 of your friends – I hope you have been able to do so. In review, I'll take a moment to remind you:

- The Original recovery goal: 300 total wolves spanning the entire NRMDPS area
- Management Objectives set by USFWS= 1100 total wolves spanning the entire NRM DPS area (to include 400 in MT, 500 in ID, 200-300 in WY).
- Current population: 3300+, with 1143 in MT, 1543 in ID, & 314 in WY, (plus 206 in WA and 175+ in OR)

Idaho and Montana have similar wolf pack dynamics. Yet Idaho's documented pack size, litter numbers and pack territory seem to present a touch larger than that of MT. With many of our packs spanning the imaginary line between the two states, I suspect that variance is more indicative of difference in sampling techniques than it is of actual distinction of wolf stats from one state to the other. That said, Montana has done a great job of making their wolf research available to the public. In Idaho it takes a bit more digging to round up information, but I've been told Idaho's Predator Biologist Katie Oelrich is currently working on an updated wolf management plan. I look forward to reading that information when it becomes available.



Average pack size: MT: 5.25 ID: 6      Average litter size: MT: 6 ID: 7

In both Idaho and Yellowstone, 30% of alphas are breeding with more than 1 wolf, leading to multiple litters in many packs... The 2021 Yellowstone report shows 8 packs birthing 13 litters with 4 litters in just one pack.

- Average pack Home Range: MT: 175 sq miles      ID: 250sq miles

Wolfers are basically looking for a half dozen wolves in each 200+ sq mile home range, that often travel 10 to 20 miles in a single night. Some packs (I'm told) tend to migrate with the big game herds, while the packs we target in North Idaho run their full territory and spend time in their favorite areas year round. Then can easily drop down to feed on elk in the winter ranges at night, and be back where they started before daylight.

Wolves more than double their own pack size each spring, YET... The pack size returns to 6 or less before the next spring, even though we remove less than 1/4 of the population each season... I believe this documented drop in pack size is largely due to the high level of dispersal taking place in search of unclaimed territories-thus the reason we now have wolves all across Washington, Oregon, into California and Colorado. Two dispersed wolves have even been shot in Northern Texas. Bottom line: we only have so much suitable wolf habitat within the NRMDPS area. So long as we allow our wolf population to be higher than the management objectives set by the USFWS (who based those numbers on suitable habitat availability), we will forever be spilling wolves into surrounding areas...

I live approximately one hour drive from the area I trap. I run a 76 mile back country trapline from September 10th to March 31st (31 weeks). From mid-November through March, that's done on my snowmobile, towing a trailer behind me loaded with survival gear, traps, supplies and occasionally wolves. On my 2-stroke snowmobile at around 10 mpg, that was 7.6 gallons premium fuel per check for my sled – not counting 2 stroke oil. Idaho check times are 72 hours by law, and my season average is approximately every 2.25 days. A 31 week season, divided by 2.25 days = around 97 Trap Checks per season. Current premium fuel price average in Idaho recently dropped below \$5 per gallon, but I'll use that in this example:  $5 \times 7.6 \text{ gallons} = \$38 \text{ per check}$ ...  $\times 97 \text{ checks per season} = \$3,686$  for snowmobile fuel alone... not counting oil, nor fuel for my truck to tow my snowmobile trailer to my trapping area, and back home again. With many wolf traps averaging \$85 each (by the time you get them set up with chain and swivels, etc.) I also own 90 traps...  $\times \$85 = \$7,650$  in traps that I have on hand (and I have had over \$3,000 in traps stolen from the field, along with about half that in trail cameras).

F4WM Members reach out to us every single year with success stories, and often send photos of themselves with their wolves and of them with the reimbursement checks that help keep them in the field targeting wolves. Many of these sportsmen tell us that without the program, there is no way they could afford to continue their efforts. F4WM funded 76% of the wolves harvested in Idaho last year, and 39% of the wolves harvested in Montana as well.

Your F4WM program is needed and has certainly made a difference! Thank you for your continued support.

Justin Webb

F4WM Executive Director

[justin@f4wm.org](mailto:justin@f4wm.org)

208-610-4455





**Review of 2022 bobcat season for Region Two. In Region Two total harvest was 119. Quota was 150, season closed 2/15/2022. Open for 77 days. 79% filled, 66.9% Trapped and 27.1% Hounds. 6% were free shot, other & unknown. This is following a drop of quota in 20021 from 200 to 150. Most felt that the deep snows in late December discouraged trapping efforts due to travel limitations. IPM Abundance projections indicate a steady population with a harvest rate at 150.**  
Carrie Franklin Photo

**Martin harvests in Regions One and Two have been declining. This is raising concern among Trappers, we asked that we return to tagging harvests and doing DNA sampling. Most of us felt that falling fur prices and less access to trapping areas has had a impact on this trend. This season FWP does require tagging and tissue samples, lets help out to protect our resources.**







Carrie Franklin Photo

Wolves are always a hot topic; this season will be no different. Whatever you do out on your lines, follow regulations. As usual, regulations are easy to violate so best way to avoid problems is consult your local game wardens. We don't want to give the anti's anything to use against the trapping community.

Wolf harvest Statewide, have dropped over the past 3 years. From a high of 329 in 2020 to 276 in 2021 and again in 2022. Region Two has seen three years of dropping numbers as well. The difference I see out on the lines are smaller pack sizes, not so much less animals, just larger packs splitting up, perhaps. Are the wolves getting smarter, I am sure they are. Does weather and snow levels have an impact, sure. How are double the gas prices going to affect the number of trappers, you bet it will deter some. I am sure that some of us will give it our all. Hopefully, F4WM reimbursements will help offset some of the fuel costs. As of 10-27-22, 28 wolves have been tagged statewide.

Last year 4 wolves were harvested by Archery. Haven't seen this season's archery numbers but this seems average. Hopefully our rifle hunters get their usual numbers. Trappers will be hoping for good weather and a better season. In fact, the season will be here in no time, so I'd better get busy.



# Soda Fountain Wilderness

Soda Fountain: device that dispenses carbonated soft drinks. Soda fountains were places to get a nice cold drink and a meal. Often friends and family would gather to talk about the latest news. These fountains were usually located in department stores or pharmacies.

The year was 1951, a father and his 11-year-old son Ken were sitting at the soda fountain having a nice cold refreshment. Ken like most young adults, sitting there intently looking around the store. While canvassing the room, one thing caught his eye. The thing wasn't the shiny items on the wall, it was something in the magazine rack. Yes, a magazine. This magazine seemed to be calling to Ken.

Like so many thousand before and still today. Once this magazine was in the grasp, that was it. You were hooked. With every turn of the page Ken began to imagine being there, in the wilderness or along the stream. Dreaming of being a mountain man. Yes, this wasn't just any magazine, it was Fur Fish and Game.

One can only imagine back in 1951, most families never owned a TV. Families would gather around the radio or read the newspaper. This was how you would get your entertainment. So, reading F F and G was a big deal, it was a way to explore the wilds without leaving home. I know that many of you can relate. This was the start of a lifelong passion into the world of trapping. Ken began trapping Jack Rabbits on Long Spring Island, now called Foster City, CA. at the age of 12. As Ken gained confidence and experience, he began to run his first trap line. Kens trap line was for raccoon and opossum. Ken ran his trap line on his way to school. The trapping rig that Ken used was his bicycle with a basket and a gun locked to it. Ken also wore a belt knife that he was very proud of. So here is a 12-year-old boy riding down through town, a gun strapped across his back, a belt knife and a basket with coon and gridders hanging out of it. Can you imagine the smile and pride of that young man. And all of this was on his way to school. I asked Ken about this, he said back then no one had a second thought about that. Ken ran this bike line from age 12 to 16.

When Ken started to put fur up, he said that the fur buyer wanted the raccoon stretched square. Some of the raccoon brought a good price, 3 to 5 dollars. Back in 1951 the cost of gas was 20 cents and milk 92 cents a gallon. As you see, Ken had a pretty good thing, the fuel for his bike, he supplied.

Ken had dreams of becoming a bear trapper in the Alaskan wilderness. Ken is a true patriot and all his trapping dreams changed when he enlisted in the Marines in 1956. Ken, the eldest of three sons that served this great country. Ken told me that when the last of the brothers came home from duty in 1966 that his mother had a party for the family and said how happy she was to have all her boys' home.

Around 2006 Ken and three buddies gathered around a table and talked about how they could help teach and educate young trappers. They knew that there is strength in education, and a way to get more trappers involved in Northwest Montana. This was the start of Montana fur Harvesters. Ken is very proud of the organization and how we work side by side with Montana Trappers Association. Ken hopes that both organizations continue to grow and work together. This season will be Kens 71<sup>st</sup> season trapping. Ken still runs a trapline for fox on his ranch in Northwest Montana. God Bless you Ken and all of those who help keep trapping alive and growing.

Pictured on page 16 are Ken and his lovely bride Maureen. The photo was taken at the Montana Fur Harvester booth at the Northwest County Fair in Kalispell. Ken volunteers every year with the Marine Food Stand. I cannot say enough about volunteers. I know everyone has a busy schedule, but please help when you can, you never know how you might inspire someone. We are always looking for help, and yes, the reward is PRICELESS. Some of the very first volunteers served under General George Washington. The analogy might be a little much, but we are always in a battle to keep our rights

Have A Blessed Season,

**Tail Dragger Scott**

**Good luck on your lines and stay safe. Tom Fieber**





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