



# Trapping Matters

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PROFESSIONAL  
DEVELOPMENT  
WORKSHOPS

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# Trapping Matters: Enhancing Awareness and Communication



PHOTO BY SAMARA TRUSSO, PENNSYLVANIA GAME COMMISSION

Instructor Adam Vashon, a Wildlife Biologist with USDA Wildlife Services, discusses the selectivity, efficiency and Best Management Practices in the use of foothold traps for the humane capture of wildlife.

**REGULATED TRAPPING CAN BE AMONG THE MOST CONTENTIOUS** and least understood of all programs within an agency's wildlife responsibilities. Many agencies have some staff unfamiliar with trapping, and as a result avoid discussions about it.

**OUR PROGRAMS WERE EFFECTIVE AND WELL RECEIVED.** Specific achievements included providing nationwide workshops for state agencies, increased awareness of Best Management Practices for regulated trapping, and improvements to the participants' abilities to understand and explain regulated trapping. Additionally, these workshops were a catalyst to update survey data about attitudes toward trapping and have provided a model for data and program delivery that can be continued. Open discussions and experiential activities made lessons interactive, enjoyable and of high professional value.

**RESULTS FOR 2015-2016 WERE EXTREMELY POSITIVE.** The average ratings among participants of all core competencies for the workshops were "Excellent" (72 percent) or "Very Good" (28 percent). Notably, participants repeatedly cited the value of learning more about the trapping Best Management Practices process and enhancing their understanding of how to effectively explain the role and importance of regulated trapping to others.

## PARTICIPANT COMMENTS

*"For me and others, the human dimension elements were enlightening. The mix of attendees' backgrounds and the way the instructors engaged the group provided for lively and thought-provoking experience; the messaging tools were both simple and on target. Feedback from staff was unanimously positive!"*

### CATHERINE SPARKS

Assistant Director for Natural Resources  
in the Rhode Island Department of  
Environmental Management

*"Participating in the Trapping Matters Workshop was very beneficial to the work of our Government Affairs Team. By developing a more in-depth understanding of trappers, trapping equipment, methods, and terminology through hands-on activities and in-class discussions, we are now better equipped to discuss trapping as a necessary and effective component of wildlife management and conservation with policy-makers."*

### KEITH NORRIS

The Wildlife Society's director of  
Government Affairs & Partnerships





PHOTOS BY SAMARA TRUSSO, PENNSYLVANIA GAME COMMISSION

Wildlife Biologist Cory Mosby, of the Maine Department of Inland Fish and Wildlife, familiarizes workshop participants with regulated trapping methods used in and around lakes and streams for the capture of aquatic mammals.



Wildlife Biologist Randy Cross shares some perspective in a discussion with other workshop participants in Brewer, Maine.



Susan McCarthy, a Wildlife Biologist with the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife, discusses natural history and the numerous ways furbearers are used by people.

# Workshop Curriculum

In our program, we guide participants through ...

- An explanation of important messages and communication strategies related to regulated trapping
- Demonstrations of traps and their use
- A review of existing information resources on trapping
- An overview of Best Management Practices and their use
- Profiles of modern trappers and their motivations
- The role regulated trapping plays in the North American Model of Wildlife Management

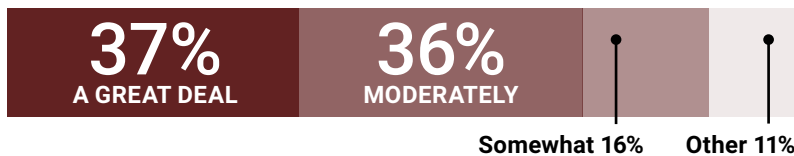
# Selected Results

After our workshops, participants reported the following:

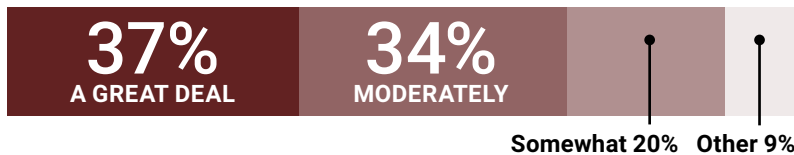
## DO YOU FEEL MORE KNOWLEDGABLE ABOUT HOW TO COMMUNICATE ABOUT TRAPPING TO OTHERS?



## DO YOU FEEL YOU OVERALL ARE BETTER PREPARED TO DISCUSS TRAPPING WITH THE PUBLIC?



## DO YOU FEEL YOU ARE MORE KNOWLEDGABLE ABOUT TECHNICAL ASPECTS OF TRAPPING?



## DO YOU FEEL YOU ARE MORE FAMILIAR WITH ISSUES SURROUNDING TRAPPING?



## DO YOU FEEL MORE FAMILIAR WITH THE BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES PROCESS AS IT RELATES TO IMPROVING TRAPPING AND ASSURANCES OF ANIMAL WELFARE?



## WHAT DID YOU ENJOY OR FIND MOST HELPFUL ABOUT THE WORKSHOP?

- Experience of the instructors
- Diversity of understanding and opinion of trapping among participants
- Effective communication of trapping-related subjects
- Hands-on demonstrations
- Networking
- The open discussions
- Human Dimension and Public Opinion survey information

## WHAT INFO WAS MOST HELPFUL IN ADDRESSING YOUR MISCONCEPTIONS?

- The role of Best Management Practices in improving trapping methods
- Communicating trapping to the public
- Terminology
- Public attitudes/key messages on trapping
- Demographic information/trapper statistics

## AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

- Discuss individual topics in greater depth
- Provide additional advanced media and communications training
- Re-evaluate communications strategies in light of social media and emerging trends

## OUR FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS

- Two additional national surveys were conducted in partnership with the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies. The results of these surveys will be distributed to all participants as an extension of their Trapping Matters workshop experience.
- Due to high demand, more Trapping Matters workshops are planned and will be hosted by state fish and wildlife agencies or The Wildlife Society.
- In addition to delivering its stated goals, these projects provided the catalyst to organize and expand the curriculum and continue to offer workshops to those who have a stated need.



# About Our Programming



**THESE PROJECTS HAVE BEEN SUPPORTED** by Wildlife Restoration funds, through grants administered by the U.S. Fish

and Wildlife Service, Division of Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration: *Partnering to fund conservation and connecting people with nature.*

## TRAPPING MATTERS PROFESSIONAL

**DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOPS** were initiated in 2003. Since their inception, more than 5,000 wildlife professionals have attended workshops throughout the United States. The Max McGraw Wildlife Foundation, the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, The Wildlife Society, The U.S Fish and Wildlife Service, and state fish and wildlife agencies partner to deliver workshops related to effective communication and regulated trapping. The fundamental purpose of these professional development workshops is to advance awareness and communication skills related to regulated trapping among agency professionals and to increase understanding of Best Management Practices for regulated trapping in the United States.



PHOTO BY SAMARA TRUSSO, PENNSYLVANIA GAME COMMISSION

## WORKSHOP LOCATIONS AND ATTENDANCE

*By controlling costs and leveraging partnerships, we exceeded the number of planned workshops. A total of 248 professionals attended seven workshops across the United States during 2015-2016. These professionals represented more than 50 entities, including state and federal agencies, nongovernmental organizations and academic institutions.*

LOCATION	DATE	PARTICIPANTS
Hadley, Mass.	September 2015	44
NEFWC, Annapolis, Md.	April 2016	25
IHEA Conference, Vermont	May 2016	27
Bend, Ore.	July 13, 2016	51
Westborough, Mass.	Aug. 3, 2016	54
Frankfort, Ky.	Sept. 24, 2016	16
SEAFWA, Asheville, N.C.	Oct. 15, 2016	31

## PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS

### STATE AND FEDERAL AGENCIES

Arizona Game and Fish Department  
 Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies  
 Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control  
 District of Columbia Government  
 Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation  
 Georgia Department of Natural Resources  
 Idaho Department of Fish and Game  
 Indiana Department of Natural Resources  
 Iowa Department of Natural Resources  
 Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife  
 Maryland Department of Natural Resources  
 Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife  
 Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fish and Parks  
 National Shooting Sports Foundation  
 New Hampshire Fish and Game Department  
 North Carolina Resources Commission  
 Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation  
 Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife  
 Oregon State Police  
 Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management  
 Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency  
 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
 U.S. Forest Service  
 USDA Wildlife Services  
 Utah Division of Wildlife Resources  
 Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife  
 Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries  
 Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources  
 Wisconsin Trappers Association Members  
 Wyoming Game and Fish Department

### PROFESSIONAL

Frontier  
 All Creatures Wildlife  
 Klamath Tribes  
 High Desert Museum  
 Oregon Trappers Association  
 The Wildlife Society  
 SIMS Environmental Consulting

### UNIVERSITIES

Unity College  
 Antioch College  
 University of West Virginia  
 University of Massachusetts  
 University of Vermont  
 Haywood Community College  
 University of Tennessee  
 Clemson University  
 University of North Carolina-Greensboro  
 West Virginia University  
 University of Virginia  
 University of Southern Mississippi  
 Oregon State University  
 University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point  
 University of Wisconsin-Madison