

Chapter 5

Trapping Regulations



Content Standard - *Students demonstrate the ability to understand, support, and comply with trapping regulations*

Legal traps vary from state to state. Trapping regulations may change each year within a state.



Andy Turner, MI DNR

Conservation Officers have an important job. Officers strictly enforce trapping regulations. They also help teach trapper education courses and work on nuisance animal complaints.

Introduction

Biologists use hunting and trapping regulations to manage and conserve wildlife. When an animal population is low or endangered, regulations can be used to protect the species. When an animal population is high, biologists can allow more harvest. If the population of a species is high enough to cause problems, biologists may lengthen the season, raise bag limits, or allow additional methods of harvest so the population can be lowered to an acceptable level.

Hunting and trapping regulations are also used to enhance human health and safety; protect habitat, property, and domestic animals; require the use of selective trapping methods; and meet public expectations for animal welfare.

Most states have a process for setting regulations that allows for public participation. Hunters, trappers, landowners, organizations, and government agencies can participate in the regulation setting process. Michigan's process includes public participation sessions within each Natural Resources Commission (NRC) meeting. The NRC holds the authority and responsibility for setting game regulations, including trapping, in Michigan.

As a responsible trapper, you must follow all regulations. If you disagree with a regulation, you should participate in the regulation setting process.

Each state has law enforcement officers dedicated to enforcement of hunting, fishing, and trapping regulations. They may be known as wildlife officers, conservation officers, or game wardens. In Michigan they are known as conservation officers. Responsible trappers work with their local wildlife officers and help develop mutual respect for the role each serves in wildlife conservation. When landowners have furbearer control problems conservation officers often refer them to responsible trappers they know and trust.



Identify two specific places to obtain current trapping regulations

Each state wildlife agency publishes a brochure that explains current hunting and trapping regulations. A copy of Michigan's brochure is available electronically at www.michigan.gov/dnr. It is also available at any store that sells Michigan hunting and trapping licenses. You may also obtain the regulations by writing, calling, or visiting a DNR office.

Because trapping regulations may change each year you need to obtain a new copy of the regulations when you renew your trapping license. Remember to obtain a new brochure when you purchase your license. As previously stated, you may also obtain a copy of the Michigan Hunting and Trapping Guide at any DNR office or by visiting www.michigan.gov/dnr.

Explain the process for setting or changing trapping regulations in Michigan

Regulations are changed by the Natural Resources Commission. Suggested regulation changes submitted by the public or another source, are evaluated by the Wildlife Division. Regulations changes are discussed internally and with a public furtakers group. After potential regulation changes have been evaluated, they are formally proposed to the Natural Resources Commission. The Commission evaluates the proposal, accepts public input and then has the authority to approve, modify, or reject changes.

The Furtakers User Group meets regularly with DNR staff. The group provides input on existing regulations as well as on proposed regulation changes. This is also an opportunity for Furtaker's to present issues with current regulations and request changes. The group assists the DNR in developing furbearer regulations that are not only biologically sound but also socially acceptable.

Flexible trapping regulations allow biologists to use trapping as a tool of wildlife management.

It is your responsibility to know the trapping regulations. Ignorance of the law is no excuse if you are charged with a trapping violation.



Silvertip Productions

Trappers work with wildlife agencies to improve regulations.



Ohio DOW Photo

When furbearers are too abundant, biologists can make recommendations to reduce restrictions on trapping.

When furbearers are too scarce, biologists can make recommendations to shorten seasons or take other steps to allow the population to increase.

Some states require trappers to tag traps with the owner's name and address.



Chris Tischaefer

Metal trap tags are made from brass or copper. The information is stamped into the metal and is permanent.



Explain conditions that could lead to changes in trapping regulations

- Furbearer populations rise or fall
- Trapping technology improves
- The number of trappers rises or falls
- Habitat changes
- Nuisance animal problems increase
- Public attitudes change
- Rare or endangered species need protection from furbearers



Know the requirements regarding permission to trap on private property

Requirements regarding permission to trap vary from state to state. A responsible trapper always obtains permission from the landowner.

In Michigan, verbal permission from the landowner is required to hunt or trap on private property



Review the current state Wildlife Conservation Order to determine legal restrictions for trapping nuisance animals

A Michigan Hunting and Trapping Guide provides information regarding the regulations related to harvesting of furbearing animals. However, depredating furbearing animals are special circumstances and the requirements differ from those used during the fur harvest seasons. Review this material with your instructor and become familiar with these requirements.



Hunters and trappers are expected to know the regulations and follow them

Violations of a state's hunting and trapping regulations are criminal offenses. Conservation officers and judges recognize the difference between an unintentional violation and willful intentions to poach animals out of season or by illegal means. Ignorance of hunting and trapping laws is not an excuse.



Hunters and trappers are expected to know the regulations and follow them.

Upon conviction of hunting or trapping violations, a judge may impose fines or jail time. Hunters and trappers convicted of serious violations may have traps, firearms, and even vehicles confiscated by the court. Judges can also revoke licenses and suspend a person's privilege to hunt or trap in the future.



Know the process for reporting wildlife violations

As a trapper, you may learn about hunting or trapping violations that need to be stopped. Never confront a violator or get directly involved without an officer present. Instead, observe the situation and quickly report it to your local conservation officer. Provide descriptions of the violators, vehicles, license plate numbers, locations, and times.

Most states have established programs to stop poaching with toll-free telephone numbers to call when you need to report a violation. These programs go by names such as "RAP" which stands for "Report All Poaching." Many states provide rewards for information that leads to the arrest and conviction of violators. In Michigan, you may qualify for a reward if you furnish information that leads to the arrest and conviction of a person or persons taking, attempting to take, possessing or commercializing in wildlife resources contrary to Michigan or Federal law. Assistance in applying for a reward will be provided by the conservation officer handling your complaint, or assistance may be obtained from one of the Report All Poaching hotline operators. Callers can remain anonymous.



Ohio DOW Photo

Treat landowners with respect.

Try to handle furbearer problems during trapping season.

Regulations concerning possession of furs during the closed season vary widely. Make certain you know the laws for your state!



Poachers steal from all of us!

Protect wildlife resources and the heritage of trapping by turning in poachers

Chapter 5 – Trapping Regulations

REVIEW

Content Standard – Students demonstrate the ability to understand, support, and comply with trapping regulations.

Identify two specific places to obtain current trapping regulations (page 39).

1. _____
2. _____

Explain the process for setting or changing trapping regulations in Michigan (page 39).

Explain conditions that could lead to changes in trapping regulations (page 40).

- Name at least three reasons wildlife agencies might change trapping regulations:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Demonstrate the use of current state regulations brochure to find trapping seasons, legal trap types, legal trap sets and tagging requirements for common furbearers (page 40).

- Pick two furbearers that are common where you live. Use Michigan’s current regulation brochure to fill in the information about seasons and legal trap types.

Furbearer		
Season		
Legal Traps		
Tagging Requirements		

Know the requirements regarding permission to trap on private property (page 40).

- Write down the requirements for permission to trap on private property below:

- State the maximum penalties for trapping out of season, trapping without a license, trapping without permission, and trapping protected animals.

Explain the process for reporting wildlife violations (page 41).

1. Never _____ a violator
2. Safely observe the situation and report it to a _____
3. Provide descriptions of the violators, vehicles, locations, and _____

- Write the phone numbers of local wildlife offices and Michigan's RAP program in the space below
(Note: use current Michigan Hunting and Trapping Guide to help answer this question.):
