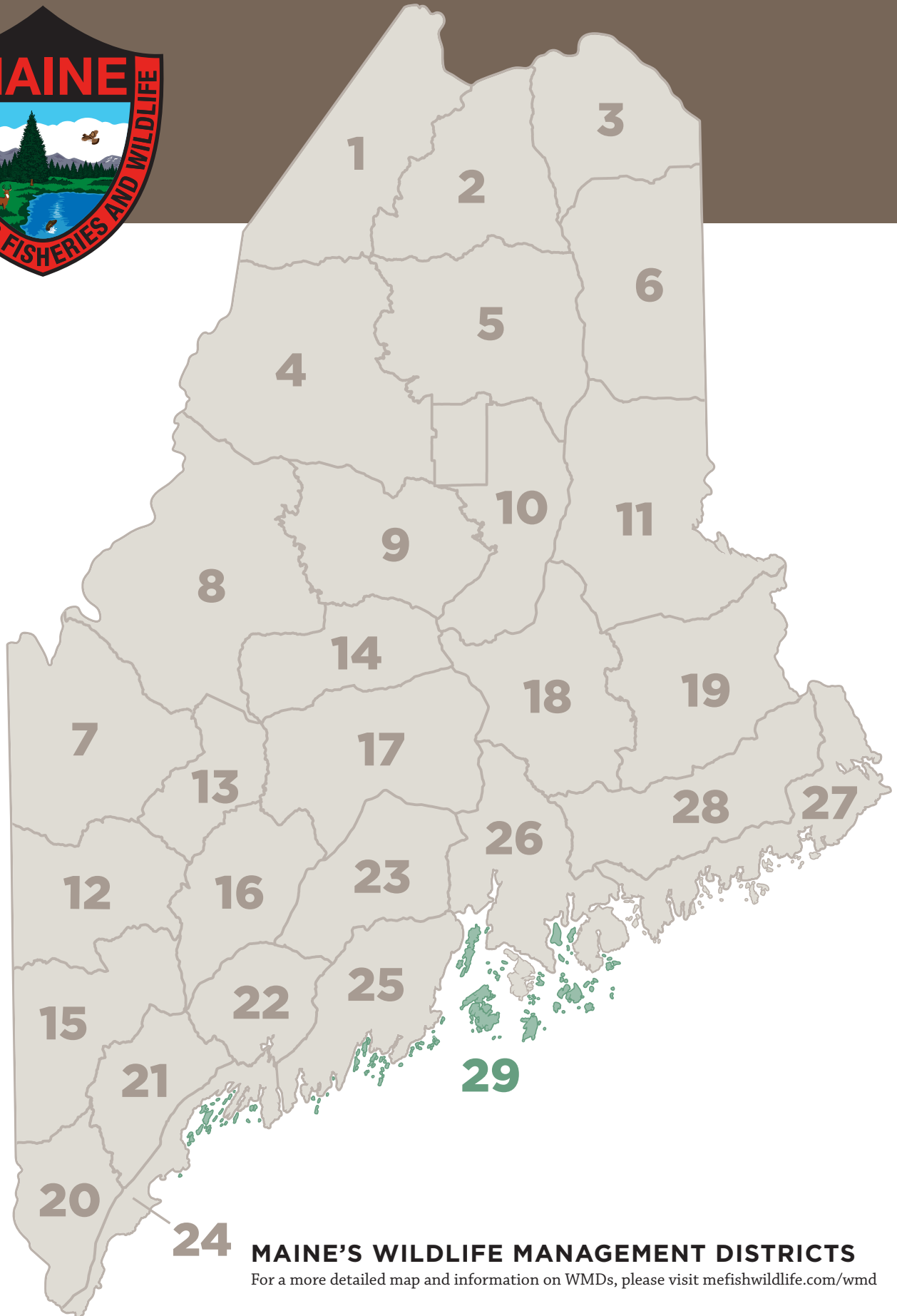


S U M M A R Y O F

MAINE TRAPPING LAWS



2026-2027



MAINE'S WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT DISTRICTS
For a more detailed map and information on WMDs, please visit mefishwildlife.com/wmd

SUMMARY OF TRAPPING LAWS

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DIGITAL VERSION AVAILABLE

Download a PDF copy
of this book at
mefishwildlife.com/trappinglaws
to easily reference from your
computer or mobile device.



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Licensing Information

TRAPPING LICENSE REQUIREMENTS

Except for certain landowners, full-time Department employees engaged in official duties, and children under 10, everyone, including animal damage control agents and animal control officers appointed pursuant to Title 7, must have the appropriate trapping license before setting a trap for wild animals or before assisting another person who is trapping. An unlicensed person may accompany a trapper only as an observer.

A person buying a trapping license for the first time must purchase it through the MDIFW office in Augusta, in person, by email, or via mail (including first time bear trapping permits). Trapping license renewals including bear permit renewals can be purchased online. Visit mefishwildlife.com or call (207) 287-8000 for more information.

A trapping license remains valid from July 1st through June 30th of the following year.

- Maine residents under 10 years old may trap without a license, except for bear. An individual must be at least 10 years of age to trap a black bear.
- Maine residents and nonresidents who are at least 10, but less than 16 years old, must have a junior trapping license.

Note: A junior trapping license issued to a 15 year old is good for the entire calendar year regardless of when the person turns 16.

- Maine residents who are 16 or older, must have a resident trapping license (see resident landowner below).
- Resident landowners and immediate family members may trap without a license on their own land as long as their license to trap is not under revocation or suspension, IF they are legally entitled to possession, they currently live on that land, AND it is 10 or more contiguous acres in size.
- **Nonresidents:** Nonresident trappers 16 years of age and older must have a non-resident trapping license. Nonresidents 10 to 15 years of age must have a junior trapping license and those under 10 years of age may trap without a trapping license.

Note: Nonresidents who are citizens of the U.S. are not allowed to trap beaver unless their home state allows Maine residents to trap beaver. A nonresident who isn't a citizen of the U.S. cannot trap in Maine unless it is for beaver AND their province of residency allows Maine residents to trap beaver in that province.

Apprentice Trapper License

An apprentice trapper license allows a person who has never held a valid adult trapping license to go trapping with an apprentice trapper supervisor for up to two years without having to take a trapper education course. An "apprentice trapper supervisor" is one who has held a valid adult trapping license for the prior 3 consecutive years. The holder of an apprentice trapper license must, while trapping, be under the direct supervision of an apprentice trapper supervisor at all times. An apprenticeship trapper license allows a person to trap for all species that may be legally trapped, except black bear. The fee for an apprentice trapper license is the same as a regular trapping license.

Residency Definitions

Resident means a citizen of the United States or a person who is not a citizen of the United States who has been domiciled in the State for one year who:

- if registered to vote, is registered in this State;
- if licensed to drive a motor vehicle, has made application for or possesses a motor vehicle operator's license issued by the State;
- has registered in Maine any motor vehicles they own that are located within the state; and
- is in compliance with the state income tax laws.

A person who is a full-time student at a college or university in the State and has satisfied the requirements above is rebuttably presumed to be a resident in the State during that period.

Nonresident means a person who does not fall within the definition of a resident.

TRAPPER EDUCATION COURSE

When applying for any Maine trapping license (except a junior or apprentice trapping license), proof of having successfully completed a state-approved trapper education course is required OR proof of having held an adult trapping license (in Maine or in some other state, province or country) at some time since 1978. If a person submits satisfactory evidence of having previously held an adult license to trap in any other state, province or country, the person must also submit proof of having successfully completed a trapper education course comparable to Maine's trapper education program.

Exemption for Tribal Members: A person who is an enrolled member of the Passamaquoddy Tribe, the Penobscot Nation, the Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians or the Aroostook Band of Micmacs are exempt from the trapper education course requirements. See page 16 for new bear trapping exceptions.

ATTENTION LIFETIME TRAPPING LICENSE HOLDERS

The Department mails trapping information to all trappers each fall. Please contact the Department at (207) 287-8000 if your contact information has changed or you no longer plan to trap.

HARVEST REPORTS

Trappers that are 16 years old and older, including Lifetime License holders, are required to complete a Fall and Spring Harvest Report, even if you did not trap. These reports are mailed to all trappers each fall or can be completed online. Fall reports are due January 31 and spring reports are due May 31. These reports provide important data for all furbearers on trapper effort trends. For more information, visit our website: mefishwildlife.com/trappinglaws. ■

PURCHASE YOUR TRAPPING LICENSE ONLINE

Trapping license renewals, including Apprenticeship Trapping, Bear Trapping Permit, and Junior Trapping License can be purchased online.



TRAPPING LICENSES & FEES

RESIDENCY	LICENSE/PERMIT	FEE
Maine Residents	Trapping (16 and older)	\$36.00
	Apprentice Trapping (16 and older)	\$36.00
	Bear Trapping Permit (10 and older) ¹	\$10.00
Non-Residents	Trapping (16 and older)	\$318.00
	Apprentice Trapping (16 and older)	\$318.00
	Bear Trapping Permit (10 and older) ¹	\$67.00
Juniors (Resident & Nonresident)	Junior Trapping (10- 15 years)	\$10.00

¹Trapping license or big game hunting license also required, see page 16.

TRAPPING BY YOUTH

Children under 10 years of age are allowed to trap all legal species without a license but must be accompanied at all times by a junior trapper supervisor. **Exception:** Children under 10 years of age may not trap black bear, see page 16 for bear trap permit requirements.

Children over 10 years of age and under 16 years of age who hold a junior trapping license must be accompanied by a junior trapper supervisor unless they have successfully completed a trapper education course. The person who accompanies a youth trapper is responsible for any violations committed by this trapper.

“Junior Trapper Supervisor” for a junior trapper means a parent or guardian of the junior trapper or a person 18 years of age or older who is approved by the parent or guardian of the junior trapper and who holds or has held a valid adult trapping license or has completed a trapper education course. ■

MAINE LIFETIME LICENSE

A Maine Tradition and a Gift that Lasts a Lifetime

A lifetime license, purchased for yourself or as a gift, allows the bearer to fish, trap, and/or hunt for their lifetime, regardless of where they live in the future. Revenues generated by these licenses are deposited in a special trust fund that provides longterm financial support for Maine’s fish and wildlife.

Lifetime license holders (not complimentary) are required to purchase any additional hunting/fishing permits between the ages of 16 and 69.

Maine Resident Applicants 70+ Years of Age

For a one-time fee of \$8.00, a senior lifetime license entitles the holder to all privileges they are qualified to receive including hunting, trapping, archery, and fishing. The resident lifetime trapping license holder (70 years of age and older) must obtain the bear trapping permit free of charge, by calling MDIFW at 207-287-8000.

Note: If you purchased a senior lifetime license before age 70, you do NOT have to pay the \$8.00 fee.

OTHER COMPLIMENTARY TRAPPING LICENSES

For information on other complimentary/special licenses call 207-287-8000.

OUTDOOR SAFETY AND EDUCATION COURSES

Maine law requires all firearms, archery, or trapping license applicants to complete an outdoor safety course, unless they have previously held an adult license.

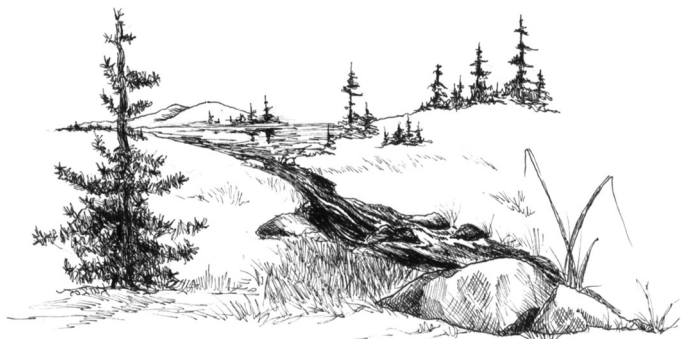
To purchase a bear trapping permit, you must complete either a full Maine trapper education course which includes the bear trapping unit, or complete the Maine black bear trapping education course online or in-person. Learn more at mefishwildlife.com/bearcourse. Exceptions to this course requirement can be found on page 16.

Trapping courses are considered home study courses that include a homework requirement (paper workbook or online module) and attendance in a 1-day course to complete. Hunter education

is available in three formats: traditional, homestudy, and online. An in-person skills and exam session is required for students ages 10-15 who take firearms or archery safety courses online. The in-person classes are sponsored by school districts, sports clubs, civic groups, and others, and are taught statewide by volunteer instructors certified by MDIFW. Pre-registration is required.

To begin taking a course online or to register for an in-person course, visit mefishwildlife.com/safetycourses. For information on becoming a volunteer instructor, contact your local Regional Safety Coordinator or the Recreational Safety Division Office.

Recreational Safety Division
(207) 287-5220



Definitions & Descriptions

Bait: Bait is defined as animal matter including meat, skin, bones, feathers, hair or any other solid substance that used to be part of an animal or any object that mimics or replicates animal matter (NEW 2026). This includes live or dead fish. Bait does not include animal droppings (scat), urine, or animals, dead or alive, held in a trap as the result of lawful trapping activity.

Beaver Dam: Means a dam built by a beaver to provide a pond as protection against predators and provide easy access to food during the winter. The Department, for enforcement purposes, has modified its definition of a “beaver dam”. A beaver dam does **not** include the remains of an inactive or breached beaver dam that is in disrepair and is no longer being maintained by beaver.

Beaver House: The term beaver house shall be interpreted to include any cavity which is capped by beaver with mud and sticks, including a cavity in the bank. Holes in the bank not capped with mud and sticks shall not be considered beaver houses.

Built-up Portion of a Town: The compact or built-up portion of a municipality is the territory contiguous to a way that is built up with structures situated less than 200 feet apart for a distance of at least ¼ of a mile.

Catch Circle: See page 7

Drowning Set: A drowning set is a trap

that is set completely under water and rigged in such a way as to reasonably ensure the drowning of any species of trapped furbearer that would reasonably be expected to visit the set location and be held in the type of trap used at the set, this is also known as a submersion set.

Note: You are allowed to trap in shallow water where a trapped animal is not likely to drown, but traps set in this manner are not considered to be drowning sets and are not allowed within ½ mile of the built up section of a city or town. For enforcement and information purposes, all drowning sets for beaver and muskrat during January and February will be considered “under-ice drowning sets” as far as trap tending requirements are concerned.

Muskrat Den: A muskrat den is any cavity, which is capped by muskrats with vegetative matter including but not limited to hollow stumps and bank cavities. Holes in the bank not capped with vegetative matter shall not be considered muskrat dens.

Trap: A trap is any device which is made to catch or hold animals. There are many types of traps, but those which you are allowed to use to trap wild animals in Maine are explained in the following pages are:

- Foothold traps (see page 6 and 7)
- Enclosed foothold traps (see page 7)
- Killer-type traps of the body-gripping variety, including spring-type traps (see page 8 and 9)

- Cage-type live traps (see page 7)
- Colony traps (see page 7)
- Cable devices (see page 7)
- Wooden, **plastic, or similar solid material-based rat traps (NEW 2026)** are legal for weasel and red squirrel (see page 7)

Trapping: Any of the following actions are considered trapping:

- Setting one or more traps anywhere in the fields, forests or waters of the state
- Tending or visiting a trap which has been set in the fields, forests or waters of the state
- Killing an animal which is being held in a trap
- Removing an animal from a trap
- Assisting another person in doing any of the above activities

Tributary: Means a brook, stream or river flowing directly or indirectly into a lake, pond or another brook, stream or river. A lake or great pond shall not be construed to mean tributary. The tributary to a great pond shall not be considered a tributary to the outlet of that great pond.

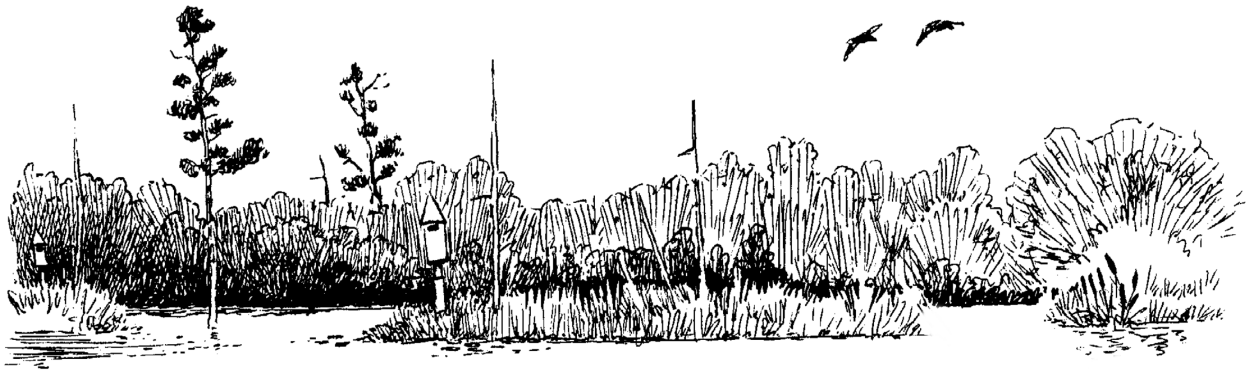
Visible Attractor: Means an object hung or placed at a trap site location that serves as a visual cue to attract an animal to the trap. Visible attractor includes, but is not limited to, CD-disc, tin can cover, foil, tinsel, feathers, bones, fur, mechanical devices, or any like items. Fruits or vegetables used for muskrat trapping, urine, and animal droppings (scat) are not considered a visible attractor. Small pieces of flagging can be used to mark trap site locations. ■

2026-2027 TRAPPING SEASONS

SEASON	AREA	DATES
Early Raccoon, Fox, & Coyote	Statewide	October 18, 2026 - October 31, 2026
Early Muskrat	WMDs 1-6 & 9-11	October 25, 2026 - October 31, 2026
	WMDs 1-4	October 18, 2026 - April 30, 2027
	WMDs 5, 6 & 8-11	October 25, 2026 - April 30, 2027
Beaver	WMDs 7, 12-29	October 25, 2026 - April 15, 2027
	Statewide	September 1, 2026 - October 31, 2026
Bear	Statewide	September 1, 2026 - October 31, 2026
General Trapping (bobcat, coyote, fisher ¹ , fox, marten ¹ , mink, muskrat ² , opossum, otter, raccoon, red squirrel, skunk, weasel)	Statewide	November 1, 2026 - December 31, 2026

¹ Trappers can harvest up to 25 fisher and 25 marten.

² See page 11 for information on trapping muskrat after the general trapping season in areas where the beaver season is open.



General Trapping Regulations

- **Trapping During Closed Season:** Except as explained in animal damage control laws, it is unlawful to trap for any species of wild bird, or any species of wild animal, which does not have an open trapping season.
- **Advance Preparation:** No person shall stake, hook, fasten or position a trap at any trap site location in the fields, forests or waters of the state prior to the opening day of the trapping season. In addition, there shall be no installation or placement of trapping implements, associated materials, or supplies or preparation of the site **in** the water or **on** the ice including the associated flowage, marsh, bog, brook, stream, river, pond, or lake prior to the beginning of the trapping season on beaver and muskrat.
- **Removing Animals from Traps:** Any animal found in a trap must be removed. If the animal is alive and it is a legal species, it must either be released or humanely dispatched. It is unlawful to keep a trapped animal alive without a permit to possess captive wildlife. Contact the Department for more information about captive wildlife.
- **Capture of Non-target Species:** Any animal caught during a closed season for that species, must be released alive immediately; **lynx** and **eagle** are the exception, see the following protocol. In the unlikely event that an eagle or a lynx is caught in a trap, a biologist or game warden must be notified immediately, before the animal is released. **See page 14 for what to do if you catch a lynx.** If a non-target species that cannot be lawfully possessed is found dead in the trap, it must be reported to a game warden as soon as possible and before the animal is removed from the trap. The animal must be surrendered to a game warden or biologist within 48 hours from the time it was discovered.
- **Carrying a Firearm:** Any licensed trapper is allowed to carry a firearm at any time while tending traps (including nights and Sundays) for the sole purpose of dispatching trapped animals. However, any person prohibited from possessing a firearm under the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 15, Section 393 is prohibited from carrying a firearm during the open trapping season for the purpose of dispatching animals unless they have obtained a valid permit to carry a firearm.
- **Disturbing Traps:** It is unlawful to take or disturb any trap, or any wild animal which is caught in a trap, without permission from the owner of the trap. An individual convicted of disturbing traps, will lose any license in effect, and be ineligible to purchase any license issued by the Department for 3 years.
- **Furbearer Hunting:** The use of a firearm, crossbow, or bow and arrow is permitted to hunt for bobcat, coyote, red and gray fox, opossum, raccoon, red squirrel and skunk during the open hunting season on these animals. See the *Maine Summary of Hunting Laws* for more information. It is unlawful to hunt for beaver, fisher, marten, mink, muskrat, otter, or weasel at any time.
- **Setback Distance:** Traps are required to be set at least 5 feet away from another person's beaver traps; however, as a matter of common courtesy, all traps should be set a reasonable distance away from any trap which has been set by someone else. See page 11-12 for regulations related to setback distances from beaver houses, beaver dams, and muskrat houses.
- **Trapping Within the Built-up Portion of a Town:** Trapping is only permitted within $\frac{1}{2}$ mile of the built-up portion of a city or town with the use of cage-type live traps and drowning sets (see page 4 Definitions), unless trapping on property owned by the trapper.

MARKING BEAVER TRAPS

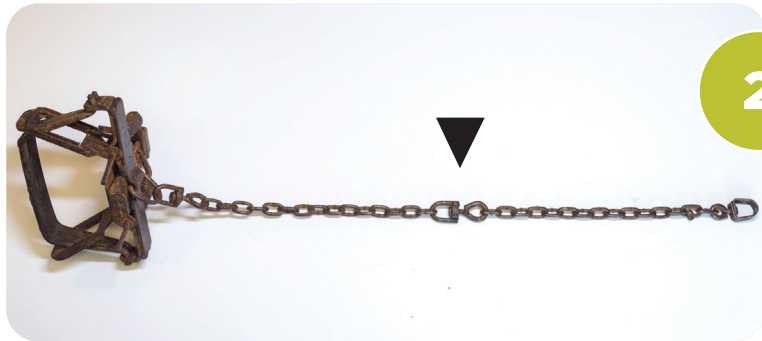
The law requires that each trap is labeled with trapper's full name and address or MOSES ID. However, most trappers label both their trap and the pole to which their trap is fastened. This eliminates the need for a warden to chop out or otherwise disturb the set in order to identify the trapper. It is a Department policy that if the trapper's name and address or MOSES ID are displayed on the trap pole above the ice, the warden will not chop out the set to check the trap for a label.

- **Trap Identification:** Each trap set must be clearly labeled with trapper's full name and address or MOSES ID. If two people are trapping together, it is not necessary to have the name and address or MOSES ID of both trappers on each trap.
Note: The recommended method for labeling traps is to attach a small metal tag to each trap chain with a piece of wire. The tag should be preprinted with your name and address or MOSES ID.
- **Visible Bait:** Foothold or killer-type traps must not be set within 50 yards of bait that is visible from above. Bait may be used for trapping if it is completely covered to prevent it from being seen from above, and it must be covered in such a way as to withstand wind action and other normal environmental conditions. Animal matter (e.g., feathers, bone, and fur) meets the definition of bait and visible attractor and must be covered or not visible from above if less than 50 yards from a foothold or killer-type trap.
Note: Visible attractors are not permitted during the early raccoon and canid season. ■

Regulations for Specific Types of Traps



1



2



3

FOOTHOLD TRAPS

The **statewide** foothold trapping regulations are as follows:

- Foothold traps must be set at or below ground, ice, or snow levels.
- It is unlawful to use a trap with teeth on the jaws unless when set, placed, and tended, the trap is completely covered with water.
- All foothold traps set **on dry land** must have at least **three swiveling points** and the chain must be centrally mounted at the base of the trap. One swiveling point must be at the base of the trap, one midway in the chain, and one at the trap's anchoring point.

3 SWIVEL POINTS

Centrally Mounted at the Base of the Trap

Think of this as the central third of the base of the trap anywhere within the white circle. This can be a J-hook coming directly from the base of the trap or a swivel attached to the trap with a D-ring, lap link or link of chain.

Midway-in the Chain

This is halfway between the base of the trap and the anchoring point. A double swivel (which technically has two swiveling points) is commonly used here, but another swiveling point is still required at the anchoring point and at the base of the trap.

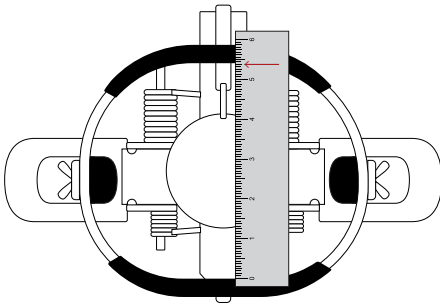
The Anchoring Point

This is where the trap chain attaches to your anchoring device. An anchoring device may be a rebar stake, disposable or cable stake, or a drag. When using a drag, the anchoring point can be considered where the chain associated with the drag attaches to the trap chain. Remember that the use of drags is prohibited in WMDs 1-11, 14, 18, and 19.

The foothold trapping regulations for WMDs 1-11, 14, 18, and 19 are as follows:

- Foothold traps must be securely anchored to the ground. The use of drags is prohibited in these WMDs.
- Foothold traps must have the **catch circle** cleared of woody vegetation, debris and man-made material that could cause entanglement of a trapped animal. Small sticks and rocks, and rotten/decaying woody material may be used for stepping guides, blocking, and backing for trap sets, if they are not rooted to the ground.
- These restrictions do not apply to foothold traps that when set, placed, and tended are fully or partially covered by water, those that are set on a muskrat "float", or enclosed foothold traps.

In WMDs 1-6 and 8-11 no foothold trap may be used that has an inside jaw spread of more than 5½ inches unless when set, placed, and tended the trap is fully or partially covered by water.



Foothold Jaw Spread

Measure inside spread of jaw at the dog of the trap to ensure jaw spread is no more than 5½ inches.

The Catch Circle

The catch circle is defined as the area that can be circumscribed by the outer edge of a trap when the trap and trap chain are fully extended and moved in a circle (360°) around the anchoring point. The catch circle must be clear of material that could cause entanglement in WMD 1-11, 14, 18 and 19. When trapping for bear with a cable trap (foothold cable restraint) anywhere in the state must be free of material that could cause entanglement.



ENCLOSED FOOTHOLD TRAPS

Enclosed foothold traps that are designed primarily to catch raccoons and avoid incidental catches of other animals may be used during the early raccoon and canid trapping season and the general trapping season.

CAGE-TYPE LIVE TRAPS

Cage-type live traps may be used to trap for bear and furbearing animals. In WMDs 1-6 and 8-11, cage traps must have an opening of no more than 13" in width and 13" in height, unless the cage trap is being used for (1) wildlife research and survey activities; (2) removal of animals causing damage to property; or (3) to capture a bear. Culvert traps are a type of cage-type live trap.

CABLE DEVICES

- **Bear:** Cable traps designed to capture and hold the animal by the foot are permitted for black bears. See pages 16-19 for more information on bear trapping.
- **Beaver:** Cable devices may be used to trap beaver, but they must be set completely underwater and be set in a way to ensure drowning.

COLONY TRAPS

Colony traps may be used (primarily for muskrat) throughout the trapping season, except that:

- The outside dimensions of colony traps may not exceed 7 inches high by 7 inches wide by 40 inches long.

- All colony traps must be set, placed, and tended so as to remain completely under water.
- For tending purposes, colony traps are considered killer-type traps.

KILLER-TYPE (CONIBEAR) TRAPS

For information and rules on killer-type (conibear) traps, see page 8.

SOLID BASE RAT TRAPS

Wooden, plastic, or similar solid material-based rat traps may be set on land for weasel and red squirrel trapping if recessed in a wooden box with a hole no larger than 2 inches in diameter. ■

Killer-Type (Conibear) Trap Rules

It is unlawful to use a killer-type trap with a jaw spread larger than 8 inches, except during the open season on beaver. These traps may only be used if when set, placed, and tended, the trap is completely underwater.

Killer-type traps with a jaw spread of 8 inches or less do not need an exclusion device if when set, placed, and tended, are completely underwater.

Killer-type traps with an inside jaw spread of 5 inches or less do not need an exclusion device if: 1) when set, placed, and tended, they are completely underwater, or if 2) the trap has an inside jaw spread 5 inches or less **and** is:

- Either set so as to be partially covered by water at all times, or
- Set under overhanging stream banks, or
- Used as a blind set (without the use of bait, lure or visible attractor). Bait, lure and visible attractor do not include animal droppings (scat) or urine.

LYNX EXCLUSION DEVICE RULES

In all WMDs, killer-type traps with a jaw spread not to exceed 8 inches may be used on or above ground level if the trap is placed within a lynx exclusion device. The trap jaws must be completely within the device, the trap springs can be outside of the device.

Exclusion devices will have the following designs:

- (1) For traps with a jaw spread less than or equal to 5 inches (primarily used for marten trapping), the device must have an opening of 4 x 4 inches or less. The entrance hole may be placed on the end or on the side of the device, and the trap must be set a minimum of 18 inches from the closest edge of the entrance hole (Figure 1).
- (2) For traps with a jaw spread greater than 5 inches but less than 8 inches, (primarily used for fisher trapping) two designs may be constructed. For both devices the trap must be placed no closer than 18 inches from the closest edge of the entrance hole.

a. The first design has an entrance hole on the end of the device that must not exceed 5 x 6 inches. A baffle must be placed no more than 6 inches back from the entrance hole and must not leave an opening greater than 5 x 6 inches. With the baffle in place, the entrance hole and interior opening must not overlap to create an unobstructed view to the interior of the exclusion device (Figure 2a).

b. For the second design the entrance hole must not exceed 6 x 7 inches and must be placed on the side of the device. A baffle must be placed at the edge of the entrance with the baffle opening opposite of the entrance hole, and the interior opening must not exceed 6 x 6 inches (Figure 2b).

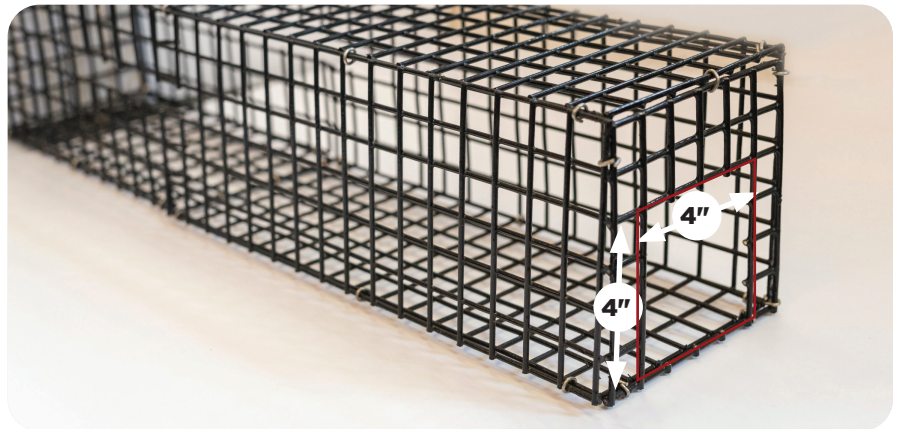
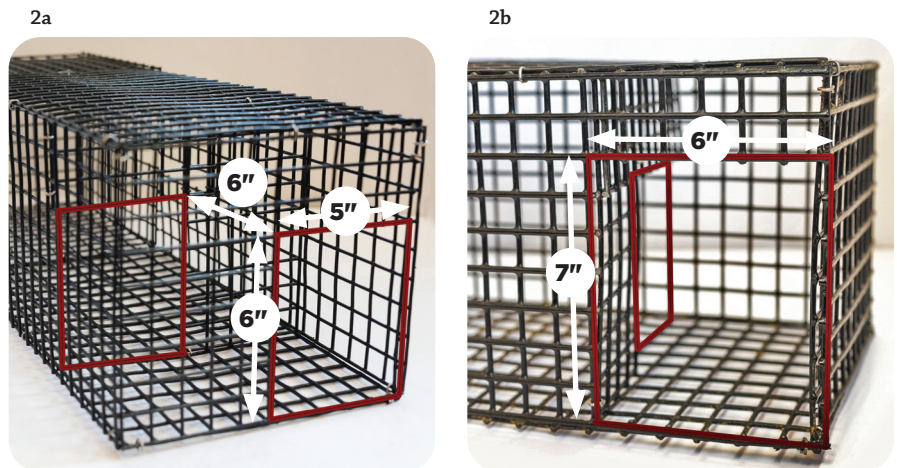


Figure 1. All exclusion devices have a 4 x 4 inch opening and are constructed for a killer-type trap with a jaw spread less than or equal to 5 inches (primarily used for marten trapping).



Red lines illustrate the locations of the entrances.

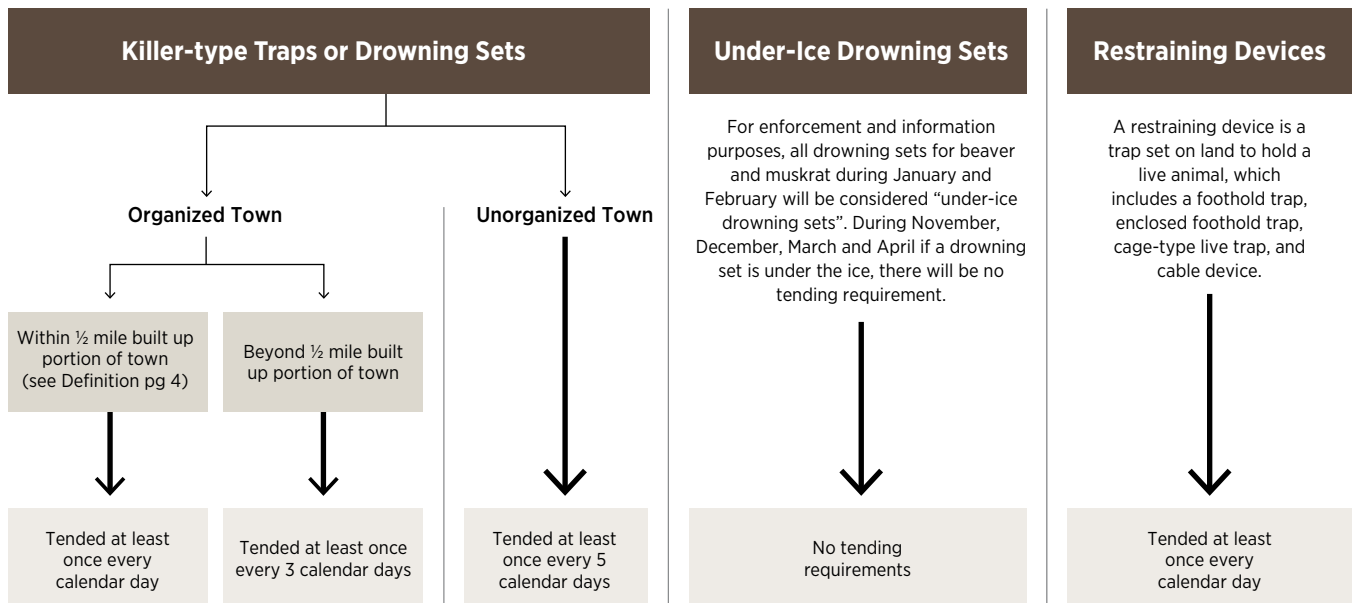
Figure 2. Legal exclusion devices for killer-type traps having a jaw spread between 5 and 8 inches. **2a.** Is an example of a device with an entrance hole on the end of the device. The entrance hole must not exceed 5 x 6 inches. A baffle must be placed no more than 6 inches back from the entrance hole and must not leave an opening greater than 5 x 6 inches. With the baffle in place, the entrance hole and interior opening may not overlap to create an unobstructed view to the interior of the exclusion device. **2b.** Is an example of a device where the entrance hole is placed on the side of the device and must not exceed 6 x 7 inches. A baffle must be placed at the edge of the entrance with the interior opening opposite of the entrance hole, and the interior opening must not exceed 6 x 6 inches.

REQUIREMENTS FOR EXCLUSION DEVICES

- Exclusion devices can be constructed of wood, plastic, or wire mesh. If using wire mesh, the mesh cannot exceed 1½ by 1½ inches, or 1 inch by 2 inch openings (side to side). The wire or wire mesh must be 16 gauge or less (wire diameter of 0.05 inches or greater).
- The opening slot in the exclusion device that allows the trap springs to extend outside the device can be no more than 7½ inches wide and a height of no more than 1½ inches.
- The back of the device must be secured to withstand heavy pulling; **if using wire mesh with a wood or plastic box, the wire mesh must wrap around two opposite sides of the box and be securely fastened.**
- **When there is a joint, there must be a secure attachment point on two opposite sides of the device to ensure the device does not separate when set.**
- The trap must be securely anchored independent of the exclusion device.
- Bait must not be visible from above and it must be covered in such a way as to withstand wind action and other normal environmental conditions.
- When enclosed in an exclusion device, killer-type traps can be set directly on the ground, or elevated in trees or on poles, with no specific requirements as to the height above ground or diameter of the tree or pole. ■

TRAP TENDING LAWS

Trap Tending Laws



Traps must be **physically tended** and adjusted as necessary to remain legal. That means traps must be adjusted to reflect changing water levels when set, placed, and tended. Electronic trap notification devices cannot be used in lieu of physical checks.



Landowner Permission Requirements

A person is strongly encouraged to seek landowner permission before going onto someone else's land for any purpose.

The trapping laws, with some exceptions, **require that a person have prior written permission from the landowner upon which the trap is to be set before setting traps:**

- Anywhere in an organized town.
- Within 200 yards of any occupied dwelling.
- On cultivated or pasture land used for agricultural purposes in an unorganized township if someone is living there.

Landowner permission is not required:

- When trapping for beaver that can be legally accessed via water.
- When trapping with the use of drowning sets on state-owned land and on public rights of way.
- When trapping with the use of drowning sets along navigable rivers and streams on privately owned land as long as the traps are set at least 200 yards away from any occupied dwelling.
- When trapping in unorganized townships.

Note: Setting traps on privately owned land is not permitted if the landowner indicated they do not want a person to trap there, either by a conspicuously posted sign or by word of mouth.

When trapping on someone else's land, the following is not allowed unless specific permission is given:

- Tearing down or destroying a fence or wall.
- Leaving open any gate or bars on another person's land unless they were open when found.
- Trampling or destroying crops.
- Cutting trees or removing branches from trees.

REMINDER FOR STATE-OWNED LAND:

All MDIFW-owned Wildlife Management Areas (WMA), except Steve Powell WMA (Swan Island) and portions of Steep Falls and Killick Pond WMA, are open for general law hunting and trapping. When landowner permission is required for trapping on a Wildlife Management Area, trappers should contact a MDIFW regional wildlife biologist for more information. Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry Bureau of Parks and Lands also manages thousands of acres of land and some areas are open to general law trapping and hunting. When landowner permission is required trappers should contact the Regional Office of the State Park or Public Lands Unit.

landowners. All landowner wishes have to be followed by all outdoor recreational participants to help ensure access and use of private property in the years to come.

Trappers are expected to abide by a higher standard of landowner permission than any of the other outdoor recreational participants. This standard is a law that requires written permission from the landowner before going on someone else's land to set traps, except for beaver.

Because trappers have done a great job abiding by this requirement, there is now a better understanding of trapping by landowners and the public in general. Contacting the landowners for permission does put an extra burden on the trapper. However, the one-on-one communication between the trapper and landowner plays a vital role in improving landowner relations – not only for trappers – but for all outdoor recreational participants.

Although you are not required to get written permission before trapping beaver on land you do not own, you are not allowed to go on another person's land to trap beaver if the landowner has asked you not to go there, either verbally or by posted notice.

We receive several complaints each year that trappers have set up on a beaver colony that the landowner does not want removed. Please make every effort to avoid this type of conflict. You can do that by communicating with landowners prior to the opening of the trapping season as to what their wishes or concerns may be.

The law covering abuse of another's property contains several prohibited acts, but the one most likely to be encountered by a trapper is the cutting of trees or branches on the land of another. Cutting is not allowed without landowner permission.

We would like to thank all trappers for the excellent efforts they have displayed in helping us improve landowner relations. What you do does make a difference. ■

TRAPPING ON PRIVATE PROPERTY

The Inland Fisheries and Wildlife Landowner Relations Program is working towards enhancing the relationship between landowners and land users. With approximately 94% of the land in Maine in private ownership, everyone must respect all landowners and their rights as



TRAIL/GAME CAMERAS LAW

People using trail and game cameras may not place a camera upon another person's private land without written permission. All cameras must be labeled with the camera owner's name and contact information.

Regulations for Specific Species

EARLY RACCOON (NEW), FOX, AND COYOTE TRAPPING

New for 2026–27, raccoon has been added to Maine's early trapping season. In addition to the general trapping rules, the following rules apply:

- Killer-type traps are not permitted.
- Traps in the water are not permitted.
- Exposed bait or visible attractors are not permitted.

Trappers are permitted to keep any incidental opossum or skunk that are caught in raccoon, fox and coyote traps. Any other furbearing animal caught incidentally in raccoon, fox and coyote traps must be released alive immediately, **except lynx as described on page 14**, or, if found dead, must be left in the trap and reported to a game warden as soon as possible.

MUSKRAT TRAPPING

Musk rats have traditionally been one of Maine's most sought-after furbearers due to their relative abundance, ease of harvest, and historic value. Musk rats are a great species to target for new and experienced trappers, but trappers should make sure to carefully review all the muskrat-related regulations.

EARLY MUSKRAT TRAPPING SEASON

In addition to the general trapping rules, the following rules apply:

- Traps must be set at or below ground or water level.

Note: For enforcement purposes, traps will be considered set "at or below ground or water level" when set on objects which muskrats frequently visit, such as floating logs, logs extending from the water onto the bank and tree stumps located in or near the water.

- The only traps allowed are foothold traps that shall be limited to an inside jaw spread between 3 $\frac{1}{16}$ inches and 5 $\frac{1}{16}$ inches, killer-type traps with a jaw spread of not more than 5 inches, and colony traps (foothold measurement description and colony trap restrictions explained on page 7).
- The use of any exposed bait or visible attractors are not permitted. Note that fruits and vegetables used for muskrat trapping are not considered bait or visible attractor.
- Keeping incidental mink, otter, or raccoon caught in muskrat traps is permitted. Any other furbearing animal caught incidentally in a muskrat trap must be immediately

released alive, or, if found dead, must be left there in the trap and be reported to a game warden as soon as possible.

LATE MUSKRAT TRAPPING SEASON

After the close of the general trapping season, muskrats may still be trapped, but only in those areas that are open to beaver trapping.

After February 28, in those Wildlife Management Districts that remain open to beaver trapping, muskrat trapping is restricted to 1) killer-type traps, foothold traps, and colony traps, which must be set, placed, and tended to remain underwater; or 2) foothold traps on "covered floats." During late muskrat trapping season, only one trap may be placed per float; the trap must be recessed 3 inches or greater from any opening in the cover; the trap chain or wire must be at least 3 feet long; and the maximum foothold trap size for covered floats sets is No. 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ or equivalent (maximum inside jaw spread no greater than 5 $\frac{1}{16}$ inches).

COVERED FLOAT

A covered float is defined as a float completely covered on the sides and top with solid material; or hardware cloth, screen, or similar material, having a mesh size no greater than $\frac{1}{2}$ inch square. A covered float must be set, placed, and tended so that it is completely surrounded by water and access to the float must be limited to openings at the extreme ends of the float and the openings must not exceed 7 inches in height or 14 inches in width. The use of exposed bait or visible attractor on covered floats is prohibited. Covered floats may be used during early muskrat, general, and late muskrat trapping season.

BEAVER TRAPPING

- Traps set for beaver are restricted to killer-type traps and drowning sets (see page 4 Definitions).
- No person shall use meat or fish as bait while trapping for beaver.
- The setting of suitcase-type live traps during the beaver trapping season is prohibited except under the authorization of a regional wildlife biologist or game warden as part of the Department's Animal Damage Control program.
- No person shall make advanced preparation on the trapping grounds for the taking of beaver or muskrat prior to the open season on these animals (see page 5).

- Any otter, muskrat, or mink taken incidental to beaver trapping may be lawfully possessed.

BEAVER CONFLICTS

Every effort shall be made to minimize the out-of-season removal of problem beaver. This shall be accomplished by: (1) maintaining in-season trapping opportunity in problem areas, and (2) restricting the removal of beaver by an agent of MDIFW, a landowner, or a person acting on behalf of the landowner who has prior approval from the Department. Except in emergency situations, no beaver will be removed within 30 days of the opening day of the beaver trapping season in that area. A list of locations where beaver have been removed within 30 days of the opening of the beaver trapping season will be maintained at regional offices. The above provisions will maintain a greater level of beaver trapping opportunity.

A list of beaver conflict sites may be available for your area. Please contact your regional wildlife biologist if you are interested in the location of recent beaver removal sites or conflict sites. Regional offices are listed on page 25.

TRAPPING NEAR MUSKRAT HOUSES, BEAVER HOUSES AND BEAVER DAMS

It is illegal to damage, destroy, or disturb a muskrat house or den, or a beaver house or a beaver dam without permission from the Department. You are not allowed to set a trap within 5 feet of a muskrat house, a muskrat den, or a beaver house, and you are not allowed to set a trap within 5 feet of an active beaver dam. A beaver dam is considered inactive if it is breached or is no longer being maintained by a beaver and shows no evidence of beaver activity.

Exception: There is no required setback distance from an active beaver dam or beaver house in WMDs 1-6, 8-11 and 18-19.

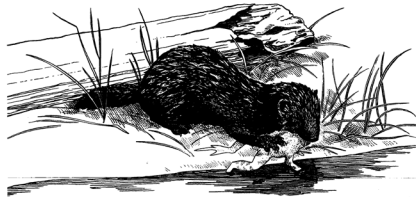
For enforcement purposes, the Department uses the definitions of muskrat den or beaver house found on page 4.



For dams, dens, and houses, all measurements should be made from the trap itself. Sticks and poles used to construct the set are not considered part of the trap. The setback distance shall be measured as follows:

- **House:** measured from where the nearest edge of the house meets water or ice. In the case of a capped cavity on the bank, distance will be measured from where the nearest intersection edge of the cap meets the ground, water, or ice.

- **Dens:** measured from the nearest opening.
- **Dams:** beaver dams should be measured from where the nearest edge of the dam meets ground, water, or ice.



BIOLOGICAL SAMPLES

Biological Samples

Trappers and hunters are required to submit a lower jaw or tooth from every bobcat, fisher, marten, and otter that is trapped or hunted (see instructions below). A tissue sample (small piece of tongue or other meat) is also required from bobcats. These samples provide the Department with the age and sex of the harvest, which will improve the management of these species. While this is an extra burden on the fur harvesting community, the information gained will benefit these species for all Maine citizens.

MAKE YOUR SAMPLE COUNT

MDIFW receives hundreds of broken and/or unlabeled tooth samples each year, meaning valuable data is lost. The lab uses tissue in the root of the tooth for aging. Roots extend far below the gumline, beyond what is visible. When jaws are cut off too short, not enough of the root is included for aging. Be sure to cut far enough back to include most of the lower jaw to avoid this problem. It is the hunter/trapper's responsibility to properly label each sample. Contact the Furbearer Biologist if you need jaw tag labels.



WHAT BIOLOGICAL SAMPLES ARE REQUIRED?

Submit the following samples to the fur tagging agent at the time of registration:

For Fisher, Marten, and River Otter

Trappers must provide a lower jaw or canine tooth from each fisher, marten, and otter taken.

- Samples must be labeled with the month/year, species, sex, method, and date (see Figure 1).
- Samples from each individual animal must be bagged separately.

For Bobcat

- Hunters and trappers must provide a lower jaw, canine tooth, or lateral incisor tooth from each bobcat taken.
- Lateral incisors are very small and easy to take when fresh before the animal freezes. Run a pocket knife down each side and gently rock the knife left to right to loosen and pull the tooth out (see Figure 2).
- Hunters and trappers must also provide a Starburst-sized meat sample (tongue works great) so the labeled sex can be checked with DNA analysis. Please keep this sample frozen to protect it from rotting.
- Bobcat samples must be labeled with the species, sex, and seal number. Both meat and tooth samples from the same animal may be bagged together.
- Replacement incisors can be requested by contacting the Furbearer Biologist.

Hunters and trappers may request age results by including their name and contact information with their sample.

Contact MDIFW Furbearer Biologist, Shevenell Webb, with any questions at shevenell.webb@maine.gov or (207) 287-8776. ■

BAG LIMITS FOR FISHER AND MARTEN

Trappers are not allowed to take or possess more than 25 marten or 25 fisher during the trapping season.

INCIDENTAL CATCH OF MINK AND OTTER

Although it is not permitted to trap for mink or otter after the general trapping season closes, trappers may keep mink or otter if caught by accident during the beaver trapping season.

Any otter caught from January 1 through April 30 must be registered with the Department within 10 days of harvest. ■

BOBCAT & OTTER TAGGING

Bobcat and otter must be tagged by Department personnel.



Figure 1. Lower jaw with completed label. Arrow points to canine tooth.



Figure 2. Lower jaw of a bobcat. Arrows point to lateral incisor teeth.

Tagging Requirements

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

The pelts of all beaver, bobcat, coyote, fisher, fox, marten, mink and otter must be presented by the person who harvested the animal to a fur tagging agent and tagged within 30 days after the end of the season on each species. Tags must be attached to the skins of these furbearing animals before you may sell, gift, send, or transport the pelts except for preparation and tagging purposes. A fee of 25¢ may be charged for each pelt that is registered; the Department will no longer charge fur registration fees.

Skins of other furbearing animals (muskrat, opossum, raccoon, red squirrel, skunk and weasel) do not need to be tagged.

Exceptions: The skins of all bobcats taken by hunting shall be presented by the person who harvested the bobcat for tagging within 10 calendar days from when they were taken. All otter incidentally harvested during extended beaver seasons (January 1st through April 30th), must be presented by the person who harvested the otter and be tagged within 10 calendar days of harvesting the animal. Untagged coyotes are allowed to be gifted (see above for more information).

BEAVER

All beaver must be tagged within 30 days of the final closing date on beaver. For example, if beaver are allowed to be trapped in some districts until April 30th, all beaver skins, regardless of where they were taken, must be tagged by May 30th.

ATTENTION TRAPPERS

Once your furs have been registered, you will receive a confirmation email. Please review the information carefully. If you notice any errors—or if you do not receive a confirmation email—contact the furbearer biologist at (207)287-8776.

BRINGING THE SKINS OF FURBEARING ANIMALS INTO MAINE FROM ANOTHER STATE OR PROVINCE

The skins of furbearing animals harvested in another state or province must be tagged in that state or province before being brought into Maine. If that state or province has no tagging requirements,

the skins must be tagged in this state. The tagging of imported fur applies only to those nine species for which Maine requires tagging.

Note: Skins imported by taxidermists solely for taxidermy purposes do not require tagging.

TAGGING ANIMALS BEFORE THE SKIN IS REMOVED FROM THE CARCASS

Skins may be tagged while still attached to the carcass, but it may make it difficult to properly prepare the skin if it has already been tagged.

TAGGING FROZEN SKINS

If a skin will be frozen at the time it is presented for tagging, even if it hasn't been removed from the carcass, a popsicle stick, tongue depressor, or similar object can be inserted from the mouth hole through one of the eye holes before freezing. Removal of the stick at the time of tagging allows the tag to be inserted in the skin without thawing it out. Tagging agents may refuse to tag frozen skins which have not been prepared in this manner.

TAGGING LOCATIONS

Bobcat and otter must be tagged by Department personnel. Other furs may be tagged at one of the many fur tagging stations which are located throughout the state (see page 24). In addition to fur tagging stations, furs may be tagged at any regional office of the Department (please call ahead) and, through prior arrangement, by any Department game warden or wildlife biologist. You can also tag your furs and visit with a biologist and warden during MDIFW Fur Tagging Days (see below and page 25 for office contact information).

MDIFW FUR TAGGING DAYS

LOCATION	FALL FUR
ASHLAND	January 4, 2027 10am-6pm
BANGOR	January 5, 2027 10am-6pm
GRAY	January 4, 2027 10am-6pm
JONESBORO	January 7, 2027 10am-6pm
SIDNEY	January 6, 2027 10am-6pm
STRONG	January 7, 2027 10am-6pm

COYOTE GIFTING

Harvested coyotes can be gifted to another person without the attachment of a permanent tag, but must have the following information attached to the coyote: person's name who harvested it, hunting or trapping license number, harvest method, harvest date, harvest town.

TAKING FURS OUT OF THE STATE

If furs have been properly tagged, it is permitted by Maine law to take or ship furs out of the state. Federal laws and regulations are subject to change and should be consulted before exporting any CITES species (i.e., bobcat, black bear, and river otter) outside the United States. For information and permit applications, please contact:

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Office of Law Enforcement

70 E. Sunrise Hwy, Suite 419

Valley Stream, NY 11580

Phone: (516) 825-3950

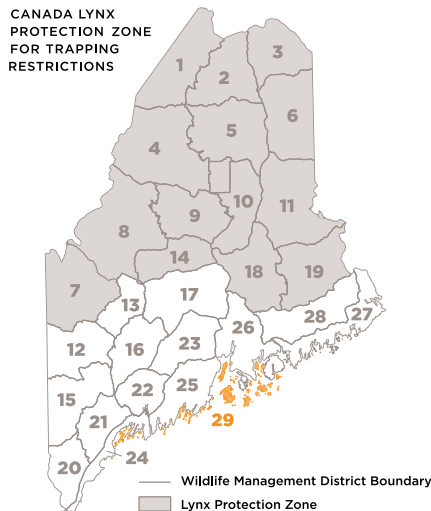
Fax: (516) 825-3597

MAINE HIDE DEALERS

A Hide Dealer's License is required to buy and sell untanned animal hides or other wild animal parts commercially. Trappers may sell any part of the furbearer they legally harvest including the fur, meat, or bones, without being a hide dealer. A person who harvests a bear by trapping or by hunting, may without a hide dealer's license sell the hide, head, teeth, claws not attached to the paws, fat not attached to the meat and gallbladder of the bear. For information regarding the sale or gifting of bear gallbladder please see page 11 of the hunting law book. For questions or a list of hide dealers, contact (207) 287-8000. ■

Lynx Protection & Trap Restrictions

Canada lynx are a federally listed Threatened Species. There is no open season for the trapping or hunting of lynx in Maine. The Department has delineated statewide and WMD specific regulations to protect lynx and to help Maine trappers avoid accidentally taking lynx.



FOOTHOLD TRAPS

- **Statewide:** When set on dry land, a trap must have at least three swiveling points (at the base of the trap, midway in the chain, and at the trap's anchoring point). Foothold traps cannot be set above ground or snow level. These restrictions do not apply to foothold traps that when set, placed, or tended are fully or partially covered by water, those that are set on a muskrat "float", or dog-proof traps also known as enclosed foothold traps.
- **WMDs 1-11, 14, 18, and 19:** When set on dry land, the use of drags is prohibited and the catch circle must be cleared of woody vegetation, debris and man-made material that could cause entanglement of a trapped animal.
- **WMDs 1-6 and 8-11:** No foothold trap may be used that has an inside jaw spread of more than 5 3/4 inches unless when set, placed, and tended, the trap is completely underwater.

KILLER-TYPE (CONIBEAR) TRAPS

Statewide: Killer-type (conibear) traps must be set within a lynx exclusion device when set on dry land, except that

killer-type traps with an inside jaw spread of 5 inches or less may be set without an exclusion device if the trap is set so as to be partially covered by water at all times, set under an overhanging stream bank, or used at a blind set without the use of bait, lure or visible attractor. For more information on foothold and killer-type traps see pages 6-8.

WHAT DO I DO IF I CATCH A LYNX?

A person who catches a lynx must call the lynx hotline at **(207) 592-4734** or a local game warden **as soon as possible and prior to removing the animal from the trap**, unless a Department official cannot be reached in time to prevent injury to the lynx. Any lynx released under this provision must be reported to the Department within 24 hours from the time it was discovered.

The lynx hotline ((207) 592-4734) is staffed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week during the trapping season. In most circumstances a biologist will chemically immobilize, examine, and release the lynx. For more information on lynx please call (207) 287-8000 or visit mefishwildlife.com/lynx. ■

TO REPORT A LYNX SIGHTING,
CONTACT THE FURBEARER
BIOLOGIST AT (207) 287-8776.

IF YOU CATCH A CAT AND ARE UNSURE WHETHER IT IS A BOBCAT
OR A LYNX, PLEASE CONTACT US IMMEDIATELY AT (207) 592-4734

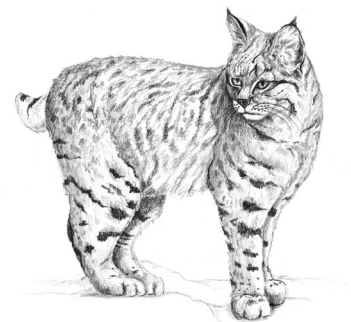
LYNX VS. BOBCAT: KNOW THE DIFFERENCE

Make sure you take the time to identify your target. Bobcats are similar in appearance to Canada lynx and are a legal furbearer in Maine that can be harvested during the open trapping and hunting season for bobcats. If you trap a bobcat that looks like a cross between a lynx and a bobcat, we would like to know about it. We have recovered several lynx-bobcat hybrids in north central Maine and are interested in documenting other specimens. Remember, if you are uncertain whether you have trapped a lynx or a bobcat, please call a biologist or warden before dispatching the animal. If you have already dispatched the animal, and think it has unusual characteristics for a bobcat, we are still interested in seeing it.



CANADA LYNX

- Longer ear tufts (1" or longer)
- Longer facial ruff
- Shorter and completely black-tipped tail
- Large and well-furred feet (>3" track)
- Uniform coat color



BOBCAT

- Shorter ear tufts (absent to 1")
- Shorter facial ruff – more round face
- Tail black-tipped on top and white underneath
- Smaller feet (2" track)
- Less-uniform coat (white underbelly, spotted)

Identifying Rare Mammals

LARGE COYOTES

Although relatively uncommon in Maine, the Department occasionally receives reports of large coyotes (50+ pounds). If you encounter a coyote that is over five feet in total length (tip of the nose to the tip of the tail) and/or weighs over 50 pounds, please contact the Department at (207) 287-5229.

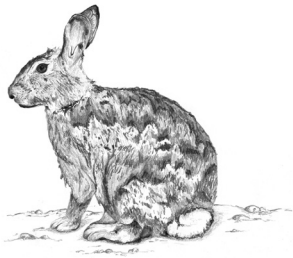


LARGE EXTIRPATED MAMMALS

Each year, the Department receives and investigates reports of possible wolf and cougar (mountain lion) sightings. Although wolves were extirpated in Maine by the late 1800s and the last cougar in Maine was killed in 1938, occasionally wolves have been observed near Maine and a cougar was struck and killed by a car in Connecticut in 2011. If you believe you have seen one of these rare mammals, take photos and contact the Department at (207) 287-5229.

NEW ENGLAND COTTONTAIL RABBITS

If you are trapping in southern Maine, MDIFW would like to know if you accidentally trap or see New England or Eastern cottontail rabbits. Cottontail rabbits are smaller than snowshoe hare, have hind feet less than 4 inches in length, and do



not turn white in the winter. Their coat remains brown all year round. Please let us know about any rabbits you see. This is Maine's only native rabbit and MDIFW is actively trying to restore its population. Identifying new areas where the rabbit occurs could greatly benefit restoration efforts. Please let us know about any rabbits you see by contacting MDIFW Small Mammal Biologist Cory Stearns at (207) 592-1782. Sightings should be reported online at mefishwildlife.com/rabbits. ■

TRACK & TRACK PATTERNS FOR BOBCAT, LYNX, COYOTE, AND DOMESTIC DOGS				
SPECIES	GENERAL SHAPE	WALKING STRIDE	PRINT SIZE (FRONT FOOT)	TRACK PATTERN
Bobcat	General round appearance. Heel points in slightly different direction than toes. No nail marks, but if present, attached to toe marks.	11" to 23"	Length: 1 7/8" to 2 1/2" Width: 1 7/8" to 2 3/8"	Direct or double register walking pattern. Trail pattern zigzags right-left-right-left.
Lynx	Same as bobcat but tracks show a lot more hair. Smaller pads than a cougar.	15" to 31"	Length: 3 1/4" to 3 3/4" Width: 3" to 3 3/8" Outline of hair impression: Length: 4 1/2" to 5 3/8" Width: 3 3/8" to 5 1/2"	Same as bobcat
Coyote	4 toes, oval shaped track. Front nails often close together. Side nails often do not register.	Eastern: 17 1/2" to 26"	Eastern: Length - 2 7/8" to 3 1/2" Width - 1 7/8" to 2 1/2"	Trail pattern usually is in a straight line. Walking pattern is usually direct registering.
Dog	Similar to wolves and coyotes. Inner toes often splayed outwards.	Varies with breed	Varies with breed	Trail pattern sloppy, wandering, not usually in a straight line. Walking pattern is often double register.

Bear Trapping



BEAR TRAPPING PERMIT AND BAG LIMITS

A bear trapping permit and a big game hunting license or a bear trapping permit and trapping license are required to set a trap for a bear during the bear trapping season (September 1 - October 31). You are allowed to take one bear by trapping and one bear by hunting annually. The fee for a bear trapping permit is \$10 for residents and \$67 for nonresidents.

To purchase a bear trapping permit you have three options:

Option 1: Must have completed a Maine Trapping Education course (includes all furbearers and bear) dated after 1978 OR Previously held a Maine Bear Trapping permit prior to 2022.

Option 2: Must have completed the Maine Black Bear Trapping Education course (online or in-person).

Option 3: A person may trap a bear under the supervision of, and in the presence of, a licensed hunting guide who has successfully completed the Maine Black Bear Trapping Education course.

A person buying a trapping license or a bear trapping permit for the first time, including bear trapping permit holders who are trapping under the direct supervision of a guide who has taken the bear trapping education course, must purchase a trapping license or bear trap permit through the MDIFW Augusta office in person, by

email (ifw.licensing@maine.gov), or via mail (see page 2). Trapping license renewals, including bear trapping renewal permits, may be purchased online at mefishwildlife.com

Exemption for Tribal Members: A person who is an enrolled member of the Passamaquoddy Tribe, the Penobscot Nation, the Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians or the Aroostook Band of Micmacs are exempt from the trapper education course and the bear trapping education course requirements.

BEAR TRAPPING LAWS

If you trap for black bears, you are required to follow the same general trapping rules regarding the labeling of traps, the tending of traps, and the need to obtain landowner permission. See page 5 and 9 for more information.

If you trap a bear, you are required to follow the same transportation and registration rules as those for bear taken by hunting. See **hunting law book** for more information.

You are also required to follow other rules specific to bear trapping, as follows:

- Bears may be trapped only with the use of a cable trap (foothold cable restraint) or cage-type live traps.
- Whenever a cage-type live trap is used to trap a bear, the trap must be enclosed and must be heavily constructed to prevent

damage from bears, and also must have adequate openings for ventilation and cooling inside the trap when the door is closed. Traps must also be constructed with no sharp intrusions to injure bears, and be large enough for bears to turn around inside the closed trap.

- You are not allowed to have more than one trap set for a bear at any time.
- All bear traps must be tended at least once a calendar day. Electronic trap notification devices, such as cellular game cameras, cannot be used in lieu of physical checks.
- You are not allowed to catch a bear in a trap and allow another person to kill or register the bear.
- You cannot continue to trap for a bear after you have captured and killed a bear in a trap.
- Bears caught in traps must be killed or released at the catch site. A bear caught in a trap may not be used in conjunction with a hunt or to train a dog for bear hunting.
- The same rules apply for the use of bait whether hunting or trapping for bears. See section below for more information on using bait when trapping a black bear.
- You may not trap within 500 yards of a solid waste disposal site. These areas can be identified by a visible line of demarcation.

Exception: An agent of the commissioner is exempt from the above restrictions when live trapping a nuisance bear under the authorization of the Department.

BAIT

Bait may be placed up to 30 days prior to the opening day of the bear bait hunting season and no later than October 31. Bait areas must be cleaned up by November 10. Bait can be used to assist dog hunters and trappers, but it is illegal to shoot a bear over bait after the close of the hunting with bait season. **See hunting law book** for season dates.

Hunting with the use of bait is defined as hunting from an observation stand, blind, or other location that overlooks any bait or food, except standing crops and foods that have been left as a result of normal agricultural operations or natural occurrence.

Bear bait means any animal, plant, or derivative thereof, used to attract bear. This does not include packaging or container materials that fall within the definition of litter under Title 17, §2263.

A person may not place any medicinal, poisonous, or stupefying substance to entice any animal, including bears. It is unlawful to disturb or interfere with a bait site using chemicals or any other method.

Bait may not be placed to entice, hunt or trap a black bear unless:

- The bait is placed at least 50 yards from any travel way that is accessible by a conventional 2-wheel or 4-wheel drive vehicle.
- The observation stand, blind, or bait area is plainly labeled with a 2 inch by 4 inch tag with the name and address of the baiter.
- The bait is placed more than 500 yards from any solid waste disposal site or campground.
- The bait is placed more than 500 yards from an occupied dwelling, unless written permission is granted by the owner or tenant.
- The person placing bait on another person's land has the landowner's permission (oral or in writing).
- If placing bait on a wildlife management area, you need to secure a permit from MDIFW. To apply for a bear baiting permit, contact the wildlife biologist in your administrative region (see p. 25).
- If placing bait on Public Reserved Land, you need to secure a permit from the Bureau of Parks and Lands (for info, call 207-287-3821).

Baiting of animals is prohibited in State Parks and Historic Sites.

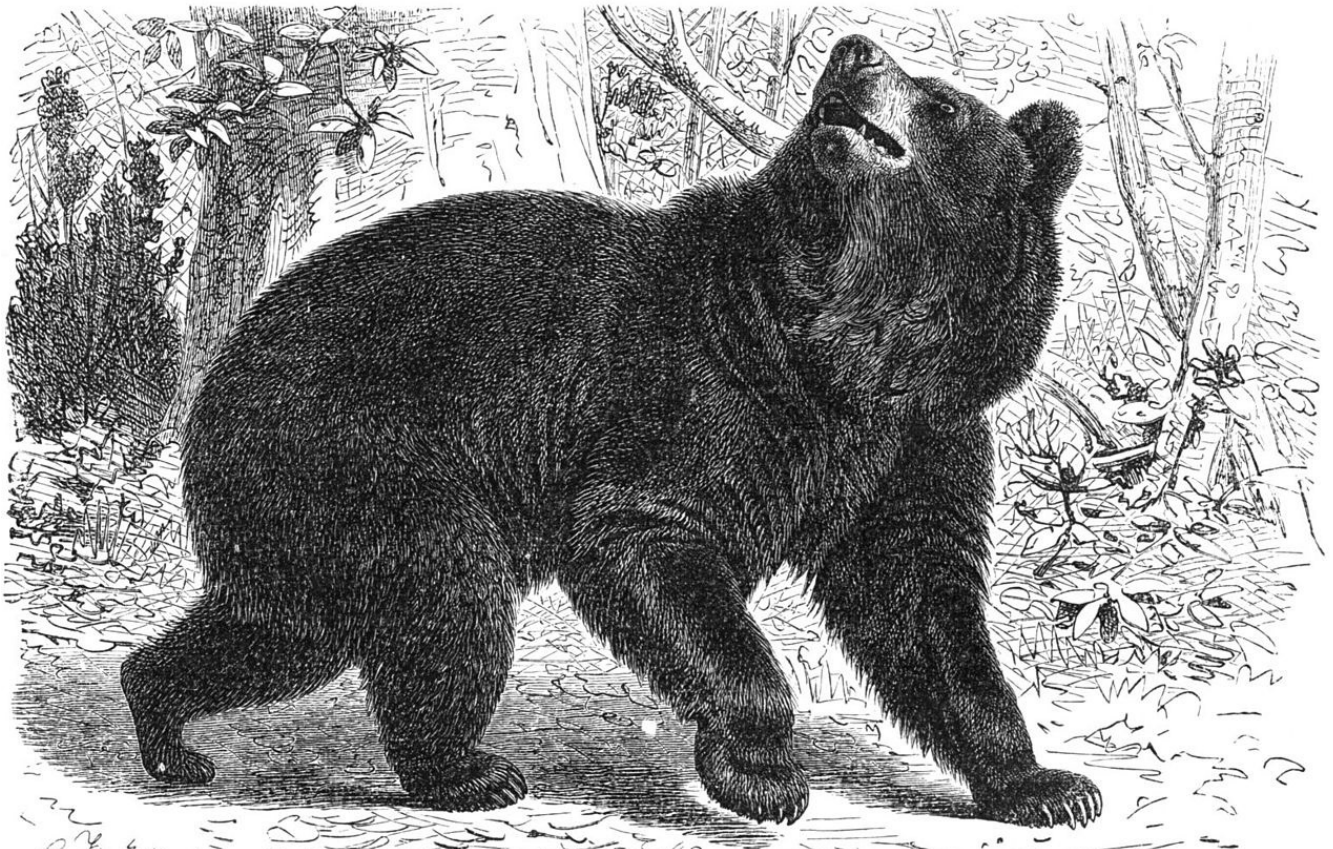
BEAR HUNTING PROHIBITIONS

A person cannot, within 50 yards of a bait site and without written permission from the person who maintains the bait site, hunt, trap, molest, or harass bears.

LAWS REGARDING REGISTRATION

- Prior to registration, a bear may be dismembered for ease of transportation, all edible meat, the head and evidence of sex must be presented for registration. The viscera, hide, lower legs and rib cage, including the ribs, spine and pelvis, are not required to be presented for registration but must be disposed of where they are not visible to a person traveling on a public or private way.
- Each gifted bear part must be clearly labeled with the name and address of the person who registered the animal and the year in which it was registered.

Note: Hunters and trappers are required to remove a premolar tooth from the bear they harvest and provide the tooth at registration (instructions are available at the registration stations and online at mefishwildlife.com). Hunters and trappers will be notified of the age of the bear they harvested on the Bear Hunting page of the MDIFW website prior to the start of the next bear hunting season (late August). ■



BEAR TRAP DESIGN AND DEPLOYMENT STANDARDS

These rules were developed to improve design and deployment standards for cable traps (foot-restraints) used to capture and harvest black bears, while minimizing incidental capture of non-targets, including the Federally Threatened Canada lynx. Most importantly, these rules ensure that cable traps are set in a manner to effectively capture and hold a black bear by the foot and minimize the risk of injury.

Cable Traps

Design Standards for All Cable Traps Used to Capture Black Bears

Whenever a cable trap is used to trap for a bear:

- The cable must have a minimum closing diameter of not less than 2½ inches
- The cable must be at least ⅜ inches in diameter
- The cable must include at least one swivel, which is typically located between the foot loop and the anchor point

Deployment Standards for ALL Cable Traps Used to Capture Black Bears

- The cable must be set at or below ground level in such a manner as to catch the animal only by the foot.
- Drags are prohibited.
- The cable must be securely attached to a fixed anchor point (a tree is the preferred anchor).
- If a tree is used as an anchor, it must be at least 6 inches in diameter at 4.5 feet above ground level and must be free of limbs for at least 7 feet above the ground.
- The catch circle, which is the distance from the anchor to the end of the closed cable loop, must be no greater than 8 feet.
- The area within the catch circle must be clear of woody vegetation, debris and manmade material that could cause entanglement of a trapped bear. Small sticks, rocks, and **rotten/decaying** woody material may be used for stepping guides, blocking, and backing for trap sets, if they are not rooted to the ground. This restriction does not include a tree used as an anchor.



1

A soda can is 2½" diameter, use a marker to note the spot for securing the stop.



2

Place the stop on the mark and close the loop.



3

Measure the loop to insure the closing diameter is no less than 2½".



4

The cable must include at least one swivel which is typically located between the foot loop and the anchor point.

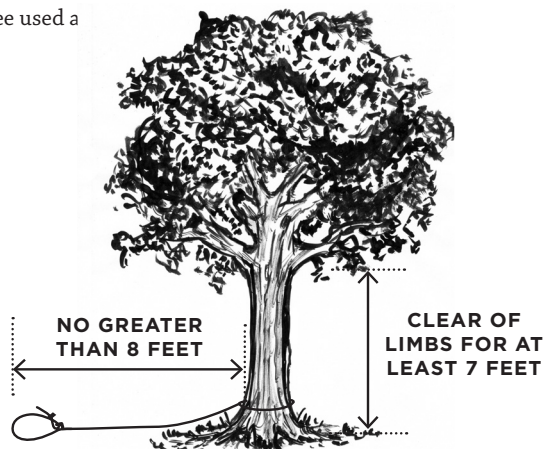
COMMERCIALLY AVAILABLE CABLE TRAPS

A list of commercially available legal cable traps (when set according to the parameters described), is available on our website at mefishwildlife.com/beartrap.

Examples of Commercially Available **ILLEGAL** Cable Traps

- Belisle
- Unmodified M-15

The distance from the anchor (often the tree) to the end of the closed cable loop point must be no greater than 8 feet.





Bucket, Tube or Pipe-style Traps

There are a variety of cable foot restraint traps available for black bears. Some do not require a bucket, tube, or pipe. For those that use a bucket, tube or pipe style trap, in addition to the cable trap design and deployment standards described on page 18, whenever a cable trap is used in conjunction with a bucket, tube, or pipe-style trap, the following design and deployment standards must be followed.

Design Standards for Bucket, Tube or Pipe-style Traps Used to Capture Black Bears

Whenever a cable trap is used in conjunction with a device that is designed to capture a bear when it reaches into the device to obtain bait (e.g. bucket, tube, or pipe-style traps):

- The trigger must be recessed at least 12 inches below the opening of the device.
- The opening and inside diameter of the device must be no more than 6 inches.
- A bucket or other similar device can be used if it is modified to have an opening and inside diameter no greater than 6 inches.

Deployment Standards for Bucket, Tube or Pipe-style Traps Used to Capture Black Bears

- Animal-based bait and/or lure cannot be placed within the bucket, tube or pipe. Animal-based bait is defined as animal matter including meat, skin, bones, feathers, hair or any other solid substance that used to be part of an animal **or any object that mimics or replicates animal matter (NEW 2026)**. This includes live or dead fish.
- Only non-animal based bait and/or lure can be placed within the device and it must be placed below the trigger.
- The opening to the device must be covered by a weight of at least 30 pounds when set and tended to prevent access by non-target species.



ILLEGAL UNMODIFIED

The Unmodified M-15 trap is illegal in Maine.



LEGAL MODIFIED

The M-15 trap is legal if it is modified to have an opening and inside diameter no greater than 6" and if the trigger is recessed at least 12" below the opening of the device.



Cut a 6" diameter hole in the lid.



Insert a tube with an inside diameter no greater than 6" and at least 12" tall to allow the trigger to be set 12" below the opening, then place the tube in the bucket and secure the lid.

Beaver Trapping Closures

by Wildlife Management Districts (WMDs) Please refer to page 4 for the beaver trapping season dates.

WMD 1

No closures

WMD 2

No closures

WMD 3

No closures

WMD 4

No closures

WMD 5

The following town shall be closed but with the excepted part of the town open:

Trout Brook Twp., except north of Trout Brook.

WMD 6

The following towns shall be open but with the excepted part of the town closed:

Ashland, except section of Nowland Brook on land owned by Ronald Rushinal adjacent to the Nowland Road.

WMD 7

The following towns shall be open but with the excepted part of the town closed:

Twp. 6 North of Weld, except Mud Pond and outlet.

Upton, except section of B Brook from the confluence with B Pond, downstream to the first road crossing.

WMD 8

The following towns shall be open but with the excepted part of the town closed:

Blake Gore, except Capehorn Pond.

Forsythe Twp., except Turner Pond.

Holeb Twp., except Fish Pond and tributaries.

Johnson Mountain Twp., except Markham and outlet to Route 201.

Prentiss Twp., except Capehorn Pond.

Tomhegan Game Sanctuary, the Pittston Farm Game Sanctuary, the Moosehead Lake Game Sanctuary and Somerset Game Sanctuary shall all be open.

WMD 9

The following towns shall be open but with the excepted part of the town closed:

T2 R12 WELS, except for the property of Ben Bailey located from the intersection of the Sias Hill/Greenville Road and the western boundary of the T2 R12 WELS township line south to the T1 R12 WELS township line east along the southern boundary of T2 R12 WELS to the intersection the T2 R12 WELS southern boundary and Gulliver Brook. From this intersection the property line follows Gulliver Brook northwest to Big Fisher Pond where the property line runs west to east across the middle of the pond where it then continues along the road at the outlet of Big Fisher Pond in a south then northwest direction to the Sias Hill/Greenville Road where the property line follows the Sias Hill/Greenville road in a southwesterly line to the western T2 R12 WELS township line boundary.

WMD 10

No closures

WMD 11

No closures

WMD 12

The following towns shall be open but with the excepted part of the town closed:

Gilead, except Carlton Brook.

Hartford, except part of the west tributary to Little Bear Pond that runs through the property owned by Sylvia Mahoney. The closed beaver flowage is located on the northeast side of the

Mahoney Road.

Twp. 6 North of Weld, except Mud Pond and outlet.

WMD 13

The following towns shall be open but with the excepted part of the town closed:

Concord Twp., except Owen's Marsh and outlet to Route 16.

WMD 14

No closures

WMD 15

The following towns shall be open but with the excepted part of the town closed:

Brownfield, except Shuther Brook from Peary Mt. Road downstream to Shepards River.

Cornish, except that portion of "the heath", and eastern tributary of Brown Brook, one-half mile eastward from Watson Hill Road.

Porter, except Thurston Brook from Kennard Hill Road to Bickford Pond and Mill Brook from Maine/New Hampshire border to Bickford Pond.

Waterford, except portion of Kedar Brook upstream of Route 37.

Otisfield, except Coon Swamp and tributaries.

WMD 16

The following towns shall be open but with the excepted part of the town closed:

Mercer, except the land of David P. Van Burgel and Kathy J. Scott, which is located between the Hampshire Hill Road and the Rome Road and includes a portion of Hilton Brook.

Beaver Trapping Closures cont.

by Wildlife Management Districts (WMDs) *Please refer to page 4 for the beaver trapping season dates.*

WMD 17

The following towns shall be open but with the excepted part of the town closed:

Atkinson, except the flowage located on the east side of the Dorr Road and within the Bud Leavitt Wildlife Management Area.

Charleston, except the land of Christopher Almy, which includes a portion of South Gate Brook and a tributary to Hudson Brook.

Charleston, except the land of Christopher Almy, which includes a portion of South Gate Brook and a tributary to Hudson Brook.

Hartland, except tributaries to Thompson Brook west and north of Route 23 that are on the property owned by John Studt.

Hermon, except the land of Herbert Bates bordered on the north by the Fuller Road, on the east by the New Boston Road, on the south by Route 2/100, and to the west by the Billings Road.

WMD 18

The following towns shall be open but with the excepted part of the town closed:

Burlington, except the land of Gerry Warren, which includes the western end of the Clark Road and running north and including that portion of Clark Brook.

WMD 19

The following towns shall be open but with the excepted part of the town closed:

T3 ND, except Duck Lake Brook.

T4 ND, except Duck Lake Brook.

WMD 20

No closures

WMD 21

The following towns shall be open but with the excepted part of the town closed:

Pownal, except tributary to Chandler River between Allen Road and Chadsey Road, and Chandler River between Poland Range Road and Lawrence Road.

WMD 22

The following towns shall be completely closed with no part of the town open:

Perkins Twp. (Swan Island)

WMD 23

The following towns shall be open but with the excepted part of the town closed:

Montville, except the parcel of land owned by the Sheepscot Wellspring Land Alliance located north of the Burnham Hill Road, west of the Howard Road, south of the Penny Road, and east of the Halldale Road.

Montville, except land owned by the Sheepscot Wellspring Land Alliance located north of the Burnham Hill Road between Herb Jackson Road and the Mountain Road.

Searsmont, except the land owned by Ravenwood Collective Inc. c/o Lily Fessenden located south of the Barrett Road, between the town lines of Montville on the west, Morrill on the east, and encompassing Thompson Brook.

Waldo, except the wetlands located on the property of Jeffrey S. Peters at 80 East Waldo Road in the town of Waldo

WMD 24

No closures

WMD 25

The following towns shall be open but with the excepted part of the town closed:

Bristol, except unnamed tributary to the Pemaquid River that passes through the land owned by James Deucher, north of the Rock Schoolhouse Road (Fire Road B 31-1).

Bristol, except Johnson's Meadow on Trout Brook, so called, to the Chamberlain Post Office.

Edgecomb, except the property of Lloyd Lawrence east of Parson's creek, and west of Parson's Point Road.

Edgecomb, except Charles and Constance Schmid Land Preserve, a private land preserve that encompasses 766 acres located off of the Middle Road, Old County Road and Mount Hunger Road East, and Mount Hunger Road North.

Jefferson, except south of the Atkins Road, west of Route 215 to the town line, and west of the Egypt road to the Jefferson /Whitefield town line.

Northport, except the land of Ovid Santoro located east of State Route 52, north of the Northport/Lincolntonville town line, north of Pitcher Pond, west of the thread of Sucker Brook, and south of Pitcher Road.

Rockport, except for the waterbodies known as "reflection ponds" located north of Park Street, on both the east and west side of Whitetail Drive, and on both the north and south side of Reflection Pond Road. All waterbodies within this subdivision shall be closed.

South Thomaston, except the land of C. M. Waterman, so called Towers Brook, west and north of Route 73, and south of the Grierson Road.

Whitefield, except east of the Weary Pond Road to the Jefferson/Whitefield Town line, east of Hollywood Boulevard to the Jefferson/Whitefield Town Line, and south of the Hilton Road.

Note: Land in the Jefferson-Whitefield Sanctuary that is in the town of Whitefield will be open to beaver trapping except for the areas described above.

Woolwich, except the flowage located on the property of Yvonne Stanton east of Hockomock Road and South of Murphy's Corner Road.

WMD 26

The following towns shall be open but with the excepted part of the town closed:

Searsport, except flowage on the property of Richard and Joyce Stevens located south and east of the junction of the Mt. Ephraim road and the Nickels Road.

Stonington, except the land of Richards Marital Trust and Richards Community Property Trust, including Ames Pond and a portion of its inlet.

WMD 27

No closures

WMD 28

No closures

WMD 29

The following towns shall be open but with the excepted part of the town closed:

Frenchboro, except Long Island. ■

Maine Mammal Tracks

F - Front track

H - Hind track

T - Tail marks may be present

Tracks Not to Scale

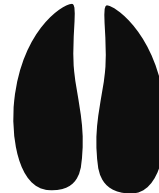
Sizes indicate length of tracks. Depending on the substrate (snow, mud, dust, sand, etc.) and the speed the animal was moving, tracks may show great variability in their appearance.

TRACK PATTERN

TRACK PATTERN



WHITE-TAILED DEER
2½" to 3"



MOOSE
4½" to 6½"



DOG – 2¼" to 4"



H – 2¼"



COYOTE



H – 2"



RED FOX



H – 1¾"



GRAY FOX



BOBCAT – 2"



H – 3½"



LYNX



HOUSE CAT
1½"



H – 3"



OTTER



FISHER – 2¼"



MINK – 1"



WEASEL – ½" to 1"



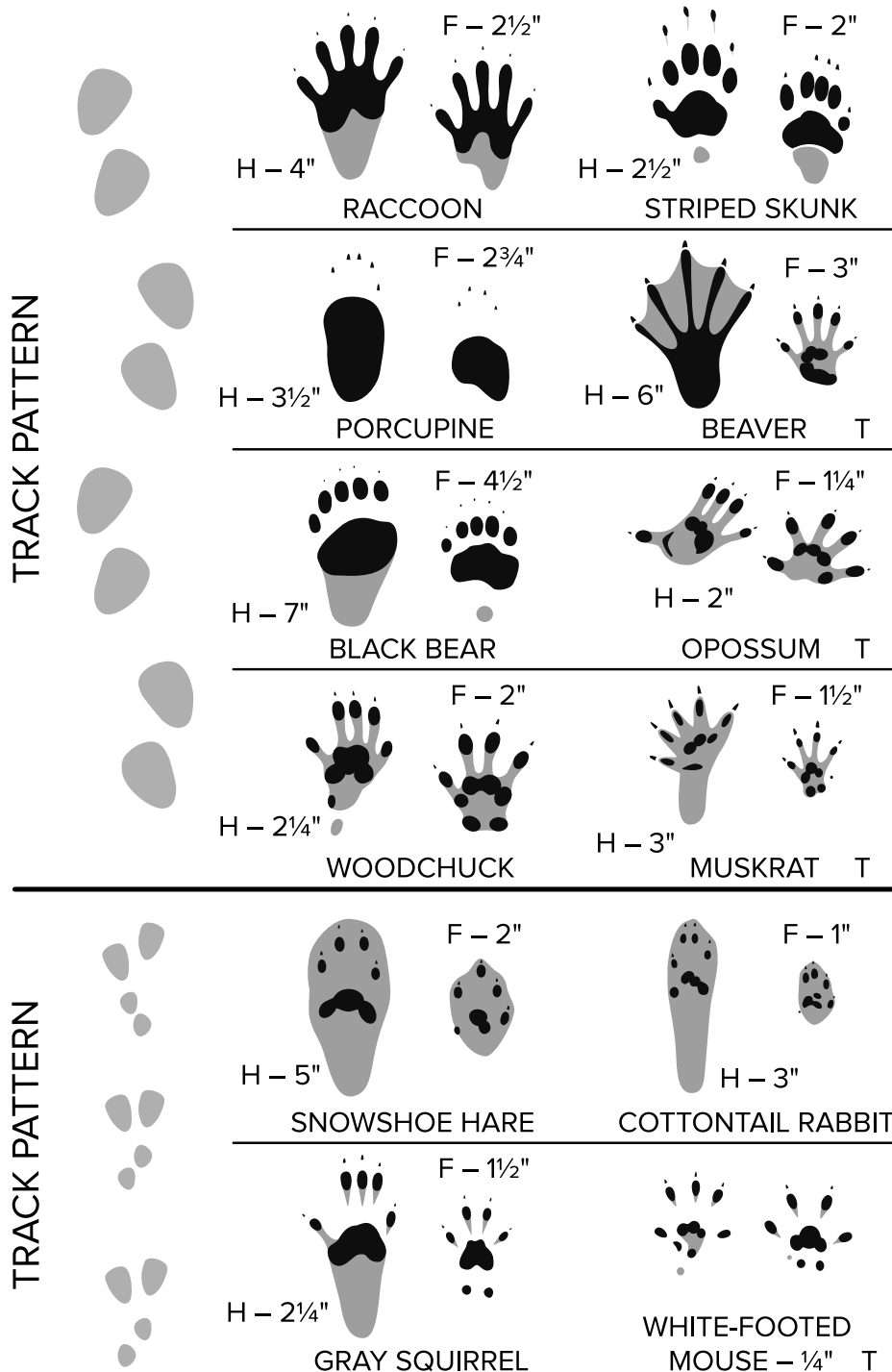
F - Front track

H - Hind track

T - Tail marks may be present

Tracks Not to Scale

Sizes indicate length of tracks. Depending on the substrate (snow, mud, dust, sand, etc.) and the speed the animal was moving, tracks may show great variability in their appearance.



FUR TAGGING STATIONS *Fur may also be tagged at MDIFW regional offices and by game wardens.*

Fur tagging stations are subject to change. Please check our website or call business to confirm their status.

TOWN	BUSINESS	ADDRESS	PHONE
Alfred	Tim's Taxidermy	377 Whichers Mills Rd	324-0723
Allagash	Allagash Guide Service	928 Allagash Rd	398-3418
Alton	Northland Taxidermy	260 Alton Tannery Rd	394-2031
Atkinson	Snow's Saw Shop	101 S Stagecoach Rd	564-7763
Buckfield	Bill's Fur	289 Paris Hill Rd	376-6406
Dedham	Stevens Fur Co.	256 Upper Dedham Rd	843-5052
Fort Kent	Up North Outdoors	23 West Main St	834-3103
Houlton	Mac's Trading Post	54 North Rd Suite 1	532-9700
Jackman	Bishops Store Inc	464 Main St	668-3411
Kenduskeag	Jerry Braley	559 Clark Rd N	944-9029
Kingfield	Sillanpaa's Western Mountains	396 Main St	670-5500
Leeds	Dale N. Holt	23 Plains Rd	713-7118
Mechanic Falls	Depot Square Hardware&Variety	9 Depot Square	345-2091
Mount Vernon	Flying Pond Variety	165 Pond Rd	293-2916
Nobleboro	Nobleboro Village Store	255 Center St	563-3639
Oxbow North TWP	Homestead Lodge	871 Oxbow Rd	576-1828
Palermo	Northeast Custom Taxidermy	36 Tyler Shore	692-6610
Parsonsfield	B and D Furs	416 Moulton Hill Rd	793-4605
Phippsburg	Reginald Read	178 Main Rd	442-8421
Pittsfield	Trafton's Fur Company	613 Main St	487-3938
Presque Isle	Spartan Arms and Ammo	5 Maple St	769-1000
Princeton	George Blaney	667 Main St	796-2470
Rumford	Rumford Firefighters Local1601	151 Congress St	364-2901
Skowhegan	Paul Pono	139 Pico Rd	474-8451
Stow	Stow Corner Store	590 Stow Rd	697-2255
Upton	The Upton Country Store	240 Thistle St	533-2280
Van Buren	Ouellette's Trading Post	200 Champlain St	868-2727
Waterboro	Peter Sterling Taxidermy	601 Deering Ridge Rd	247-3989
Woodland	Hemphill and Son's Butchery	531 Woodland Center Rd	498-9263



SUMMARY OF TRAPPING LAWS

All In for the Maine Outdoors

MAIN OFFICE

353 Water Street, 41 SHS
Augusta, ME 04333-0041
(207) 287-8000

WEBSITE

mefishwildlife.com

OPERATION GAME THIEF

1-800-ALERT US (253-7887)
maineogt.org

REGIONAL COMMUNICATION CENTERS

If you are in need of the services of a game warden or need to report a wildfire or request a campfire permit from Forestry call the Department of Public Safety Dispatch at the following toll-free numbers:

Augusta.....1-800-452-4664
Houlton.....1-800-924-2261
Bangor.....1-800-432-7381

Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife receives federal funds from the U.S. Department of the Interior. Accordingly, all Department programs and activities must be operated free from discrimination in regard to race, color, national origin, age, or disability. Any person who believes that he or she has been discriminated against should write to the Office of Equal Opportunity, U.S. Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C. 20240.

GOVERNOR

Janet T. Mills

ACTING COMMISSIONER

Timothy E. Peabody

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER

Vacant

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Catherine Gordon

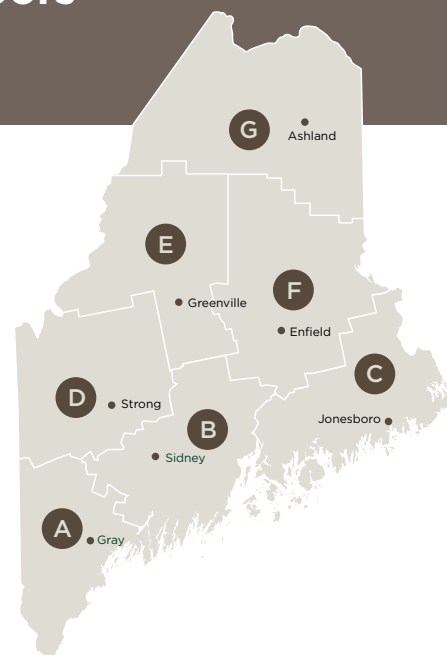
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John Neptune

john.neptune@penobscotnation.org
Maine Tribal Governments .. (207) 659-3490

ADMINISTRATIVE REGIONS

Region A – Gray (207) 287-2345
Region B – Sidney (207) 287-5300
Region C – Jonesboro (207) 255-2080
Region D – Strong (207) 778-3322
Region E – Greenville (207) 695-3756
Region F – Enfield (207) 794-1003
Region G – Ashland (207) 435-3231
Bangor Research Office (207) 941-4440

COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS

Written comments should be mailed to:

Maine Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife

353 Water Street
41 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333-0041

MDIFW
353 Water Street
SHS 41
Augusta, ME 04333

