



# TRAPPING

TOP FURBEARERS

SEASON INFORMATION

TRAPPING TIPS

Trapping is part of our nations history, serving as an incentive to explore new lands. Institutions supporting the trapping industry, such as the Hudson Bay Trading Company, would become legend. Beaver served as a primary staple.

Today, trapping serves as a great management tool to keep certain species numbers in check that will, in turn, help reduce the potential for disease, like distemper, that impacts furbearers when populations get too high.

Being a successful trapper is a process of learning and honing outdoor skills needed to identify signs the animal leaves behind. There is no substitute to spending time outdoors. There are plenty of places to trap if trappers are willing to get off the main areas and walk streams. Talk to landowners and ask to walk their farm ponds. It's a good way to avoid competition and enjoy the outdoors.

Most of the furbearers are nocturnal so when you set a trap, you are placing it in a specific area based on the



*Muskrat trapping in a marsh*

signs and concealed in a way to outwit the animal. Trappers find their success in the morning.

In Iowa, raccoons have been the top harvested furbearer for the past decade topping out with a statewide harvest of

300,000, then settling in around 220,000. The fur market crash has dropped the annual harvest to around 110,000.

The peak time for pelts that bring the highest prices is the third and fourth week of November.

## TRAPPING INFORMATION

Trapping information appears in the *Iowa Hunting, Trapping & Migratory Game Bird Regulations*.

TRAPPING SEASON:	First Saturday in November through January 31
TRAPPING HOURS:	8 a.m. on opening day, then no restrictions
LOCATIONS:	Statewide
LICENSE AND FEES:	Furharvester license; habitat fee

### PLACES TO TRAP:

- **HUNTING ATLAS** shows all areas in the state open to public use, type of wildlife likely found in the area, open seasons and any restrictions. [www.iowadnr.gov/hunting](http://www.iowadnr.gov/hunting)



## TRAPPING TIPS

### DISPATCHING TOOL:

Trappers typically carry a small caliber rifle with them in case it's necessary to dispatch an animal.

### EQUIPMENT & TECHNIQUES:

Trapping equipment includes a hatchet, trapping pack to carry the traps and stakes, wire to attach the stakes, waterproof gloves and waders or hip boots if trapping around water. Trappers are required to have tags with their name and address on each of their traps.

#### Common traps and uses

Foothold, used on land and water

Body gripping, used on land and water

Snares, used on land

Live traps, prey will be drowned or shot

### SPECIES FOR BEGINNING TRAPPERS

**Raccoons:** Strong population, fairly easy to skin, wear latex gloves and eye protection when skinning larger raccoons to avoid parasites like roundworm

**Muskrats:** Found around water, traps are small and easy to set, fur handling is easy, fast to skin, scrape and stretch the pelt. Good size to begin with, use foothold traps around feeding spots, runs and dens



*Foothold*



*Snare*



### ETHICS

- There is a 200-yard minimum separation for placing traps near occupied buildings or driveways.
- Respect private property and other sportsmen and women in the field
- Check traps regularly
- Dispose of carcasses properly either by burying or land-filling
- It is illegal to litter
- Promptly report any wildlife problems - disease, pollution or habitat destruction
- Respect other trappers sets in the field

### TIPS

- Record trap locations - makes it easier to remember all the locations
- Use adequate stakes
- Proper trap type or size is important
- Set traps in areas that lessens chance of catching non-target animal, like hunting dogs

### SPECIAL RULES

**Otters and Bobcats:** Furharvesters are required to contact a conservation officer within seven days of taking an otter or bobcat to receive a CITES tag which must remain with the animal until it is sold. They are also asked to turn in the lower jaw or skull of all otters and bobcats harvested to the Iowa DNR, which is used for a population and harvest monitoring.

### SAFETY & ETIQUETTE:

- If trapping on private land, be sure to close any gates that were opened, know the property boundaries to avoid trespassing, and follow the rules of fair chase.
- The way you trap reflects on all trappers – portray a positive image

FOR MORE INFORMATION  
on where to hunt in your local area,  
contact your regional DNR wildlife biologist.