



# Trappers: Stewards of the Land

Promoting the sustainable and wise use  
of Canada's fur resources



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As the fur trade has evolved over the centuries, trappers have adapted their practices to reflect increased knowledge and understanding of the fur trade and the species they harvest. Today, the success of Canada's fur trade is as much a recognition of a centuries-old tradition of excellence as it is a modern example of the sound application of conservation principles and sustainable development.

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Fur Institute of Canada  
Ottawa Canada

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# About the Fur Institute of Canada

**The Fur Institute of Canada** is a national non-profit organization, established in 1983 on the initiative of the federal, provincial, and territorial wildlife ministers to pursue the work of the Federal-Provincial Committee for Humane Trapping. The Institute is an umbrella organization for the Canadian fur industry, and its mandate ensures that all sectors are represented, particularly on the Board of Directors.

The overall mission of the Fur Institute of Canada is *to promote the sustainable and wise use of Canada's fur resources*. The Institute supports the following values:

- The sustainable use and conservation of renewable resources
- The continued improvement of animal welfare through ongoing research and the development of national and international trapping standards
- The conservation and management of natural resources based on scientific evidence and traditional knowledge
- Professionalism through continued education, licensing, and research
- Respect for people, animals, and the environment
- Respect for tradition, heritage, and culture
- Respect for the right of Aboriginal peoples to pursue their Aboriginal and treaty rights.

Six operational committees develop programs and deliver project activities within the structure of the Institute. These programs are general communications, Aboriginal communications, trap research, international relations, conservation, and funding.

The Fur Institute of Canada is committed to delivering information to the media, the general public, and governments pertaining to the economic, social, cultural, and environmental contributions made by today's fur trade.



## A Message from the Chairman

As Chairman of the Fur Institute of Canada, I am extremely pleased to introduce a project I believe so strongly in. Since 1983, when this organization was established, its mission has been to promote conservation and the sustainable use of Canada's fur resources. We are pleased to have coordinated this work and compiled the information contained in this report, which we feel clearly demonstrates that trappers are stewards of the land. Trappers personify the best in natural resource management, which deserves public recognition and support. Such appreciation for their accomplishments and contribution to the Canadian conservation effort is long overdue.

For readers who may not be familiar with trapping, this report will give you an insightful perspective on the trapper's world. Furbearing animals are the most resident form of wildlife and therefore one of the best indicators of the state of the land. These animals are the source of the trapper's livelihood, and thus the long-term sustainability of wildlife populations is extremely important to our trappers and is their highest priority. Our members spend a lot of time and effort monitoring wildlife populations, mapping critical habitats, and managing land for habitat conservation. Their ongoing level of commitment to the land helps to ensure that furbearers and other wildlife will continue to occupy their rightful places in Canada's ecosystems.

Trappers work essentially as small business owners, in whose own best interest it is to responsibly manage renewable furbearer resources in a sustainable manner. Canadian trappers are genuinely committed to wildlife habitat and its conservation. Trappers demonstrate a powerful respect for the future of their industry, as well as for the animals upon which they depend. The work of a trapper is challenging, tough, cold, lonely, and often dangerous. Yet for most trappers, what they do for a living is not a job but a passion.

The reports from each Canadian territory and province show the wide range of contributions made by our trappers. From relocating endangered species to replanting trees and restocking rivers and streams, our members collaborate with other committed groups to ensure healthy animals and a healthy environment.

We humans should remember that, as part of the animal kingdom, we share ecosystems and environments with other animals and are closely linked to them and often dependent on them. Animals have always provided the material sustenance that maintains us as individuals and societies. Our need and use of them for food, clothing, medicine, arts and crafts, companionship, inspiration, and environmental indicators are perpetual, and our dependence on them, constant.

To our trappers, we would like to say, "*Congratulations*". To our readers, we invite you to join us in supporting conservation initiatives that strengthen the sustainable use of all our resources.

*Bruce Williams*



## What is a furbearer?

One characteristic of mammals is that they have hair or fur. Technically speaking, this means that all mammals are furbearers. However, the provincial regulatory definition of a furbearer is limited to those mammals that are trapped for their fur. Furbearers can be meat-eaters (carnivores), such as wolf, lynx, and mink, or animals that gnaw with their long front teeth (rodents), such as squirrel, beaver, and muskrat.

The fur of these animals has two layers: an inner layer of dense, soft fur that provides protection against water and cold, and an outer layer of coarse guard hairs. When an animal is frightened or angry, it is these guard hairs that stand up on end, making the animal look larger.



Furbearers are trapped when their fur is in prime condition – when the underfur is at its thickest and the guard hairs are at their longest. Furs become prime in response to a decrease in daylight length and intensity. Although furs are in prime condition at different times for different species and locations, they are usually taken by trappers in the middle of the winter, when furbearers need their thickest, most insulative coat. After harvesting, furs are usually tanned and made into clothing, decorative items, and other products.



# Introduction

## A sustainable way of life

Trapping has been a part of life in what is now called Canada since First Nations peoples first crossed the Bering Land Bridge and inhabited this new land. Thousands of years after this migration, the fur trade became the chief commercial interest of colonizing countries, drawing European settlers to the eastern reaches of this vast territory and opening up frontiers to the west and north. On the foundation of this trade, a nation was built.

Trapping is a way of life, with strong cultural roots and social ties. Today it provides the livelihood for 75 000 Canadians, men and women alike. These are people whose work ties them to the land – a resource that must be cared for wisely if it is to continue into the years to come. Many trappers grew up in trapping families and learned their skills under the instruction of parents, grandparents, and even great-grandparents. An illustration of the importance of intergenerational equity, they know well that wildlife and its habitats are gifts that need careful tending if they are to be passed on in good health to the next generation. Trapping offers a way of self-employment that allows people to take care of themselves and their families, while contributing in an important way to the Canadian economy, particularly in the north. At times of the year when unemployment is high, trapping provides a much needed source of food and income in many rural and remote parts of Canada.

TRAPPING IS CANADA'S  
BEST EXAMPLE OF HOW  
A NATURAL RESOURCE  
CAN BE MANAGED IN A  
SUSTAINABLE MANNER.

Trapping is Canada's best example of how a natural resource can be managed in a sustainable manner. Trappers have been harvesting Canada's furbearers for centuries, maintaining a stable harvest in synchrony with population numbers. Besides providing furs, meat, and other useful products, trapping is also an essential tool of wildlife management. It can be used to cull animals in over-abundant populations and to build up new populations where they have been eliminated over the years by human activity.

## Stewards of the land

The word steward brings to mind a person who has been given the responsibility to manage someone else's property, not only maintaining it, but even improving it. Trappers are resource stewards, because they are responsible for their traplines on public or private lands. Traplines encourage a sustainable harvest because one person manages an area for his or her own long-term benefit. Trappers observe their traplines through the seasons, work them, and manage them in a way that keeps them productive.

Good land stewardship requires a presence, and the regular presence of trappers in the bush allows them to notice changes first-hand. They are often the first to recognize changes in habitat, the spread of wildlife disease, or the decline in wildlife population numbers. No wildlife conservation agency today has the time or money to mount this level of surveillance in the bush, so trappers play an important role in observing the environment and reporting what they see to conservation

authorities. They are experts on the status of furbearer populations in their regions. Registered trappers recognize that trapping is a privilege, not a right. As good stewards, they do the following:

- show care for wildlife by using the most humane trapping methods possible, checking traplines regularly, and avoiding the capture of non-target animals
- selectively trap only a small percentage of furbearer populations
- avoid habitat destruction and improve some habitats
- turn carcasses in to wildlife authorities when required or thought necessary, and otherwise recycle them in a natural setting
- participate in biological studies and conservation activities
- support trappers' organizations and other conservation groups
- stay current with new trapping techniques and support the education of novice and seasoned trappers
- abide by all laws and regulations and discourage illegal activity on the part of others.



### Sharing resources

Most of the land used for traplines belongs to the government or to private land owners and is used for other activities as well, including forestry, mining exploration, park development, and rural residences. Trappers cooperate with private property owners, using

the land respectfully and making their trapping services available for the removal of problem wildlife. Crown lands are often designated for multiple use. For example, forest lands under timber management can also support trapping, with both activities co-existing peacefully and even benefiting each other. Forestry roads can provide better bush access to trappers, and trappers can help control road flooding by beavers. Trappers have the opportunity to raise conservation concerns and voice their interests at public consultation meetings in relation to multiple land use activities.

### Humane trapping

The trapping community cooperates with the Fur Institute of Canada in a research program aimed at designing and testing humane traps. Canada leads the international community in humane trap research. To date, 31 traps have been certified in Canada under the Agreement on International Humane Trapping Standards (AIHTS). This agreement is carried out through the Provincial and Territorial Trap Certification Program, which was formally accepted by provincial and territorial wildlife directors in May 2001. By autumn 2007, only certified traps will be permitted for trapping the species listed in the AIHTS.



### This report

The first part of this report describes the various kinds of conservation activities that trappers are involved in, providing vignettes of real, hands-on activities that trappers have carried out across Canada. The second part of the report outlines the conservation efforts of trappers and their organizations in each territory and province in Canada.



# Letter from a Trapper

As a prelude to this project, several Canadian trappers were asked to give their personal views of their role in conservation – why they do what they do, and why their commitment to the land is so profound. From the letters we received, we selected a letter from Paul Tufts of Nova Scotia. We think it provides great insight into the strong allegiance trappers have to their profession. It has been said that the real reward of the trapper’s work cannot be measured in money, but in terms of spirituality, peace of mind, and a love of, and respect for, nature. This letter illustrates why trappers are true stewards of the land.

*Dear Friends,*

*I am the oldest in a family of 15 children, and the only one who became a trapper—hunter—fisherman. Although my father had some influence on me as a hunter, my attraction to trapping came at an early age via a Métis trapper who lived in my community. He had no children, but wished to pursue the traditions of his father – traditions that required a son in the bow of his canoe while trapping, fishing, and hunting. I became his substitute son, and he became my hero and role model. He taught me how to trap muskrats and mink in the marsh behind my home. He encouraged my trapping ventures by giving me an old canoe to repair and by secretly placing beavers in my beginner trap sets. He was admired in the community as a renowned otter trapper who gladly shared his vast knowledge of wildlife.*

TRAPPING HELPS KEEP  
WILDLIFE POPULATIONS  
BALANCED WITH THEIR  
HABITATS.

*The seed he planted in my soul took root. I decided to become a professional trapper, against the wishes of my parents, who wanted to arrange for me to go to college. I soon learned that it was difficult to earn a living solely from trapping, so with the blessing of my parents, I chose a career in wildlife biology. In this profession I could apply my trapping skills to the management and research of my beloved furbearers. As life rolled on I also became a trapper education instructor, a part-time fur farmer, the president of the Trappers Association of Nova Scotia, and finally, a director on the Board of the Fur Institute of Canada.*

*During this journey, I learned about the importance of trapping as a wildlife management tool. Furbearers are a renewable resource and respond well to the modern science of wildlife management, which ensures the health and welfare of animal populations. Successful trappers are among the best outdoorsmen in existence.*

*Trapping has been under attack by animal rights groups for some time. Activities of anti-fur groups have lowered fur prices so much that many no longer trap. Opponents of trapping, as well as some folk who do not understand the entire situation, question the need for trapping. Even if trapping is not needed, and most wildlife managers believe it is, trapping is a legitimate activity that removes excess animals from the wildlife population. Sound wildlife management practices allow the harvest of excess animals because wildlife is a renewable resource. Trapping helps keep wildlife populations balanced with their habitats. If beavers become too*

numerous, there will not be enough trees to support them and they will literally eat themselves out of house and home.

I have often pondered the question, "Why do I trap?" This trapping obsession cannot be explained by monetary gains, which are so marginal and uncertain. I have to look at my ancestors within the process of evolution to explain the Creator's design of human behaviour. Studies of skulls and teeth indicate that human beings are omnivorous hunters and gatherers descended from a lifeline that is several million years old. Science dictates that the human brain couldn't have evolved to its large size without the consumption of protein-rich meat. To



assure survival and development, the Creator surely had to cause the evolution of natural instincts, desires, and contentment in association with hunting and gathering. I cannot conceive that a few centuries of modern living would completely erase instincts that are millions of years old. I believe modern man still pursues these natural instincts, even in unnatural settings where substitute behaviours satisfy these urges.

I have also looked at the morality of trapping, since modern man has detached himself from nature and often considers animal use immoral. For me, morality implies a spiritual connection to goodness

and respect according to conscience, God, or the Creator. My understandings and feelings for nature are central to my soul — while seemingly absent in modern humans who have detached themselves from natural processes.

I am perplexed by the extreme view that says the Creator made a mistake in his design of natural predator-prey relationships. I find great comfort in the belief that, as a trapper, I am a predator in the Creator's design of nature's surpluses. At the same time, I realize that because of current extraordinary human population numbers, man's predatory activities need to be regulated and controlled out of respect for the Creator's design.

Thus, spiritually, on the trapline, I feel that I am one with nature.

I hope these personal notes help to explain my personal point of view. Thank you for reading.

Paul Tufts



# Conservation Activities carried out by Trappers

## Setting the scene

Today on planet Earth there is hardly any place left that hasn't been explored and changed by humans. Much of what was once wilderness is now the scene of extensive logging operations, mining, oil and gas operations, and airborne pollutant loading. Hand-in-hand with these modern pressures has come a great loss in the habitats that are home to the world's many living species. Habitat loss and fragmentation are the single most important factor in changes seen in wildlife populations over the past century.

Despite these pressures, the forest base in Canada has remained relatively stable over time, maintaining an ideal setting for trapping activities. Habitat changes have taken place mainly in southern Canada, close to human habitation. Southern habitat area has become smaller, chopped up and scattered, and more tainted with the chemical by-products of human technologies. As habitat has changed, animals have had to adapt. Sometimes they discover the benefits of having human neighbours and join us on our farms and in our towns and cities, sometimes creating a nuisance and causing concern. Although some animals lose the struggle to adapt, disappearing completely from a local area or broader region, Canadian furbearers have typically adapted well over the years.

The modern science of wildlife management, carried out in Canada in large part by provincial and territorial wildlife departments, works for the conservation of wildlife species while recognizing their many uses to humans. With respect to furbearers, conservation management seeks to sustain stable populations and preserve faltering ones, while allowing certain numbers to be harvested. The benefits of a regulated harvest are many, including those related to subsistence living, gainful employment, medicinal relief, ecological balance, property protection, and human security, to name important ones.

In keeping with the principles of sustainable use, responsible trapping abides by several principles. Responsible trappers never willfully take an endangered or threatened species, and do whatever they can to avoid accidental capture of these species. They use the latest and best techniques and equipment to ensure that animals are dispatched humanely. Trappers take only the number of animals that can be handled responsibly and is permitted by law. They also place great value on wildlife habitat, making as little mark on it as possible. Most trappers go much beyond these principles, demonstrating a deep respect for both land and wildlife. The following description of their conservation activities in Canada gives a glimpse into the soul of trapping. From respect for traditional Aboriginal ways of life to support of cutting edge genetic studies, trappers take conservation seriously.

## Preserving Aboriginal culture and practice

For thousands of years, Canada's Aboriginals have relied on wildlife for food and clothing. Trapping has become a traditional part of their culture, passed from generation to generation.

FROM RESPECT  
FOR TRADITIONAL  
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People who live in cities, much removed from the land and from a dependency on the land for their sustenance, may not fully appreciate the value of trapping to people who live in rural and remote areas. But Aboriginal groups have lobbied long and hard in recent years to retain their traditional way of life, centred on sustainable use of their natural surroundings.

For example:

### ***Cree reach historic agreement with Quebec government***

The Waswanipi Cree First Nation, along with Cree trappers, have successfully bridged the gap between forest management practices and the needs of the Cree people. Cree trappers entered into direct consultations with nine participating forestry companies, resulting in temporary agreements to extend forest stands along bodies of water and to protect wildlife areas and burial and sacred sites. These consultations gave rise to a historic agreement between the Cree Nation of Quebec and the Quebec government that recognized the Cree traditional way of life, provided greater support of sustainable development, and ensured a consultation process among all stakeholders.

## **Sharing traditional knowledge**

Local trappers, hunters, and elders have a wealth of traditional knowledge that can be gathered and analyzed for a better ecological understanding of the areas in which trappers work. For example, they often know where the richest trapping and hunting grounds are, and when the weather is going to change. These survival tips are based on repeated observations and have been passed down from one generation to the next. Many government policies and research projects now recognize the ecological value of this traditional knowledge and are adding this source of information to other ways of collecting wildlife data.

For example:

### ***Traditional knowledge base being built in Nunavut***

Two unique collaborative projects are under way in Nunavut to encourage local trappers and hunters to share their traditional knowledge of the area and its wildlife. Known in Inu as Qaujimajatuqangit, this traditional knowledge often dates back for generations and so provides a historical context for current wildlife population studies. The Tuktu and Nogak Project and the 2001 Naonayaotit Study form unique and accessible records of Inuit traditional knowledge that can be consulted by community members and decision makers, today and in the future. Ecological knowledge held by Inuit elders, trappers, hunters, and other community members is shared through stories, which are the fabric of Inuit culture, tradition, and subsistence. Within these stories are key observations that can be collected and stored in the records.

## **Population studies**

Trappers are in the perfect position to gather information about local wildlife populations. Out on their traplines every day during trapping season and much of the rest of the year, trappers know when a population is doing well and are the first to observe when a population is in trouble. Because of the nature of their activity, they are able to record observations and collect samples in a systematic way, offering a reliable source of information to wildlife researchers.

For example:

***Trappers assist in marten studies***

During the late 1980s, trappers of the Northwest Territories became concerned with the decline in marten numbers. The territorial Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development responded to this concern by mounting a study of this species, with trappers cooperating in a number of ways. There are several ways to monitor marten populations. One way is to regularly record the number of marten tracks along survey lines. Another method involves calculating the ratio of males to females in the harvest, as well as the ratio of juveniles to adults. Males are more likely to be caught than females, because they are less cautious and their home ranges are larger. Juveniles are more likely to be caught than adults because of their inexperience. Trappers have participated in this study by live trapping and tagging individuals to determine population density and prey availability. They also assist biologists with field work and provide carcasses for examination. Biologists determine the age and sex of harvested individuals, and also check body fat levels and reproductive levels in females as indicators of the health of the marten population. Studies of the animals that martens eat, such as mice, voles, and snowshoe hares, provide additional information to understand the marten population better.

TRAPPERS RECOGNIZE  
THAT THEIR TREATMENT  
OF HABITAT PLAYS A PART  
IN HOW SUSTAINABLE  
THEIR TRAPPING  
ACTIVITIES ARE.

Trappers in Nova Scotia collaborated with the Nova Scotia Department of Natural Resources in a DNA testing program for martens. Nova Scotia has two separate marten populations, one on Cape Breton Island in the north, believed to be indigenous and recently listed as provincially endangered, and a second in the west. Martens were unknown in the western part of the province until one was accidentally caught there in 1976. Later, in the 1980s, martens that were live-captured in New Brunswick were introduced to Kejimikujik National Park in western Nova Scotia. This introduction seems to have been a success, since the western marten population is growing. The question now being asked is, Are these martens New Brunswick genotypes or a cross with a Nova Scotia type that originally inhabited the area? DNA testing can answer these questions. Nova Scotia trappers participated in live-trapping martens using specially designed capture-cages with shelter nest boxes. Blood samples were taken for DNA testing, and the martens were then released at the capture site. Results of this program are pending.

***Prince Edward Island trappers participate in bird and mammal surveys***

P.E.I. trappers are closely involved in wildlife and habitat assessment. Working with provincial government biologists, local trappers assist with the collection of data to determine habitat and population status. Trappers assist in conducting aerial and ground censuses of a variety of birds and mammals, including ducks, geese, woodcock, cormorant, and beaver.

**Habitat restoration**

Wildlife populations are only as successful as their habitats allow them to be. Trappers recognize that their treatment of habitat plays a part in how sustainable their trapping activities are. Many trappers have become involved in restoring elements of the areas in which they trap, while others work with conservation groups to rehabilitate habitat that may not be connected to their traplines.

For example:

### ***B.C. trappers help to restore beaver habitat***

B.C. trappers have observed that it usually takes many years for the habitat to return to the stage where it can support beavers again once these furbearers have exhausted the trees in an area. After beavers have left an area, trappers often break the dams, releasing the water and allowing the ground to dry out. Once the sun can reach the soil again, plant growth begins and eventually new saplings grow up. Trappers can hasten the process of succession by planting white poplar and birch, two types of tree that beavers favour. This step can bring beavers back to an area three to five years earlier than would happen naturally.

## **Wildlife re-introductions**

Largely as a result of human encroachment, certain species of wildlife have been extirpated (eliminated) from some parts of Canada and the United States. To rebuild these populations, individuals of some species are re-introduced to the area and usually protected until the population is well established. Trappers are often invited to assist in these projects because of their experience with live-trapping animals and caring for them in a humane way.

For example:

### ***Alberta trappers assist with re-introduction of wolves to Idaho***

The United States Fish and Wildlife Service's (USFWS) Northern Rocky Mountain Wolf Recovery Plan recommended the establishment of a minimum of 10 breeding pairs of wolves in each of three recovery areas in the northwestern United States. Alberta trappers played a key role in this restoration project, known as Wolves for Yellowstone and Idaho. In August 1994, the USFWS requested that Alberta provide about 15 wolves each year for three to five years. In November and December of that year, registered Alberta trappers worked with USFWS and Alberta Environmental Protection personnel to live-capture and radio-collar 17 wolves in western Alberta. Information from this activity was used to identify wolf packs for the project. In January 1995, wolves were captured by trapping and aerial darting. Twenty-nine wolves were airlifted to two recovery areas in the United States, resulting in a successful re-introduction.

### ***Manitoba trappers live-trap martens for relocation to provincial park***

Manitoba trappers carried out live-trapping of martens for relocation to Turtle Mountain Provincial Park in 1987 to 1990. Martens had been extirpated from the park largely due to the major ecological changes that resulted from devastating forest fires in 1887, 1903, and 1921. Only in recent years has the park habitat reached the mature stage needed by martens. The area is isolated by surrounding farmlands, and no natural populations or habitat exist nearby for martens to re-establish naturally. Provincial department staff and the local trappers determined that relocation was the only method of re-establishing the population.

## **Protection of endangered species**

Loss of wildlife species to extinction has the result of reducing the richness of biodiversity in ecosystems. Trappers have an interest in sustaining not only the species that support their

livelihood, but also species that are threatened and endangered. They take steps to avoid catching these species in their traps, and also participate in programs to protect them in their natural settings.

For example:

***Yukon trappers reduce predation pressure on endangered caribou***

The Chisana caribou herd is in danger of extinction. This small herd, which ranges between Alaska and Yukon, has an aging population and no recruitment. Three major steps are being taken to keep this herd from disappearing off the face of the earth. First, no one has hunted this herd for 10 years. Secondly, pregnant cows are kept in a natural enclosure during the spring and fed until their calves are born. Cows and calves remain in the enclosure until calves are older and less vulnerable to predation. Yukon trappers participate in the third component of the protection strategy, which is to reduce predator pressure on the herd. By focussing more effort on trapping wolves, wolf predation of the herd is reduced and there is a greater chance that young caribou will reach reproductive age and add to the population. Trappers often undertake this conservation activity at some personal cost, foregoing other animals that are easier to catch and take care of, and that generate more money for the effort than wolf trapping does.

TRAPPERS OFTEN  
UNDERTAKE  
CONSERVATION  
ACTIVITIES AT SOME  
PERSONAL COST.

***Newfoundland trappers help prevent accidental trapping of endangered martens***

Newfoundland trappers cooperated with the Fur Institute of Canada and other partners in testing floating mink boxes in an effort to reduce accidental trapping of the endangered Newfoundland pine marten.

**Environmental monitoring**

Contaminant loading of the environment is part and parcel of industrialized life in today's world. Contaminants make their way into the wild food chain, often becoming magnified at each successive stage in the chain. Carnivorous animals typically carry the largest contaminant loads, as they are at the end of the chain. Trappers often collect and turn in the carcasses of their captures, sometimes by regulatory requirement but often voluntarily. Tissue samples from the carcasses are used to monitor contaminant levels in various species that are particularly at risk. Trappers may also be asked at times to sample other elements in the environment, such as air, soil, and water.

For example:

***Saskatchewan trappers help monitor uranium developments***

Saskatchewan trappers were involved in an environmental monitoring program with the Athabasca Working Group in northern Saskatchewan, helping with the environmental monitoring of uranium developments. Three uranium companies and seven Athabaskan Aboriginal communities jointly designed and implemented a community-based environmental monitoring program. Local trappers provided muscle tissue samples from moose, caribou, and lynx. Water, air, plant, and fish were also sampled. Hunters, trappers, and other community members assisted with collecting these samples.

## Project planning

Because of their long-term experience on the land and their intimate knowledge of the terrain and wildlife in their trapping zones, trappers are in a unique position to offer advice during the planning stage of a variety of resource management and development projects. Involvement at the planning stage means that their conservation interests, which overlap with those of other outdoor enthusiasts, are considered.

For example:

### ***B.C. trappers advise on development projects***

As a haven for tourists, British Columbia is scattered with development projects. Development always has some impact on the ecosystems where it takes place, but this impact can be reduced by careful planning. B.C. trappers have been involved in several project impact studies or preconstruction surveys to identify or confirm the needs of particular local wildlife species and to help formulate wildlife-sensitive options for areas destined to undergo development.

Trappers work closely with biologists and resort owners to assist them in various aspects of development planning, such as:

- minimizing habitat removal and disruption
- timing construction events to minimize disturbance of wildlife life cycles
- routing summer hiking trails appropriately
- managing hikers and wildlife viewing opportunities
- prohibiting or curtailing helicopter-based and motorized recreation
- raising the awareness of wildlife needs during the construction phase
- reducing the impact of motor vehicle traffic by, for example, restricting speed limits along roads.

MUCH OF WHAT WE  
KNOW TODAY ABOUT  
WILDLIFE DISEASES  
AND PARASITES COMES  
FROM ANALYSIS OF  
CARCASSES THAT  
TRAPPERS HAVE  
TURNED IN

This type of involvement on the part of trappers highlights the importance of wildlife and their habitats in the long-term sustainability of resort operation – healthy wildlife in healthy habitats give intrinsic value to resort settings and offer esthetic appeal to resort users. Establishing an understanding of wildlife and their needs at the outset of a development project also builds the foundation for adaptive management. Corrective measures can be taken when development threatens to disturb wildlife or their habitat beyond what is thought to be acceptable.

## Control of problem animals

Many species of wildlife have adapted to life in the presence of humans. Coyotes prey upon farm animals. Beavers clog city waterways and flood roads with their constructions. Raccoons make their noisy nests in attics. Although most people have an appreciation for wildlife in a natural setting, many become less tolerant when their property or personal security is threatened. Trappers are often called in as control agents when wildlife become a problem. They are well acquainted with the proper techniques for trapping, relocating, and, when necessary, dispatching these animals.

For example:

***Ontario trappers provide valuable control services***

When it comes to problem animals in urban and rural municipalities and on public and private lands in Ontario, local trappers are the principal control agents. Whether the animals are squirrels, raccoons, beavers, muskrats, opossums, coyotes, foxes, or skunks, the trapping community is equipped to deal with these animals humanely and in accordance with provincial trapping regulations. Through this service, trappers have saved corn crops, orchards, and bee hives; unplugged municipal drains; staved off flooding of croplands and forests, as well as municipal lands and roadways; and made railways and airports safer.

**Control of parasites and disease**

Much of what we know today about wildlife diseases and parasites comes from analysis of carcasses that trappers have turned in because they noted some sort of abnormality. In some jurisdictions it is mandatory to turn the carcasses of some species in, but many trappers take this step voluntarily. Without this assistance, wildlife disease programs in Canada would not have enough personnel to carry out the extensive collection of carcasses needed to produce reliable results. Trappers can also provide accurate information on where the affected animal was trapped, adding to the knowledge of the range of diseases and parasites and the paths by which they spread. Trappers also assist with wildlife vaccination programs that limit the transmission of some infectious diseases, such as rabies.

NEW BRUNSWICK  
TRAPPERS REGULARLY  
TAKE PART IN  
DISEASE CONTROL  
AND MONITORING  
PROGRAMS IN THEIR  
PROVINCE.

For example:

***New Brunswick trappers help curb the spread of rabies***

New Brunswick trappers regularly take part in disease control and monitoring programs in their province, such as the Rabies Point of Infection Control (PIC) program. In the fall of 2001, trappers from across the province descended on the St. Stephen area to carry out the program, which consists of live-trapping, vaccinating, ear tagging, and releasing raccoons, skunks, feral cats, foxes, and other species that are common carriers of the rabies virus. More than 500 animals were treated in the project. It was hoped that by having a "wall" of immunized animals on the perimeter of the infected area, the virus would spread more slowly and would be contained. From all indications, the 2001 PIC program was successful, with only three confirmed rabies cases during the follow-up period, compared to more than 60 cases in the previous two years.

**Education**

Becoming more sustainable as a society and placing a higher value on conservation both call for an emphasis on raising public awareness and providing appropriate education. This is especially true for industries that share a land-base with trappers, and for young people, who have a fresh way of looking at things and minds that are eager to learn new ways. Trappers have found many ways to share their knowledge about life on the land, wildlife conservation, and trapping activities with others in the hope of fostering a conservation attitude among them. They also take an interest in training new trappers and upgrading the skills of veteran trappers, to ensure that they know the latest and best methods for trapping humanely and preparing pelts effectively.

For example:

***Alberta trappers offer workshop to logging company***

Some Alberta trappers made a field presentation to Weyerhaeuser employees in the Slave Lake area to acquaint field personnel with trapline management and sets. Trappers accompanied company employees on a walk through the woods, pointing out what a trapper sees. In a follow-up session, employees examined a fur kit display and took part in a discussion of cutblock design as a way of lessening the impact of logging on traplines.

***Trappers teach school children about harvesting furbearers***

Saskatchewan trappers often join conservation officers and wildlife biologists in instructing young people about the fur industry in their province. Using a presentation called Fur Ever, trappers help students to understand that wise wildlife management includes balancing habitat, population growth, and harvest. Students also learn about animal adaptation to climate, and about the historical and modern use of fur garments for protection and insulation. The presentation includes a video called "Respect for the World We Live In", along with samples of humane traps and fur pelts such as marten, ermine, and muskrat. The New Brunswick Trappers and Fur Harvesters Federation has developed an education program geared specifically to upper elementary students. This program describes the history of trapping, wildlife population trends, and problems associated with wildlife overpopulation. The Furbearer School Program can be used by individuals or schools to teach students about furbearing animals and fur harvesting and trapping. It explains the benefits of these activities, as well as the equipment used. The school kits include a collection of tanned pelts of each of the 13 species trapped in New Brunswick.

## **Communication**

Trappers have a collective voice through the newsletters and magazines published by their various organizations. These publications are an effective tool for keeping trappers informed of new developments in their field and promoting the principles of conservation and animal welfare. Trapping organizations are also instrumental in distributing the conservation material produced by other groups.

For example:

***Quebec trappers' federation publishes wildlife information***

The Fédération des trappeurs gestionnaires du Québec publishes information documents on the management of furbearers and other wildlife (e.g., marten, otter, bald eagle, Gaspé caribou). The organization also publishes *Le coureur du bois*, a magazine that raises awareness of species management. For example, the September 2002 issue featured articles on population numbers of grey wolf in Quebec and the importance of managing these populations well.



## Conservation Activities in the Provinces and Territories

The regulation of trapping falls largely to the provinces and territories. Regulations spell out restrictions on trapping activity, such as licensing requirements, open seasons, quotas, and trapline areas. All jurisdictions now require that trappers complete a trapping workshop to qualify for a licence. These workshops introduce the concepts of sustainable trapping, habitat conservation, and best practices for trapping and preparing pelts and requirements of the Agreement on International Humane Trapping Standards.

**The following section of the report lists resident furbearers in each province and territory and gives examples of the kinds of conservation activities that take place in each jurisdiction.**





## Yukon

**Size of the territory:** 478 000 square km

**Trapper organization:** Yukon Trappers Association

**Resident furbearers:** Bear, beaver, coyote, fisher, fox, lynx, marten, mink, muskrat, otter, squirrel, weasel, wolf, wolverine



### Contributions to Wildlife Conservation

- Each year trappers voluntarily complete a trapper questionnaire. Specific surveys are included pertaining to the presence and abundance of new species, such as moose tick, or range extensions of existing species, such as mule deer.
- Trappers were closely involved in projects to re-introduce lynx to areas in the states of New York and Colorado where they had been extirpated. Trappers trained in live-capture techniques took great care to ensure that all animals taken were free of any injury that might reduce their chances of survival in their new homes.
- Both across the territory and locally, trappers aid fish and wildlife management planning through their participation in public boards and councils. Much of the planning information comes from the traditional or local knowledge of trappers in the area.
- Trappers participate in wildlife studies by assisting in live captures, track surveys, retrieval of tags and collars, and carcass collections for autopsies and lab studies.
- Trappers assist in protecting the endangered Chisana caribou herd by controlling wolf predation (see p. 9).
- Trappers assist in ground-based monitoring programs to support the collection of information about local populations. For example, trappers are participating in a three-year monitoring program for moose in the Mayo area, started in 2001. Local trappers and hunters record their moose sightings from August to October. The project will be evaluated in 2003–2004.
- Local trappers assist in dealing with problem wildlife using humane methods, at the same time addressing public safety concerns.
- A government-certified trapper education program provides training to all trappers. Experienced trappers teach the course, which includes upgrading workshops to demonstrate recent developments in humane trapping and pelt preparation techniques.
- Young people attending the Yukon Fish and Game Association Teen Camp learn trapping, bush survival, and respect for the land and animals. Trappers assist at this camp, and also offer school talks that teach about trapping in the context of sustainable resource use, as well as field trips to selected traplines.
- The Fur Institute of Canada involves Yukon trappers in the field-testing of traps as part of their humane trap research program.



## Northwest Territories

**Size of the territory:** 1 171 900 square km

**Trapper organizations:** Trappers are represented at Renewable Resources Councils at which land claims have been settled. Hunter and trapper councils or organizations exist where land claim negotiations are still under way

**Resident furbearers:** Bear, beaver, coyote, fisher, fox, lynx, marten, mink, muskox, muskrat, otter, squirrel, weasel, wolf, wolverine

### Contributions to Wildlife Conservation

• Trappers have played an important role in gathering baseline wildlife data relevant to understanding the environmental impact of the proposed MacKenzie Valley Pipeline. They provide traditional knowledge and experience related to important vegetation and habitat areas and the potential effects of development on the land and wildlife resources. Trappers were closely involved in developing a draft cooperation plan for the pipeline, collaborating with a number of national and regional agencies that have an interest in this project.

• Wildlife officers and biologists work together with trappers on research projects related to specific wildlife species. For example, they provide information for a project on wolverines that seeks to establish distribution and home range size, denning locations and fidelity to den sites, reproductive rate, and harvesting intensity, composition, and locations. Among other contributions, trappers provide hair and hide samples for DNA analysis, used in determining the origins of tracked wolverines, as well as their health.

• NWT trappers have been involved in marten population studies (see p. 7).

• Trappers were an integral part of the co-management plan for grizzly bears in the Inuvialuit Settlement Region for the Yukon Territory. This multi-partner plan, carried out from 1997 to 2002, clarified the grizzly bear status in this region and implemented management principles and goals to successfully manage this bear population over this five-year period.

• An annual wildlife conservation questionnaire gives trappers the opportunity to provide valuable wildlife information from their trapping experience. This questionnaire helps to build an accurate picture of the total wildlife population in the territory.

• Trappers contribute wildlife carcasses to researchers for further study, providing information on when and where the animal was caught.

• Through a program administered by the Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, experienced trappers conduct training workshops for new trappers.



# Nunavut

**Size of the territory:** 2 000 000 square km

**Trapper organizations:**

Kitikmeot Hunters and Trappers Organization, Qikiqtaaluk Hunters and Trappers Organization, Kivalliq Hunters and Trappers Organization, and Kugluktuk Hunters and Trappers Organization

**Resident furbearers:** Bear, beaver, coyote, fox, lynx, marten, mink, muskox, muskrat, weasel, wolf, wolverine



## Contributions to Wildlife Conservation

• Trappers have a wealth of traditional ecological knowledge, which they are sharing under various Qaujimaqatungit (traditional knowledge) projects (see p. 6). Two examples are:

• The Tuktu and Nogak Project, a brainchild of the Kugluktuk Angoniatit Association that started in 1996. In this community-driven project, traditional knowledge of trapping, hunting, and living in the bush is collected and stored for future use. This project has created a broad ecological information base for the Kitikmeot region of Nunavut.

• The 2001 Naonayaotit Study, commissioned on behalf of the Kugluktuk Hunters and Trappers Association.

• Photos, transcripts, and tapes gathered during the projects are given to participants in the traditional knowledge projects, and they share this information with others. For example, some contributors brought project tapes to local schools and integrated the material into education programs.

• Trappers participate in studies that support the allocation and management of fish and wildlife. For example, they provided harvest numbers for the Nunavut Wildlife Harvest Study, the largest and most complex data collection program of its type to be carried out in Canada. This study focussed on caribou, polar bear, and seal. Data from this study was used to maintain sufficient numbers of specific stocks and to measure the economic value of the food available from harvested animals.



## British Columbia

**Size of the Province:** 952 300 square km

**Trapper organizations:** B.C. Trappers Association and member locals

**Resident furbearers:** Bear, beaver, bobcat, coyote, fisher, fox, lynx, marten, mink, muskrat, opossum, otter, raccoon, squirrel, skunk, wolf, weasel, wolverine

### Contributions to Wildlife Conservation

- B.C. trappers provide annual wildlife conservation information to the B.C. government through a questionnaire that includes trappers' knowledge on trends in furbearer abundance, habitat, prey, and other food sources.
- Many B.C. trappers work cooperatively with other organizations, such as the B.C. Wildlife Federation Land Use Committee and the provincial wildlife agency. Highlights of this collaboration include establishing zones that provide for sensitive resource management for wildlife.
- Many members of the provincial trappers' association hold executive positions in other conservation groups, such as Ducks Unlimited, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, Foundation for North American Wild Sheep, B.C. Wildlife Federation, and local sportsman clubs.
- Some trappers were involved in writing and submitting briefs to various forestry groups regarding the newly proposed Forest Practices Code. Trappers from 10 B.C. communities appeared before local forestry panels, giving trappers a voice in forest 4.
- Over the years, local trappers have field-tested traps for wolf, coyote, and lynx in the Fur Institute of Canada's trap research program.
- Trappers contribute significantly to the Habitat Conservation Trust Fund through fees attached to trapping licences and all other permits required for them to carry out their work.
- B.C. trappers are involved in the Dawson Creek Land and Resource Management Plan being carried out by the B.C. Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management. This far-reaching program addresses land and resource management, including the management of furbearers, in both provincial parks and forest land.
- Many B.C. trappers speak at local elementary schools, presenting aspects of the trapping lifestyle and providing information on wildlife and habitats. Trappers sponsored an educational video titled People and Wildlife for use in B.C. middle schools. Fur samples are also shown.
- The B.C. Trappers Association assists the B.C. Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection in delivery of the Trapper Education Program.
- Some trappers assist in habitat restoration (see p. 8) and development planning (see p. 10).



# Alberta

**Size of the province:** 661 190 square km

**Trapper organization:** Alberta Trappers Association

**Resident furbearers:** Badger, bear, beaver, bobcat, coyote, fisher, fox, lynx, marten, mink, muskrat, otter, raccoon, red squirrel, skunk, weasel, wolf, wolverine



## Contributions to Wildlife Conservation

• The Alberta Trappers Association is a founding member of the Alberta Conservation Association. This association supports and funds wildlife and fisheries projects and programs that seek to reverse or halt the reduction in range or numbers of individual species in the short term. The long-range goal of these projects and programs is to achieve favourable conservation status of Alberta's biological natural resources.

• The Alberta Trappers Association conducted a survey with municipalities about their wildlife damage control activities. The purpose is to encourage municipalities to work cooperatively with trappers to enhance public safety through the humane removal of problem wildlife.

• Trappers were instrumental in a provincial study of wolves on caribou ranges in west-central Alberta. Wolves were mapped by aerial snowtracking, and a helicopter was used for aerial capture and tagging. The hunting behaviour of four wolf packs was followed over 10 days, shedding light on how kill patterns are affected by landscape structure.

• Alberta trappers contribute to a humane trapping trust fund through their trapping and fur-buying licence fees. The fund is used for trapper and public education, as well as to support research to develop new traps and to assist trappers to obtain new traps.

• Forest companies consult trappers to minimize the effects of tree harvesting on furbearers and trapping activities. Forests are often managed through a Forest Management Agreement. Trappers have a say in forest management through participation in public advisory committees under these agreements. In addition, through a notification process, trappers are provided with opportunities to work with the tree harvest planners to identify roads, paths, trapping cabins, and other areas that should be considered during tree harvest plans. Forest companies recognize trapping as a way of life and economic necessity for trappers, and consider it to be one of the most important forest-related livelihoods.

• Standard Trapping and Conservation courses are held during the fall and winter throughout Alberta. Participants receive information on humane trapping techniques, fur management regulations, fur handling, and marketing. Expert fur handlers provide instruction on fur quality and grading.

• Alberta students study a unit on the fur trade and beavers. Trappers make many school presentations to demonstrate what trappers do and how closely they are linked to the environment.



## Saskatchewan

**Size of the province:** 651 900 square km

**Trapper organizations:**

Saskatchewan Trappers Association,  
Northern Saskatchewan Trappers Association

**Resident furbearers:** Badger, bear, beaver, bobcat, coyote, fisher, fox, lynx, marten, mink, muskrat, otter, raccoon, skunk, squirrel, weasel, wolf, wolverine

### Contributions to Wildlife Conservation

• James Smith Cree Nation trappers cooperated with provincial wildlife staff in the Forest Road Access Management Program, created to protect forests. Elders and trappers were interviewed about trails and cabins, sacred sites, medicine gathering spots, and hunting, berry picking, and trapping areas. A conventional land use report was completed with local input, and seminars were conducted to explain to the public and other forest users the need for regrowth of the forest and preservation of wildlife habitat.

• Trappers were involved in an environmental monitoring program with the Athabasca Working Group in northern Saskatchewan (see p. 9).

• Two separate projects under Natural Resources Canada's Sustainable Communities initiative involved trappers. The North West Saskatchewan Métis Council and Athabasca Land Use Planning Group trained locals to gather information about traditional land uses. The information supports management of natural resources in the area. The Northern Saskatchewan Trappers Association held a symposium to discuss the use of geographic information and global positioning systems to map and store this type of information.

• Trappers contribute through trapping licence fees to the Fish and Wildlife Development Fund, which supports the Prairie Conservation Action Plan.

• Local trappers work closely with the Saskatchewan Federation of Wildlife, supporting the principle that responsible hunting, trapping, and fishing are components of the sustainable use of wildlife resources.

• Trained members of Saskatchewan's trappers associations cooperate with the Fur Institute of Canada to conduct courses for new trappers. The associations also sponsor competitions for young trappers that include small trap setting, skinning, and pelt preparation. Instruction is also given on humane trapping in accordance with international standards.

• Trappers often give their time to help promote Fur Ever, an program for youth about Saskatchewan's wild fur industry (see p. 12). The Saskatchewan Trappers Association takes educational kits of tanned pelts to schools, Cub and Scout groups, wildlife conservation functions, sports and leisure shows, and other events. Trappers also visit schools to give input on an elementary curriculum unit on hunting, trapping, and fishing.



## Manitoba

**Size of the province:** 650 000 square km

**Trapper organizations:** Manitoba Trappers Association, member local fur councils, and some independent local organizations

**Resident furbearers:** Badger, bear, beaver, bobcat, coyote, fisher, fox, lynx, marten, mink, muskrat, otter, raccoon, squirrel, weasel, wolf, wolverine



### Contributions to Wildlife Conservation

- Alberta trappers monitor and trap regulated season quotas in accordance with provincial regulations. They are committed to sustainable development and believe furbearers should be moderated from “boom and bust” cycles. This results in stable populations of healthy animals that are in balance with the biological carrying capacity of their ecosystems and the cultural carrying capacity accepted by the public.
- The Trapline Inventory Project of the Manitoba Model Forest was conducted as a partnership between the Manitoba Trappers Association and the Tembec–Pine Falls Operation. Trappers provided information on traplines and opinions on the effects of forest management on high-value area to facilitate planning forest operations. Manitoba trappers are currently involved with the provincial wildlife department and forestry companies in developing a furbearer survey program that will apply to all forested areas of Manitoba designated for timber harvest. The information gathered will help reduce the impact of forest harvest on trapping operations.
- Live animals needed for animal relocation projects are provided by trappers. For example, trappers carried out live-trapping of martens for relocation to Turtle Mountain Provincial Park in 1987 to 1990 (see p. 8).
- Trappers represent their interests on resource management committees within the province. They also regularly alert Manitoba Conservation about environmental impact problems caused by other resource users.
- Trappers participate in surveys and assist with implementing and monitoring fur-related research projects.
- The humane trap research program of the Fur Institute of Canada depends on trappers to test trap designs in the field.
- When problem animals, such as black bear or beavers, must be removed, or livestock predation must be controlled, trappers are often called in to do this work.
- The Manitoba Trappers Association operates a school program to promote the fur trade industry, the conservation of furbearing animals, and the importance of trapping in wildlife management. It also provides trapper workshops under the mandatory trapper education program, and offers upgrading workshops on humane trapping and pelt preparation to experienced trappers.
- The Whiteshell Trappers Fur Council operates a Trapper’s Museum and Public Awareness Program in Whiteshell Provincial Park.



## Ontario

**Size of the province:** 1 068 580 square km

**Trapper organizations:** Ontario Fur Managers Federation, Treaty #3 Trapping Resource Centre, Nishnawbe Aski Nation Harvesters Association, and about 120 district fur councils

**Resident furbearers:** Bear, beaver, coyote, fisher, fox, lynx, marten, mink, muskrat, otter, raccoon, skunk, squirrel, weasel, wolf, wolverine

### Contributions to Wildlife Conservation

• Local trappers assist the provincial wildlife staff as the primary agents of control of the spread of rabies through wildlife populations such as foxes and raccoons through trapping, ground distribution of bait containing vaccine, and trap–vaccinate–release programs.

• Provincial wildlife authorities receive valuable information from trappers on furbearers and other species. Trappers also provide carcasses to help monitor diseases, such as that caused by the West Nile virus, and environmental conditions, such as mercury contamination.

• Local trappers provide food for carnivores by leaving carcasses in the bush. This practice ensures that there is no waste when furbearers are trapped for the fur.

• Ontario trappers serve as the principal control agents for problem animals (see p. 11). They helped to establish an ongoing agreement with certain northern municipalities for the control of problem black bears. They are also working with farmers to reduce livestock predation.

• The Fur Institute of Canada’s humane trap research involves trappers in field–testing new trap prototypes. Trappers also support the trap–testing program in Vegreville, Alta.

• The Aylmer District Trappers Council offers youth education programs that cover stream rehabilitation, winter camping (outdoor survival and cooking), nesting boxes, food web studies, natural resources management, and the study of mammals, birds, and fish.

• Trappers live–trap animals for relocation of wildlife to rehabilitate various habitats.

• Establishing spawning sites helps to maintain a healthy ecosystem with diverse fish populations. Trappers have worked with provincial wildlife staff in this activity, ensuring that lakes and streams are well populated with fish.

• The Ontario Fur Managers Federation delivers the province’s Fur Harvest, Fur Management and Conservation Course. It also updates trappers on regulatory, conservation, and market news through their magazine and a CD–Rom version of “Wild Furbearer Management and Conservation in North America.” Trappers in many communities make presentations to elementary and high school students on trapping, life on the trapline, and the trapper’s role in wildlife management. Presentations are also made to municipal councils, field naturalist clubs, and other groups.



## Quebec

**Size of the province:** 1 250 000 square km

**Trapper Organizations:** Fédération des trappeurs gestionnaires du Québec, comprising 13 regional associations, and Cree Trappers Association

**Resident furbearers:** Bear, beaver, coyote, fisher, fox, lynx, marten, mink, muskrat, otter, raccoon, skunk, squirrel, weasel, wolf



### Contributions to Wildlife Conservation

- Each year trappers provide information on their trapping activities, such as the number of captures and the areas where the animals were harvested. Biological samples are taken to determine the population health. Local trappers use management unit information to monitor furbearer populations.
- The Forest Stewardship Council of Canada involves trappers in the development of boreal forest standards, ensuring that wildlife management issues are considered in forest management planning.
- Local trappers were involved in the decision-making process for the protected land use strategy adopted by the Quebec government, which resulted in the creation of controlled use zones in the province. Zone users, including trappers, are encouraged to practise conservation and sustainable use assessing potential yields and setting quotas.
- As part of its 2002–2004 strategic planning, the Société de la faune et des parcs du Québec has identified a goal to “optimize wildlife development in a sustainable development perspective in order to promote regional economic development.” Quebec trappers will be involved in this collaborative project.
- Local trappers contribute a portion of their revenues to the research and development of humane traps.
- Since the fall of 2001, trappers have collected data on various threatened species in Quebec. The Fédération des trappeurs gestionnaires du Québec has produced a document that trappers can use to report their observations on these species in the forest.
- Provincial biologists value the assistance of trappers in several research projects, such as one on dioxin contamination of mink and one on the chronology of muskrat reproduction.
- Trappers provide coyote control in the recovery plans for white-tailed deer in the lower St. Lawrence and the Gaspé region. They are also involved in the Gaspé caribou recovery plan.
- The provincial trapper education program is administered by trappers in conjunction with the provincial government and the Fur Institute of Canada. Trappers must complete the Trapping and Furbearing Animals Management course.
- The Fédération des trappeurs gestionnaires du Québec publishes information to support wildlife management and public awareness (see p. 12). Their Youth Education project for elementary schools provides students with information on trapping and forest use.



## New Brunswick

**Size of the province:** 73 500 square km

**Trapper organizations:** New Brunswick Trappers and Fur Harvesters Federation, which includes local trapping councils

**Resident furbearers:** Bear, beaver, bobcat, coyote, fisher, marten, mink, muskrat, otter, raccoon, fox, skunk, squirrel, weasel

### Contributions to Wildlife Conservation

- By contributing to New Brunswick's annual Fur Harvest Report and Trapper Questionnaire, trappers provide information on furbearer populations.
- Provincial wildlife biologists depend on trappers to help conduct snow track surveys to determine the distribution and habitat of species such as marten and mink.
- Trappers take part in disease control and monitoring programs, such as the Rabies Point of Infection Control program (see p. 11).
- In 1984–1985, trappers worked with the Canadian Wildlife Service to successfully re-introduce American marten. Twenty-five animals were released and monitored by radio-telemetry and winter tracking, and 19 were later located in the park and surroundings. The revolutionary technique of satellite telemetry is now helping scientists and their trapper assistants track the movement of species at risk on a hemispheric scale.
- In 1986, 20 martens (nine females and 11 males) were live-trapped by local trappers in northern New Brunswick and introduced to Kejimikujik National Park in Nova Scotia.
- Trappers were involved in a study that determined parasite load and distribution in

certain furbearers, such as mange in coyotes, foxes, and wolves.

- Trappers participate in a wildlife council established in 1997 by the New Brunswick Department of Natural Resources and Energy. The council also includes Aboriginals, naturalists, outfitters, anglers, hunters, and representatives from the academic and business communities. The council administers a wildlife trust fund and provides advice and recommendations concerning contentious issues and new initiatives related to wildlife. The wildlife fund, used to support wildlife conservation projects, receives money through surcharges on hunting, trapping, and angling licences, donations, bequests, and the sale of wildlife-conservation specialty products.

- The New Brunswick Trappers and Fur Harvesters Federation has developed a program for upper elementary schools called the Furbearer School Program (see p.12).

- The New Brunswick Trappers and Fur Harvesters Federation assists in delivering the New Brunswick Trapper Education Program, coordinated by the Department of Natural Resources and Energy. Local trappers are committed to using certified humane traps as they become available, and to ensure that new trappers are educated in these traps.



## Nova Scotia

**Size of the province:** 55 000 square km

**Trapper organization:** Trappers Association of Nova Scotia

**Resident furbearers:** Bear, beaver, bobcat, coyote, fisher, mink, muskrat, otter, raccoon, red fox, red squirrel, skunk, weasel



### Contributions to Wildlife Conservation

• Trappers provide wildlife conservation information through a questionnaire on trends in furbearer abundance and changes in habitat, prey, and food sources.

• Live furbearers are needed in many projects. Trappers have live-trapped fishers for a relocation project in Nova Scotia, bobcats for a telemetry study to determine range distributions, and martens for relocation from New Brunswick to Kejimikujik National Park in Nova Scotia.

• Trappers have participated in a DNA testing program for martens (see p. 7).

• The Fur Institute of Canada carries out humane trap research, which involves Nova Scotia trappers field-testing traps for coyotes, bobcats, and raccoons. Trappers also provided animals for Fur Institute of Canada programs in Alberta related to humane trap research.

• Trappers evaluate fisher habitat to ensure that there is a continuous source of all the necessary elements for a healthy fisher population.

• Control services to take care of problem animals are offered by trappers. For example, they can remove predators such as black bears, as well as other problem animals, such as beavers. They are also available to remove feral and alien animals.

• Raccoons pose a risk of rabies transmission to humans when they enter urban areas. Trappers participate in trapping raccoons, ensuring that house pets are not inadvertently captured by dog-proofing the raccoon sets.

• Trappers collect and turn in carcasses to evaluate mercury contamination in aquatic furbearers. This helps the government track levels of mercury in wildlife and provincial waters, with implications for human health.

• Information on otter captures is important to a study on otter habitat use and feeding ecology. Trappers submit this information and also turn in carcasses. Carcasses are used to evaluate stomach contents, leading to a better understanding of the food habits of this species. Tissues are also assessed for mercury levels.

• Trappers provide harvest and biological information for bobcats and coyotes by participating in a mandatory carcass collection for these species. This information contributes to studies of deer and coyote populations and the effects of foresting in different areas in Nova Scotia.

• The Nova Scotia Trappers Association offers a marten conservation workshop and publishes a newsletter promoting conservation management. Trappers support public education by making school visits and participating in exhibits.



## Prince Edward Island

**Size of the province:** 5660 square km

**Trapper organization:** Prince Edward Island Trappers Association

**Resident furbearers:** Beaver, coyote, fox, mink, muskrat, raccoon, red squirrel, skunk, weasel

### Contributions to Wildlife Conservation

• Licenced trappers, hunters, and anglers make a contribution once a year to the Prince Edward Island Wildlife Conservation Fund. This fund was created in 1998 as a cooperative venture to assist nongovernment wildlife conservation groups in P.E.I. with their work. Money is distributed to wildlife conservation projects by the Department of Fisheries, Aquaculture and Environment on the recommendation of an advisory committee after reviewing applications received.

• Trappers offer their assistance in dealing with problem wildlife. Islanders can call a toll-free number, administered by the Fish and Wildlife Division, to report concerns about problem wildlife such as coyotes, raccoons, skunks, or foxes. They can also use this number to report injured wildlife. Local trappers are consulted on how best to handle these problems. When necessary, they carry out further investigations and resolve the problem, sometimes in cooperation with provincial wildlife workers.

• Provincial government staff call on trappers to help monitor wildlife complaints and provide written information and advice to the public on problem wildlife.

• Trappers are closely involved in wildlife habitat and population assessment in the province (see p. 7).

• Harvest surveys of game and furbearers depend on the involvement of trappers. Trappers recommend changes to regulations to maintain healthy populations based on surveys, banding data, and harvest data.

• Trappers provide advice on keeping wildlife in captivity, as well as on the exportation of wildlife from the province and the importation of wildlife into the province.

• Members of the P.E.I. Trappers Association participated in a program to monitor beaver survival and movement on the island following capture, translocation, and release of the animals. This program was undertaken as a result of over-population of beaver in certain areas.

• The P.E.I. Trappers Association contracts to the P.E.I. Ministry of Fisheries, Aquaculture and Environment to deliver the Trapper Education Program. This program includes beginner courses, as well as advanced courses for experienced trappers. Prince Edward Island trappers, working with the Fur Institute of Canada, ensure that training is offered in the use of humane traps.



## Newfoundland & Labrador

**Size of the province:** Labrador, 294 300 square km;  
Newfoundland, 111 400 square km;  
Total, 405 700 square km

**Trapper organization:** Newfoundland and Labrador  
Trappers Association

**Resident furbearers:** Bear, beaver, coyote, fox, lynx,  
marten, mink, muskrat, otter, pine marten, squirrel,  
weasel, wolf



### Contributions to Wildlife Conservation

- Trappers provide information annually to the provincial wildlife department on furbearer abundance and trapper efforts.
- When requested to do so, trappers provide animal carcasses for DNA sampling for lynx and wolf.
- In collaboration with the Fur Institute of Canada and other partners, trappers tested floating mink boxes in an effort to reduce accidental trapping of the endangered Newfoundland pine marten (see p. 9).
- Trappers provide wildlife conservation information on the distribution, habitat, and population health of pine martens, lynx, and beavers.
- Through mandatory carcass collections, trappers provide lynx and coyote harvest information and biological specimens.
- Trappers also voluntarily turn in otter carcasses to provide harvest information and biological specimens. This information helps wildlife biologists track population and habitat trends for this species.
- Trappers are involved in trapping and marking animals for range and habitat studies.
- Beavers often venture into urban areas. Trappers assist in relocating these animals to prevent damage to roadways and sewers.
- Trappers participate in an ongoing education and stewardship program for resource users in central Newfoundland for the endangered Newfoundland pine marten.
- A trappers' newsletter is published regularly to promote conservation, humane trapping, and proper pelt preparation.
- Trappers conduct public information and education programs, including visits to schools and scouting groups, and media interviews.

**We would like to thank all who contributed information about the many projects described in this report. For further information on particular projects, please contact the Fur Institute of Canada at [info@fur.ca](mailto:info@fur.ca), or the organizations listed below.**

#### **Yukon**

Yukon Trappers Association – Tel: 867-667-7091,  
Fax: 867-667-7330;  
Department of Environment – Tel: 867-667-5652,  
Fax: 867-393-6213,  
[www.environmentyukon.gov.yk.ca/main/index.shtm](http://www.environmentyukon.gov.yk.ca/main/index.shtm)

#### **Northwest Territories**

Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic  
Development – Tel: 867-920-6389, Fax: 867- 873-0638,  
[www.gov.nt.ca/RWED/index.html](http://www.gov.nt.ca/RWED/index.html)

#### **Nunavut**

Wildlife Management Board – Tel: 867-979-6962,  
Fax: 867-979-7785, [www.nwmb.com](http://www.nwmb.com);  
Department of Sustainable Development  
Tel: 867-975-5925, Fax: 867-975-5980,  
[www.gov.nu.ca/sd.htm](http://www.gov.nu.ca/sd.htm)

#### **British Columbia**

B.C. Trappers Association – Tel: 250-881-1222,  
Fax: 250-953-6586, [www.bctrappers.bc.ca](http://www.bctrappers.bc.ca);  
Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection  
(Wildlife Branch) – Tel: 250-356-5142,  
Fax: 250-387-0239, [wlapwww.gov.bc.ca/wld](http://wlapwww.gov.bc.ca/wld)

#### **Alberta**

Alberta Trappers Association – Tel: 780-349-6626,  
Fax: 780-349-6634, [www.albertatrappers.com](http://www.albertatrappers.com);  
Department of Sustainable Resource Development  
Tel: 780-944-0313, Fax: 780-427-4407,  
[www3.gov.ab.ca/srd/index.html](http://www3.gov.ab.ca/srd/index.html)

#### **Saskatchewan**

Saskatchewan Trappers Association – Tel: 306-835-2870,  
Fax: 306-835-2832, [www3.sk.sympatico.ca/sktrap](http://www3.sk.sympatico.ca/sktrap);  
Saskatchewan Wildlife Federation [www.swf.sk.ca](http://www.swf.sk.ca);  
Department of Environment and Resource Management –  
Tel: 306-662-5433, Fax: 306-662-5450,  
[www.serm.gov.sk.ca](http://www.serm.gov.sk.ca)

#### **Manitoba**

Manitoba Trappers Association – Tel: 204-345-9107,  
Fax: 204-345-9170; Conservation, Wildlife and Ecosystem  
Protection Branch – Tel: 800-214-6497,  
Fax: 204-945-7775, [www.gov.mb.ca/conservation/wildlife](http://www.gov.mb.ca/conservation/wildlife)

#### **Ontario**

Ontario Fur Managers Federation – Tel: 705-254-3338,  
Fax: 705-254-3297, [www.furmanagers.com](http://www.furmanagers.com);  
Ministry of Natural Resources – Tel: 705-766-2451,  
Fax: 705-766-9677, [www.mnr.gov.on.ca/MNR](http://www.mnr.gov.on.ca/MNR)

#### **Quebec**

Fédération des trappeurs gestionnaires du Québec  
Tel: 418-872-7644, Fax: 418-872-6131, [www.ftgq.qc.ca](http://www.ftgq.qc.ca)  
Ministry of Natural Resources – Tel: 418-627-6370,  
Fax: 418-643-1443, [www.mm.gouv.qc.ca](http://www.mm.gouv.qc.ca);  
Société de la Faune et des Parcs – Tel: 800-561-1616,  
Fax: 418-646-5974, [www.fapaq.gouv.qc.ca/en/index1.htm](http://www.fapaq.gouv.qc.ca/en/index1.htm)

#### **New Brunswick**

New Brunswick Trappers and Fur Harvesters Federation –  
Tel: 506-372-9737, Fax: 506-372-5635,  
[www.nbtrappers.ca](http://www.nbtrappers.ca);  
Department of Natural Resources and Energy  
Tel: 506-453-2440, Fax: 506-453-6699,  
[www.gnb.ca/0078/fw](http://www.gnb.ca/0078/fw)

#### **Nova Scotia**

Trappers Association of Nova Scotia  
Tel: 902-689-2951, Fax: 902-689-2528,  
[www.trappersassociationofnovascotia.ca](http://www.trappersassociationofnovascotia.ca);  
Nova Scotia Department of Natural Resources Wildlife  
Division – Tel: 902-679-6091, Fax: 902-679-6176,  
[www.gov.ns.ca/natr/wildlife](http://www.gov.ns.ca/natr/wildlife)

#### **Prince Edward Island**

PEI Trappers Association – Tel: 902-838-2010,  
Fax: 902-368-5830; PEI Ministry of Fisheries,  
Aquaculture and Environment – Tel: 902-368-4683,  
Fax: 902-368-5830, [www.gov.pe.ca/fae/index.php3](http://www.gov.pe.ca/fae/index.php3)

#### **Newfoundland and Labrador**

Newfoundland and Labrador Trappers Association  
Tel: 709-674-5300, Fax: 709-637-7308;  
Department of Tourism, Culture and Recreation  
Tel: 709-729-2664, Fax: 709-729-6639, [www.gov.nf.ca](http://www.gov.nf.ca)



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