

Instructor Guide

Philosophy

Regulated trapping is a safe, effective, humane, and ecologically sound method of harvesting and managing many species of furbearing animals. Trapping methods are essential tools for many wildlife management activities such as animal damage control, wildlife research, wildlife restoration, and the control of animal disease. Regulated trapping also provides substantial human benefits, including:

1. healthful outdoor activities
2. fosters awareness of the need to maintain wildlife habitat
3. the control of wildlife populations in some situations
4. develops a conservation ethic and a connection to the land
5. food, and clothing for many people

Trappers embrace their historical, cultural, link to the past. Few other activities can compare to the body of experience, knowledge, and wisdom acquired and passed on from generation to generation.

Trappers should behave responsibly, be concerned about animal welfare, and follow approved Best Management Practices at all times. A small percentage of people in North America adhere to an animal rights view that opposes any use of animals. The majority of people think it is acceptable to use animals, including furbearers, and they are concerned about animal welfare. This group includes most trappers.

The purpose of this Trapper Education Program is to help individuals acquire the knowledge, skill, attitude, and judgmental ability to selectively and responsibly trap furbearing animals for the benefit of society in a way that is acceptable to the majority of American citizens.

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Non-Discrimination

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. 2000(d)).

A. Summary. Prohibits discrimination based on race, color, or national origin in any "program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance."

B. References.

- (1) Regulations of the Department of the Interior (43 CFR Part 17)
- (2) U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Guidelines for Compliance with Federal Nondiscrimination Requirements
- (3) U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Federally Assisted Program Implementation Plan

C. Requirements.

- (1) Grantees may not, on the basis of race, color, or national origin, select, locate, or operate project facilities which will serve to exclude or limit opportunity for use or benefits.
- (2) Grantees shall make reasonable efforts to inform the public of opportunities provided by Federal Aid projects and shall inform the public that the projects are subject to Title VI compliance.
- (3) Though employment practices are not in themselves subject to Title VI, Title VI does apply to employment which may affect the delivery of services to beneficiaries of a federally assisted program. For the purpose of Title VI, volunteers or other unpaid persons who provide services to the public are included.

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 795)

A. Summary. Ensures that no qualified handicapped person shall, on the basis of handicap, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.

B. References.

- (1) Regulations of the Department of the Interior (43 CFR Part 17)
- (2) U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Guidelines for Compliance with Federal Nondiscrimination Requirements
- (3) U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Federally Assisted Program Implementation Plan

C. Requirements.

- (1) Grantees may not deny a qualified handicapped person the opportunity to participate in or benefit from Federal Aid project facilities or services afforded to others.
- (2) Grantees may not deny a qualified handicapped person the opportunity to participate as a member of a planning or advisory board.

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(3) The location of facilities shall not have the effect of excluding handicapped persons from, deny them the benefits of, or otherwise subject them to discrimination under any Federal Aid project.

Age Discrimination Act of 1975 (42 U.S.C. 6101)

A. Summary. Prohibits discrimination on the basis of age in programs or activities receiving Federal financial assistance.

B. References.

(1) Regulations of the Department of the Interior (43 CFR Part 17)

(2) U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Guidelines for Compliance with Federal Nondiscrimination Requirements

(3) U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Federally Assisted Program Implementation Plan

C. Requirements. No person in the United States shall, on the basis of age, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance. However, a grantee is permitted to take an action otherwise prohibited if the action reasonably takes into account age as a factor necessary to the normal operation or achievement of any statutory objective of a program or activity.

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (20 U.S.C. 1681, et.seq.)

A. Summary. Prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in any education program receiving Federal financial assistance.

B. References.

(1) Regulations of the Department of the Interior (43 CFR Part 17)

(2) U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Guidelines for Compliance with Federal Nondiscrimination Requirements

C. Requirements. No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program receiving Federal financial assistance. For the purpose of Title IX, hunter education and aquatic education project activities are considered education programs.

Authority

The authority for official trapper education programs lies with state fish and wildlife agencies. State fish and wildlife agencies work together through the

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International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (IAFWA). One outcome of this cooperation is the development of Best Management Practices (BMPs) for Trapping along with national standards and curriculum materials that can be used to teach trappers about BMPs.

State agencies have the authority to manage furbearers, regulate trapping, license trappers, establish voluntary or mandatory trapper education programs, certify instructors, train students, and modify trapper education materials.

Some state Trapper Education Programs receive funds from the Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Program, which is administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Division of Federal Aid. Funding for the Development of IAFWA Trapper Education materials was provided by a Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration National Multi-State Grant Agreement.

Funding

Trapper education is funded through the state fish and wildlife agency's hunter education program using federal dollars (Wildlife Restoration funds), through their own state funds (license fees and fines) and/or in cooperation with partners such as the state trapper associations. In some cases, it is the partner that funds trapper education training programs on behalf of the state agency.

State fish and wildlife agencies recently received a boost in hunter education funding entitled "Section 10 Funds" that can only be used to fund added efforts in hunter education. Some states are choosing to set aside some of these funds to bolster trapper education and/or other advanced hunter education training programs.

Whatever states choose to use to fund training programs, it takes a concerted effort by all of the partners to organize and implement an effective trapper education program. Programs must be promoted to attract more people to the training. Funding also should be used to enlighten the general public on the benefits of trapping and wildlife management to the natural resources of the state and to society as a whole.

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Cycle of Success in Sport Fish & Wildlife Restoration Programs



Wildlife Restoration: Each state's apportionment is determined by a formula which considers the total area of the state and the number of licensed hunters in the state. The Program is a cost-reimbursement program, where the state covers the full amount of the approved project then applies for reimbursement through Federal Aid for up to 75 percent of the project expenses. The state must provide at least 25 percent of the project costs from a non-federal source.

Sport Fish Restoration: Each state's share is based 60 percent on its licensed anglers and 40 percent on its land and water area. No state may receive more than 5 percent nor less than 1 percent of each year's total apportionment. Up to 75 percent of the cost of every Sport Fish Restoration project is borne by federal excise tax funds and 25 percent by matching state funds, mainly derived from the sale of state licenses. Each state selects, plans, and performs the management work, which is monitored by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Taxable Items

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A Federal excise tax or import duty placed on the following items funds the Sport Fish and Wildlife Restoration Programs:

- fishing rods, reels, creels, lures, flies and artificial baits
- fishing accessories and equipment
- sonar devices for locating fish
- electric outboard boat motors
- motorboat and small engine fuels
- import duties on sport fishing equipment, pleasure boats and yachts
- sporting arms, handguns, ammunition and archery equipment

Course Modifications

The IAFWA trapper education manual and tests are designed so that agency personnel can modify the materials as needed. IAFWA recognizes that each state/province/territory is unique concerning the species and numbers of furbearers present, regulations, and traditions. Agencies are encouraged to modify the IAFWA materials in ways that maintain the integrity of the national content standards while providing specific content that will benefit furbearer management, trapper education students, and the public within their jurisdiction.

Manual Design Features:

- Chapters can be rearranged to change the sequence of instruction
- New chapters can be inserted
- Content can be added, changed, or in some cases deleted

Agencies that do not want to modify the manual can provide supplemental materials for students, and tailored lesson plans for instructors.

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Organizations Related to Trapper Education

IAFWA

The International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies was founded in 1902 as an organization of public agencies charged with the protection and management of North America's fish and wildlife resources.

The Association has been a key organization in promoting sound resource management and strengthening federal, state, and private cooperation in protecting and managing fish and wildlife and their habitats in the public interest.

The Association's governmental members include the fish and wildlife agencies of the states, provinces, and federal governments of the U.S. and Canada. All 50 states are members.

State Fish and Wildlife Agencies

All 50 state fish and wildlife agencies support the development of BMPs for trapping, as well as the development of trapper education standards and curriculum materials.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service provided funding and personnel to assist with the development of the IAFWA Trapper Education Program. Additionally, the Service administers the Wildlife Restoration Program, which provides money for hunter and trapper education, wildlife research, management, and public land acquisition. Wildlife Restoration funds are derived from excise taxes on firearms, ammunition, and archery equipment.

IHEA

The International Hunter Education Association is related to the IAFWA. IHEA advances the cause of safe, responsible hunting and works to ensure that all North American hunter education programs meet standards. Voting members include all state and provincial hunter education coordinators. Many coordinators also oversee or promote state and provincial trapper education programs. Additional members include 70,000 hunter education instructors and representatives of hunter education programs from foreign countries including

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Mexico, South Africa, and New Zealand. IHEA also promotes recruitment and retention programs for hunters, trappers, and target shooters.

NTA

The National Trapper's Association works on many trapping issues and promotes conservation, sound legislation, and education. NTA's preamble follows:

WE, the Trappers of North America, prompted by a feeling of profound respect and gratitude toward the many valiant Fur Trappers who have gone before us, whose courageous deeds and exploits will forever embellish the pages of our Nations' early history, and being duly grateful for the rich legacy of wildlife bequeathed by our predecessors, do associate ourselves for the following purposes: To promote sound conservation, legislation and administrative procedures; To save and faithfully defend from waste the natural resources of the United States; To promote sound environmental education programs; and To promote a continued annual fur harvest using the best tools presently available for that purpose.

FTA

The Fur Taker's of America promote trapper education in a number of ways including "The Fur Taker" magazine and their "Trapper's College."

FTA uses the Chapter/Affiliate concept as a means of local grassroots organization. Wherever possible, we like to build chapter/affiliates from the local grassroots level. FTA is affiliated with the United States Sportsmen's Alliance (USSA), International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, National Trapper's Association, International Trapper's Federation, Fur Institute of Canada, and they are involved with the BMP Committee.

State Trapper's Associations

Most states have active trapping associations. State trapping associations often work closely with the state wildlife agency to assist with the trapper education program.

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Trapper Education Students

Serving the needs of trapper education students is our most important goal. We must give them the fundamental knowledge, skills, and attitudes to become responsible trappers who will continue to support conservations programs and provide benefits for society.

People enroll in trapper education courses for various reasons. The following kinds of people are likely to take courses

- People interested in obtaining trapping licenses or permits
- Nuisance animal trappers
- Students in high school or college natural resources programs
- Fish and wildlife agency employees

Evaluation forms are included with the IAFWA Trapper Education Program materials. We suggest that all agencies use evaluations to help meet student needs, make program adjustments, improve trapper behavior, and measure success at training and recruitment.

Generally, you can expect trapper education students to be older than hunter education students. Most come from rural areas, and grow up in families that enjoy many outdoor activities such as hunting, fishing, camping, and boating. Many students are mentored by family or friends. During pilot courses we verified earlier instructor observations that many "students" are adults with some trapping experience who want to learn more.

Instructors should expect to have courses with low turnouts. It is important to offer training, even if enrollment is as low as one or two students per year.

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Trapper Education Delivery Systems

Agencies are encouraged to develop multiple delivery systems for trapper education programs. Given the amount of information and number of skills that need to be covered, delivery systems must be efficient to prevent time and distance from becoming barriers to participation. We also recognize that many students who want to obtain trapping permits have a family member or a friend as a mentor.

Online training programs and other home-study methods can be used to great advantage for the delivery of factual knowledge, and provide the foundation for efficient skills training. Home-study programs, including online courses, should be followed by skills training and/or testing sessions

Traditional courses should be scheduled for two sessions if possible, since some students may need to travel a long distance. In this case, instructors are encouraged to make use of “homework” assignments to deliver factual knowledge, while focusing more class time on skill development.

In the past, some trapper education instructors have been disappointed with low turnouts for their courses. Low numbers of students are to be expected. In this case, instructors will probably experience more satisfactory results by using “authentic assessment” techniques using forms that let instructors test as they go. From an educational perspective, low numbers of students are actually highly desirable for a skills-based course of instruction such as trapper education.

Proficiency testing is another technique that some states may want to try. Knowing that many students are interested in trapping because they already have a mentor, it stands to reason that they may already have a considerable number of skills that they have learned at home. Students can be given materials to study at home, assignments to complete, and then be tested using authentic assessment rubrics.

Trapper Education Testing

Traditionally, trapper education courses have followed a common educational method. A course manual is designed, the material is taught using various methods, and then a written test is administered that covers a somewhat random selection of the material in the manual.

The new IAFWA trapper education course is designed to allow for more than one type of testing. First content standards, and student performance objectives were developed to cover the knowledge, skills, and attitudes deemed to be most important by a body of expert trappers, biologists, and educators. If a written test

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is administered, it needs to be based on the student performance objectives. While traditional test questions may be available from IAFWA, it should be acknowledged that it is difficult to develop a valid, reliable, written test that is relevant to all states and all students.

Test validity refers to the degree to which the test actually measures what it claims to measure. Test validity is also the extent to which inferences, conclusions, and decisions made on the basis of test scores are appropriate and meaningful.

Test reliability refers to the degree to which a test is consistent and stable in measuring what it is intended to measure. Most simply put, a test is reliable if it is consistent within itself and across time.

IAFWA is providing tests that use “authentic assessment” techniques to measure real world knowledge, skills, and attitudes. While states can modify the projects and test forms that are used in the authentic assessment model, the tests can generally be used “as is” and still be relevant for each state and each student.

Instructors are also encouraged to think about the ultimate measure of the two kinds of tests. Some students are tuned into written tests. They may do well on paper, but not in the field. Conversely, a student who is good with his or her hands and verbal skills may do great in the field, but have problems with a written test. See the authentic assessment (skills) test forms for more details and understanding.

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Youth Protection

Many states have policies and procedures that provide guidelines for protecting youth during training programs. When followed, these policies and procedures can also help protect instructors from false charges of child abuse or improper behavior.

Parents should be invited to attend the class with their children, and openly welcomed. Avoid conducting classes at your home unless parents are present and the state approves. If possible, have one or more adult instructors assist you with the course.

The following policy has been in place with the International Hunter Education Association since 1996. It is recommended that states adopt a similar policy for trapper education programs.

IHEA Youth Protection Policy

The IHEA recognizes the societal problem of child abuse as an unacceptable behavior. The association wishes to clearly convey the Hunter and Trapper Education Programs are family oriented with safe learning environments that will not tolerate abuse to children.

The IHEA strongly recommends that each jurisdiction adopt the following four point strategy:

- Educate volunteer hunter or trapper education instructors to aid in the detection and prevention of child abuse.
- Establish volunteer instructor-selection procedures to prevent offenders from entering the IHEA and volunteer instructor ranks.
- Establish policies that create barriers to child abuse within the program.
- Swift removal and reporting of alleged offenders.

Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment takes many forms. It does not require physical contact, or even overt statements. Off-color jokes, comments, or other actions can offend some people.

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IHEA Sexual Harassment Policy

IHEA recognizes the societal problem of sexual harassment. The IHEA wishes to clearly convey that sexual harassment will not be tolerated in any form. The IHEA recommends jurisdictions adopt policies to safe-guard hunter and trapper education program participants from any and all forms of sexual harassment.

Discrimination

Under federal law, discrimination is prohibited on the basis of race, color, age, sex, national origin or handicap. State agencies will provide students with contact information for reporting complaints alleging discrimination.

Handicaps can include blindness, deafness, confinement to wheelchairs, and other conditions. You may also need to be prepared to assist people who speak foreign languages or those who have reading problems or learning disabilities. Do not hesitate to ask your state coordinator for advice or assistance to help people who want to take the trapper education course.

Record Keeping

Record keeping and reporting are important responsibilities for trapper education instructors. When you teach a class, make sure you complete and submit reports promptly and accurately. Students may need a record of their certification years after their course. If someone complains about any aspect of your course, the records may be important to help resolve it. State agencies are required to submit many types of reports based on classes they sponsor. Many of these reports are used to evaluate programs and services, allocate budgets, and set laws. It is a good idea to keep copies of all reports you submit to the state.

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