

TRAPPER EDUCATION NEWSLETTER MARCH 2008 EDITION

Greetings. For the most part the winter season is over and trappers are winding down. Now is a great time to start making some notes. What supplies will you require? If you need snare materials, get them now or order them. If you wait until the late summer or fall the stores may not have what you need or you will forget what you wanted. What fur sign and trends did you notice, how were the prey numbers? You will want this information for your records and they are mandatory for a management plan.

FUR SALES

All in all, not bad the NAFA had their March sale and Fur Harvesters February sale was in Seattle. Go to their website for the latest. Some of the prices paid, I have summarized below:

Sable (Pine Marten) average \$100US +
Beaver - \$25
Coyote - \$34
Fox -\$23
Muskrat -\$3.50
Ermine (weasel) - \$5.50
Squirrel -\$1.60

TRAPPER EDUCATION

We have finished the season for the most part. Some of the numbers:

Courses – 12
Students – 194
Ages -50+=10%
31-50=38%
19-30=27%
18 and under= 29%
Female = 20%

New Courses: One planned for Lloyd minister 14-19th. April 2008

Two at the Trappers College (Aug and Sept) see details on our website
www.albertatrappers.com

New fee schedule is applicable now (approx \$350 adults, \$250 students)

Min. 12 to make a course

We are attempting to come close to cost recovery for these courses. Our funding is getting tighter every year but we still feel that this is a good value for 28 hours of instruction, the manual and the services of two instructors.

We are almost out of study guides for those wishing to challenge the test. We will be using the trapper's manual instead of the study guide as there are no funds to reprint the study guide.

We are working with SRD to update the challenge examination to make it more meaningful and hopefully only resident trappers will be able to challenge the examination. Registered trappers would have to take a course. This is in the works, probably would not come into effect for a year or so and is subject to the approval of SRD. I will keep you posted.

Our present course allows a student to miss one session and still get the certificate. Starting this season if the student misses a session he will be given an examination for self study on the session he missed.

I have some interest in the trappers college courses and I suspect that we will have to turn away some of the prospective students later. If you want these courses let me know via e mail as I keep a log of the name and date you asked for the course. Those who let me know early, get first crack at the course. I have to say it; the course at the Trappers College will be heads and shoulders above our standard course due to the intensive full time immersion in trapping. Consider it.

We will also be running a biologist workshop in May at the college. This program is designed to introduce biologists to the trapper. Biologists primarily from Alberta will be attending; however we should have representatives from BC, NWT and the Yukon. Instructors will be trappers, U of A, SRD and University of New Mexico. Should be interesting.

PUBLIC EDUCATION

We managed two trade shows (Edmonton and Barrhead) with about 2,600 attendees. We did 10 presentations to the University, Forest Wardens and Foresters to 380 participants. We did one snare making workshop and one survival workshop.

The largest expenditure of time and funds was the school program. We accomplished 63 presentations to 1500 students. My thanks to Ross Hinter, the main speaker. Since we started this program we have presented to 246 schools and over 7,000 students. Funding was from SRD, the ACA and this year APOS.

In Alberta, everyone is busy and I found this out this year. I am winding down the program due to a lack of instructors and long term funding. We will re think the program and I have some ideas in the form of a school kit and accompanying DVD that might work. I will again, keep you posted.

TV SHOW

I note there is a special on National Geographic channel tonight on Moose and ticks. It is entitled "Titans of the North" and airs 8PM for those with this channel.

MORE TRAPPING

About all that is coming up are spring beaver and rats. As soon as the water is open, get the traps in before they start fighting. The 2 year olds will be moving then as the mother

is getting ready to give birth. They are extremely territorial and a castor mound set work well. Make your own lure (ground castor, oil and perhaps a touch of anise). Simplest set is along the shore, set the trap and dip a stick into the lure bottle and prop it up. Fence the area lightly and ensure there is a good anchor for the 330 and enough wire that the beaver, when caught, can make it to the water. You can get elaborate by making a mud mound for the scent and dipping the 330 in water to avoid scent. You will know when you have a trap shy beaver in a hurry. The beaver will shove sticks into the trap to show you his disdain. You have a problem then, and that is when you might want to try a foothold hidden on a slide wire and the 330. You will know what I mean when it happens to you.

The best rat trap is a funnel set. Use it in culverts or anyplace you have a narrow spot and the rats travel it. If you find the rat house, stick it in the entrance and check this trap daily as multiple catches are the rule here. A 120 with bait (carrot, or parsnip) will also work. Be careful with late spring beavering in the bush as the bears might want to partner up with you. I won't go into the bush without a rifle anytime but that is just my personal choice. Spray them with a condiment such as pepper spray if you want and announce your presence with tinkling bells if that is your method, I don't care. You will almost never have a problem with a bear, but they are individuals with different temperaments and tolerances. They are also a nose attached to a gut and will eat almost anything to survive. In my view bold bears should be removed, if not you are allowing this trait to be passed on which is not smart. Anyways, take care out there and enjoy a good spring season.

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