

Vermont Furbearer Management Newsletter



 VERMONT
AGENCY OF NATURAL RESOURCES

The MISSION of the Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department is the conservation of fish, wildlife, and plants and their habitats for the people of Vermont.

Editors: [Christopher Bernier](#)
[Mary Beth Adler](#)

Designer: [Melissa Currier](#)

802-885-8833

www.vtfishandwildlife.com

Inside this issue:

Paying it Forward	2-3
Bobcat Population Study	3
Estimating the Source and Distribution of American Martens in Vermont	4
<i>Urocyon cinereoargenteus</i> : The Ashen-Silver Dog	5
Trapping in Today's World – A View from the Central Office	6
USDA WS Enhanced Rabies Surveillance Initiative	7
Scat is Gross but Cool!	8
The Good, The Bad, and the Slimy	9
Canine Distemper	9
Think Before You Post	10
Tips for Taking Trapping Photos	11

Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department

As I write this, the 2015/16 trapping season has come to a close and most folks have shifted their attention to new tasks and their off-season activities. Reflecting on the year and the many conversations that have taken place throughout, I am reminded of the sincere concern and appreciation trappers have for the furbearers they pursue not to mention the incredible depth of knowledge they possess regarding these species. In fact, of all the people I interact with, it's fair to say that trappers routinely offer the most insightful and relevant info regarding these animals. When I need to know what's going on with lynx in Lewis or beaver in Bolton, for example, I know the local trapper is a great place to start. That is precisely why safeguarding this heritage and maintaining our partnership with you is so critically important to the long-term conservation of furbearers in Vermont.



Chris Bernier, Furbearer Management Project Leader

So how is it, then, that we find ourselves under attack? Doesn't everyone recognize the value of having people in our communities whose lives are inextricably entwined with these animals? Who possesses the skills, tools, and knowledge to safely and humanely harvest these abundant local organic natural resources? Who, at no cost to the community, trap and utilize a beaver in December which could very well otherwise be killed and wasted as a nuisance animal in July? Who help to keep these populations healthy and within their ecological and social carrying capacities? Sadly, the answer is no – not everyone shares these values or even recognizes these as legitimate benefits of regulated trapping.

What I find most perplexing though, is how the vast common ground we all share, trappers and anti-trappers alike, can be completely lost in the polarization of our debates. So closely held and entrenched are everyone's ideals that we often lose sight of the fact that there is considerable work to be done that we all agree on and would benefit from. Regardless of whether you drive a Prius™ or a pickup truck, or wear a tie or a t-shirt, isn't it fair to say we're all animal welfare advocates? Isn't it fair to say we all share the desire to leave our successors with as bountiful and as diverse a wildlife community as possible? Isn't it fair to say the time we all spend afield only strengthens our will to preserve what we have?

Going forward, I ask that we all take a moment to not only congratulate ourselves on our many successes to date, but to identify those actions we can take tomorrow for getting us to where we ultimately need to be. Look for the common ground and when you find it, act on it. Throughout this newsletter you'll find hints of the many contributions trappers have made to furbearer management in Vermont over the past year. So much so, in fact, that no space remained in this newsletter for season summary data! Despite not being included here, please know these data are available to anyone upon request – just give me a call. As always, I'll look forward to the conversations.

Paying It Forward

In a popular movie titled “Pay it Forward”, a young boy is given a unique assignment by his Social Studies teacher: think of something to change the world and put it into action. The boy fulfills this assignment by pursuing the idea of paying a favor forward rather than back. He repays good deeds by doing good deeds to three new people rather than paying back the person that did a good deed for him. The young boy’s efforts affect change in an ever widening circle of people — both known and unknown to him.

This is the second in a series of articles recognizing folks that are “paying it forward”. These are everyday people who are working, in most cases, quietly behind the scenes to ensure the ongoing heritage of hunting, trapping, and fishing, as well as the health of all wildlife species and the ecosystems they inhabit. At some point in their lives, someone bestowed on them a good deed by encouraging them to pursue these traditions in a thoughtful, ethical manner. The subjects of our articles are in turn “putting it into action” to change the world for present and future generations.

Jeff Houde has only been trapping for about five years but he grew up hunting, spending a lot of time in the woods and watching his older brothers trap predators on the family farm in Vermont. After a term in the Marine Corps, he returned home and realized he missed the camaraderie of the service and wanted to give something back to the community. In a chance encounter, a Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department Hunter Education Specialist introduced him to Linwood Smith and the idea of hunter education. It all clicked for him.

Jeff has been a Hunter Education instructor since 2007 with a particular interest in making it

enjoyable and hands-on for kids. He always had an interest in trapping but never pursued it until one day when Vermont State Game Warden Dave Gregory stopped by a class and talked about trapping. Jeff was hooked. Warden Gregory encouraged him to take the Trapper Education class and then mentored him as he worked his own trapline. Becoming a trapper ed instructor seemed the natural next step. Jeff’s love for the outdoors and his desire to keep young and old participating in outdoor pursuits, such as hunting and trapping, are his way of paying it forward.

“We average about 900 students in our classes here (Linwood Smith’s Archery Shop & Range)”, Jeff told us. “They are all ages, abilities, and interests and most of them come to us by word of mouth. The hands-on approach we take, whether for trapper ed or hunter ed, is appreciated by kids and adults. I don’t want folks walking away thinking, ‘That was a long day!’”

The number of students equates to a lot of Saturdays and Sundays given up for others. The effort is well worth it though in Jeff’s mind. Pat Jarvis and Stephanie Grant were two of Jeff’s students. Neither could say enough about how much they appreciated Jeff’s easy-going manner of instructing them in the class and the encouragement they received to actually do some trapping once they completed the class. “The amount of equipment and the expense can seem overwhelming, especially for young folks wanting to trap,” explained Pat. “Jeff showed us how to keep it affordable and fun. We have been successful because of his willingness to mentor us and encourage us.”



Jeff Houde (left) with grandchildren Will (back center), Cindy (right), and Faith (front center).

Stephanie could hardly contain her excitement as she told about catching her first coyote. “Jeff came and helped us put out our first sets. He showed me how to do it, and it worked!” Jeff is known to spend a good amount of time mentoring new trappers as well as youth and novice hunters.

As more and more children and adults are distracted by today’s technology and busy lives, participation in these traditional outdoor pursuits is declining. It is a challenge that Jeff, Linwood Smith, and the other instructors are up to. As a group, they are committed to recruiting new participants and tailoring their instruction to keep them interested. They go the extra mile doing things like setting out trail cameras before a class so students can see what animals will come to the bait or learning taxidermy so there can be mounts in

Paying It Forward *(continued from page 2)*

the classroom for students to study. But the key component seems to be mentoring. They *tell* their students how to do it, *show* them how to do it, *watch* them practice it, and then are willing to *go with them* on the trapline or during youth hunting weekends as the students try it on their own.

Jeff is aware of the growing sentiments against trapping, “We don’t spend a lot of time talking about the “anti” groups in our classes, but we do discuss how to respond in a positive, sensitive way to those who don’t know a lot about trapping. We definitely need to be more thoughtful and careful about posting on Facebook and talking to non-trappers.”

Jeff’s grandchildren are following wholeheartedly in the hunting and trapping heritage. Will, 16, is excited about fisher trapping this coming December after catching his first one this past season. Cindy, 15, has taken a liking to the craft of taxidermy and is currently working on her first bobcat. And Faith, 11, got her first turkey this past spring. “It (the shotgun) kicked a bit, but I was OK!” she explained with a shy smile. All three help with the hunter and trapper ed classes. “It makes the kids feel more at ease when they see us there helping out and being right alongside of them,” offered Will.

After our visit in the classroom, we hiked out to where Jeff had set up

several game cameras aimed at baited dirt cubbies. Along the way, we were thrilled to cross a large male fisher track on the trail. “These cameras are set up for the trapper ed class coming up this weekend,” he explained. As we scrolled through the photos, we saw the large male fisher and a female fisher too, along with a red fox, several turkeys, and a beautiful coyote. “This is what helps make it fun and something the students are more apt to stick with. I hope it helps to keep more people interested in trapping, enough so they pass it along to the next generation.”

Bobcat Population Study Update

Rory P. Carroll, a PhD student at UNH, and principal investigators Marian K. Litvaitis and John A. Litvaitis, are using genetic information to assess the dispersal patterns of bobcat populations in the New England/ Quebec region. Thanks to the furbearer harvest in Vermont, they have been able to collect nearly 300 individual tissue samples from the last three harvest seasons. The DNA from each sample is used to assess movement patterns across the landscape, and to determine what features of the landscape help or hinder bobcat movement. Results from this study indicate that bobcats are fairly well connected throughout the region, but interstates, especially I-89 in Vermont, are significant barriers to dispersal. Few bobcats are willing



Photo Credit: US Fish & Wildlife Service

and able to successfully cross the interstate, which may have negative long-term consequences for the population.

In addition to the genetic work, the team is also sampling bobcats harvested in Vermont to evaluate the dietary patterns and stress levels of this population. Both of these things may change in response to levels of urban development on the landscape, and both are detectable

in hair collected from harvested bobcats. Many of the bobcat’s prey species have different isotope ratios, and the isotope ratios in a bobcat’s tissues change depending on what prey species it eats. By analyzing the hair samples, they can determine what a bobcat has been feasting on in recent weeks. Similar to humans, high stress levels can hurt a bobcat’s health, including their dispersal and reproductive ability. A stressed-out bobcat produces distinct hormones, which also get incorporated into its hair. Measuring hormone levels in bobcat hair will shed light on where and why bobcats experience high stress and how efforts to minimize human impacts on wildlife populations can have the greatest effect.

—Rory Carroll, PhD student

Estimating the Source and Distribution of American Martens in Vermont

Throughout the 20th century, American martens were largely absent from Vermont's forests. In an attempt to restore the population, individuals from Maine and New York were reintroduced to the southern Green Mountain National Forest in the early 1990s. Initial monitoring returned promising results; however, by 1995 surveys were unable to detect martens and the reintroduction was declared unsuccessful. More recently, occasional detections in the southern Green Mountain National Forest and the Northeastern Highlands indicate that two populations have become established in the state. It is unclear from past monitoring data whether these populations are a result of the reintroduction or dispersal from neighboring populations. With the help of professors Bill Kilpatrick, Jed Murdoch, and Terri Donovan at UVM, my research goals are to determine the source of these two populations and their distribution in the state. The results of this research will help state biologists understand the viability of these populations and develop management plans to promote their persistence.

The source of these populations will be estimated by examining genetic markers in martens from southern Vermont and northeastern Vermont, and comparing them to the genetic markers of three populations in northern New Hampshire, northern Maine, and the Adirondacks of New York. Likely source populations (those populations of martens from where VT martens may have originated) are identified by shared genetic markers between a potential source and the



*Photo Credit:
US Fish &
Wildlife Service*

Vermont population. The southern Vermont population is suspected to be a remnant of the reintroduction; thus, we expect genetic markers to be shared between the southern Vermont population and the population in northern Maine — the primary source of reintroduced individuals. Additionally, we think that the population in northeastern Vermont was derived from individuals dispersing from New Hampshire. Accordingly, we anticipate shared genetic markers between the northeastern Vermont population and the northern New Hampshire population.

Preliminary results point to a successful reintroduction in the southern Green Mountain National Forest. The southern Vermont population has significant genetic difference with respect to the northern New Hampshire population. In addition, the population in southern Vermont lacks genetic diversity and shows signs of rapid expansion within the area, both characteristic of a reintroduced population. Results from

the northeastern Vermont population are not as conclusive. A genetic marker unique to the northeastern Vermont martens has not yet been identified to link it to another population within our study area.

Developing a model of the distribution of American martens in Vermont is being conducted using a new method of gathering expert opinion. Experts are currently being identified and asked to estimate the probability of American marten occupying a suite of sites in the Northeast. To date, our group of experts includes trappers, biologists, refuge managers, and community members throughout the Northeast. These expert opinions will be used to develop the occupancy model that will estimate the distribution of American marten in Vermont and evaluate how marten genetics may flow across the state.

— *Cody Aylward*
UVM Graduate Student

Urocyon cinereoargenteus: The Ashen-Silver Dog

Urocyon cinereoargenteus, the gray fox, is a relatively recent migrant to Vermont and the wider Northeast region. It most likely expanded its range to this area from the southeastern states after the Medieval Climate Anomaly, a time of warm climate conditions in the North Atlantic region during about 950 A.D. to 1250 A.D. This warming period resulted in the northern expansion of deciduous forest, the gray fox's primary habitat. Fossils of gray fox dating back to 400-1100 years ago have been found on Martha's Vineyard in Massachusetts and fossils found in southern Connecticut date back to 200-250 years ago.

Pilgrims in Massachusetts in 1635, however, observed the gray fox to be rare. In 1853, Zaddock Thompson wrote in his record, Natural History of Vermont, "*The Gray Fox is said to have been taken in this state, but since I have seen no Vermont specimen, it is here omitted.*" These observations were made during what is known as the Little Ice Age, a period of cooling between 1500 and 1850. The gray fox's coat is about one inch shorter than that of its red cousin so thought to be less tolerant of cold. The latter portion of that period was a time of deforestation in Vermont due to human colonization. These factors combined to push Péquawus, as it was known by the Abenaki, further south once again.

As farms were abandoned for better land to the west and grew up into forest again, the gray fox moved northward once more and presently is found throughout the woodlands of Vermont. During this same period, the native red fox that inhabited the boreal regions of North America also experienced a shift in its range due to climate changes and human alterations

of the landscape. While the red fox has adapted and broadened its range to include diverse habitats, the gray fox remains strongly associated with deciduous woodlands. Gray fox and red fox are now considered widely sympatric throughout Vermont and the Northeast.

The Latin name for this canid species aptly describes its appearance (*Cinereo* means ashen, *argenteus* meaning silver). Somewhat smaller but more robust than the red fox, the gray fox gets its salt-and-pepper coloring from the guard hairs being banded with white, gray, and black. It is a solitary, omnivorous hunter that frequently preys on rabbits, rodents, birds, crickets, and grasshoppers and will forage for apples, grapes, berries, and corn. It also feeds on fresh carrion. Seldom seen during daylight, gray foxes prefer densely forested areas for foraging, denning, and raising young.

Male gray foxes seek out mates in late January through March. They stay with the females until the kits (four on average born in late March or April) are independent. The females stay with the kits in the den and rely on the males to forage for them. The pups are weaned at about three weeks and stay with the parents until about seven months of age while learning to hunt and forage for themselves. Though not well understood, it is suggested that an adult male and female and their offspring comprise the basic social unit. These families travel independently of one another in home ranges that vary from 180 to 1,600 acres.

The main cause of mortality among gray foxes is infectious diseases. Rabies, canine distemper, tularemia,



and leptospirosis all affect the gray fox. Canine distemper viruses are almost always fatal in gray fox and can markedly reduce local populations. Coyotes, bobcats, and golden eagles can be a threat to the gray, but the "flying fox" can readily evade these predators using its unique ability to climb trees. Leg muscles adapted to "hug" and "shimmy" up tree trunks aided by strong, hooked retractable claws provide a means of escape. Amazingly, it can climb branchless, vertical trunks to heights of 60 feet! It descends primarily by jumping from branch to branch or by descending slowly backwards as a domestic cat would do. Among canids, this ability is shared only with the Asian raccoon dog.

Though gradually increasing in numbers throughout Vermont, it is still a rare treat to see this shy, elusive creature as it prowls the forests. In the words of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle:

*But may we meet the old grey fox
The Same old fox,
The game old fox:
May we meet the old grey fox
Before the year is done.*

From "The Old Grey Fox"

Trapping in Today's World – A View from the Central Office

Good Communication is Key

In recent years, Chris Bernier, Vermont's furbearer biologist, along with others in the Fish & Wildlife Department, has been called upon to respond to many questions or concerns we have received from the non-trapping public related to furbearer management. This is not a new phenomenon in Vermont, but it is certainly on the increase.

Responding to these many inquiries takes time, patience, and a high regard for the public and their concerns, but it is essential to the future of furbearer management.

Though Chris is doing a great job juggling this demand among the many others that come with this complex position, we can all play a role in promoting rational, science-based furbearer management. We must, however, remain respectful and consistently follow some important guidelines when communicating with anyone who might disagree with us.



Kim Royar (far right) getting the message out.

The tips below offer some excellent guidance regarding how to address those people who might be unfamiliar with the cultural and resource values associated with trapping and furbearer management. They were based on social research from the Ohio Division of Wildlife in cooperation with the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies and the Ohio State Trappers Association.

COMMUNICATION TIPS

1. Be professional and speak (or write) in a conversational tone, even if you disagree on the topic.

2. Be respectful and acknowledge that there are people who have other points of view.
3. **Show that you care about wildlife and put the conservation of the resource first.**

KEY MESSAGES

1. Regulated trapping does not cause wildlife to become threatened or endangered.
2. Trapping is managed through science-based regulations that are strictly enforced by Vermont Fish & Wildlife game wardens.
3. The Fish & Wildlife Department continually reviews and develops regulations, education programs, and capture methods that maintain high standards of animal welfare.
4. Regulated trapping provides many benefits for people, other species, and the habitat.

In Vermont, trapping is part of the cultural heritage, but it is also an essential tool for managing furbearer populations and keeping them in balance with available habitats and cultural expectations. For trapping to persist and thrive in Vermont, we will all need to work to be good communicators with the general public. Your help will make the difference.

—*Kimberly Royar, Special Assistant to FW Commissioner, VT Fish & Wildlife Department*

THANK YOU, THANK YOU

Trappers, hunters, game wardens, biologists, seasonal staff, education specialists, support staff, and volunteers for your help in the management and conservation of Vermont's furbearers



USDA Wildlife Services Enhanced Rabies Surveillance Initiative

The raccoon strain of rabies first entered Vermont in 1992 and quickly spread into all 14 counties of the state. By 1996, raccoon rabies was approximately 73 km (45.5 miles) south of the U.S.-Canadian border. This prompted an intensive oral rabies vaccination program (ORV) implemented by USDA Wildlife Services (WS) beginning in 1997 to prevent the northward spread of rabies into Canada.

Since 2012, the Vermont WS team has been involved in field trials to test the effectiveness of a vaccine known by its tradename, ONRAB®. This new vaccine is showing great potential in Canada and other US states in controlling the spread of the raccoon strain of rabies. These results have led to the

implementation of an enhanced rabies surveillance initiative (ERS) in 2016. The ERS will help monitor the distribution of rabies in Vermont and help the program make management decisions.

The objective of this initiative is to increase our chances of finding rabid animals beyond current levels of surveillance. Raccoons, skunks, foxes, and coyotes are of priority interest to the WS team and cooperators involved in ORV. These carnivores are common rabies vectors throughout the US and the animals most frequently collected and submitted to WS to enhance rabies surveillance. WS is looking to collect non-exposure specimens only, such as: 1) strange-acting animals that have been euthanized; 2) animals that



were found dead but not road kills; 3) targeted collection of surveillance samples from specified rabies risk areas; and 4) nuisance or otherwise healthy animals trapped and euthanized. You can help by contacting WS at 1-802-223-8697 or 1-800-4RABIES if you come across an animal that fits the criteria above.

—Fred Pogmore, USDA Wildlife Services

FUN FACTS

- The word **shenanigan** (a deceitful trick, or mischief) is considered to be derived from the Irish expression *sionnachuighim*, meaning “I play the fox.”
- “The fox can see the earth’s magnetic field as a ‘ring of shadow’ on its eyes that darkens as it heads towards magnetic north. When the shadow and the sound the prey is making line up, it’s time to pounce.” — Information taken from news scientist.com
- The muskrat pelt was used by Native Americans as a diaper — MontanaTrappers.org
- Castoreum is a chemical found in the castor sacks of a beaver. It is an FDA approved natural flavoring used in vanilla.
- Raccoons can remember solutions for particular tasks for up to three years.

WORD POWER

SYMPATRIC

sim-'pa-trik

- 1 : occurring in the same area
- 2 : occupying the same geographical range without loss of identity from interbreeding <*sympatric species*>; also: occurring between populations that are not geographically separated <*sympatric speciation*>

FURBEARER MANAGEMENT PROJECT STAFF

Chris Bernier

Furbearer Program Leader
Chris.Bernier@vermont.gov

Mary Beth Adler

Furbearer Technician
MaryBeth.Adler@vermont.gov

Kim Royar

Special Assistant to Commissioner
Kim.Royar@vermont.gov

Scott Darling

Wildlife Management Program Manager
Scott.Darling@vermont.gov

Lt. David Gregory

Game Warden District Chief
David.Gregory@vermont.gov



Scat is Gross but Cool!

Students throughout Vermont have echoed 3rd grader Lily's sentiments after diving into the Furbearer Education Kit resources with their teachers in 2015. The kits continue to be popular with a variety of educators, and the feedback is always positive. Lisa Marks, a teacher at a local elementary school, wrote, *"The kit was very engaging and my students looked forward to the activities each day. Thank you for making the kit available to teachers. I can't wait to use it again next year!"*

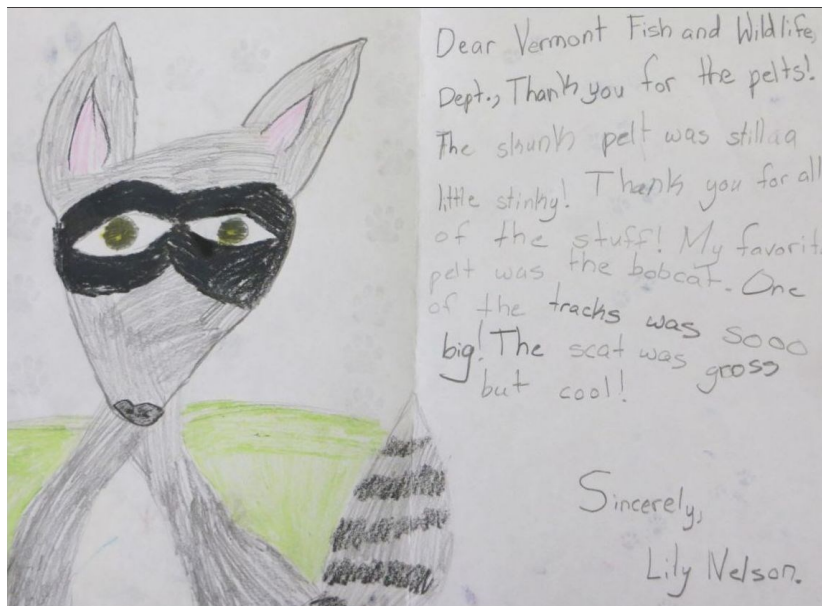
In July of last year, a new kit was delivered to the Rutland Regional State Parks office to be used by Park Naturalists. They were thrilled to have it available and used it

extensively to introduce campers from inside and outside Vermont to the world of Vermont's furbearers. As this newsletter goes to press, we are putting together yet another kit which will have the Essex Fish & Wildlife office as its home base!

It is important to note that these kits are not just about the individual species. The experience is more than cuddling with warm, furry pelts and playing with scat. Furbearer Fundamentals includes information about trapping and why it is an important part of furbearer management. The curriculum focuses on the importance of furbearers to our nation historically, and how changing landscapes have affected

furbearer populations. Students are introduced to the concepts of furbearer population dynamics and wildlife management, and different techniques used to achieve and maintain healthy furbearer populations are also presented. The kit contains various informational resources on furbearers, regulated wildlife management and regulated trapping. Students of all ages come away with a better understanding of furbearer management as well as the animals themselves.

If you or an organization you know would like to borrow a kit, contact the VT Fish & Wildlife Department district office near you.



THANK
YOU!

Many thanks, once again, to the Vermont Trappers Association for donating pelts for the new kits!

Don't forget:

If you haven't already sent in your 2015/16 Trapper Mail survey, please take the time to do it. If you have lost your copy or your mailing address has changed, give us a call (802-885-8836) or send an email (chris.bernier@vermont.gov or marybeth.adler@vermont.gov), and we'll get another one to you.

Don't forget:

The Good, The Bad, and The Slimy

Opening day of the 2015-16 furbearer necropsy season brought four trappers and four wildlife biologists (two of them professors) together to begin the inglorious but necessary task of processing carcasses. The always cheery crew breezed through more than a hundred fisher, bobcat, and otter in various stages of sliminess in no time at all. It was a great start to the season. Subsequent sessions provided opportunity for

more trappers, wildlife biologists, researchers (*see related articles for updates from these folks*), and a wildlife veterinarian to rub shoulders and discuss the concerns and issues surrounding the species, the traditions of trapping and hunting furbearers, and wildlife in general.

The decline in harvest numbers for each species meant a shortened season, but the help the Furbearer Project received and the interaction

with all those participating is no less appreciated. Sincere thanks to trappers **Mak Keyes, Jim Stewart, Brent Teillon, Bill Pickens,** and **Gary Gibbs**, houndsman **Patrick Soneira**, biologists **Peter Smith** and **Carol Shaw**, wildlife veterinarian **Walt Cottrell**, and VFW co-workers **Ryan Smith, Tom Rogers, Tim Appleton, John Mlchuch,** and **Katy Crumley** for your willingness to brave the slime with us!

Canine Distemper

In March of this year sick gray foxes were observed showing abnormal behaviors in Washington and other Vermont counties. After rabies was ruled out in one gray fox, it was submitted to UNH Diagnostic Lab where it was confirmed to have canine distemper. This is not considered a disease able to influence landscape scale population levels, but the prevalence of this and other diseases of wildlife is largely unknown. We encourage trappers to report sick animals to their local warden or call 1-800-4-RABIES. Infected animals exhibit a cough or difficulty breathing, vomiting, diarrhea, and weight loss. They may show abnormal behavior such as stumbling or the inability to hold their head upright, or may go into convulsions or be paralyzed. Information sheets on wildlife diseases supplied by the Northeast Wildlife Disease Cooperative can be found at the VT Fish & Wildlife Department's website at www.vtfishandwildlife.com.

— **Walter O. Cottrell, MS, DVM**
Wildlife Veterinarian



Raccoon Pie Recipe

1 raccoon
1 qt. water
1 pt. vinegar
1 tbsp. salt
1 tsp. pepper
1 tbsp. brown sugar
1/4 oz. pickling spices
1 onion, diced
4 small potatoes
4 small carrots
1 recipe baking powder biscuits



Cut prepared raccoon in serving pieces. Mix water, vinegar, seasonings, sugar, and spices together. Put raccoon pieces in this brine for 8 hours or more. Drain, put in stewing kettle, and cover with water. Cook until meat is tender. Add onion, potatoes, and carrots. When all ingredients are tender, remove from broth. Thicken liquid with browned flour and butter and season to taste. Place meat and vegetables in a dish and cover with gravy. Cover the top with your own recipe for baking powder biscuits, with a little extra shortening in dough. Cut vent in dough. Bake at 450 degrees until brown, about 12-15 minutes. Serves 8.

FromCooks.com

Think Before You Post

With the advent of the internet, a lot of things have become more accessible. There are discussions on our phones and apps that allow us to share content with millions in mere moments. There are platforms to have discussions with trappers in other states such as online forums or Facebook groups. But with this access comes some loss of control. Photos taken with apps like Instagram or posted to Facebook and Twitter and

videos posted to Vine and YouTube can be saved by anyone and manipulated in any way they choose. Your successful trap photos can be used without your permission or give non-trappers a negative view of regulated trapping. This applies to all forms of social media, whether it be photo-sharing sites, video sites, or other platforms that are publicly viewable.



Also, don't forget to check your privacy settings on each platform so things you post are only viewable by people you know, when possible.

— *Excerpted from Wisconsin's [Regulated Trapping and Social Media](#)*

VFWD Furbearer Project on the Road

Look for the Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department Furbearer Project Display and staff at the following events:

- [Herrick's Cove Wildlife Festival](#)
Sunday, May 1, 2016
Rockingham, VT
- [Vermont Trappers Association Annual Rendezvous](#)
Saturday, September 10, 2016 and Sunday, September 11, 2016
Barton, VT
- [Vermont Wildlife Festival](#)
Sunday, September 18, 2016
Dover, VT
- [Dead Creek Wildlife Days](#)
Saturday, October 1, 2016
Dead Creek WMA
Addison, VT
- [Yankee Sportsmen's Classic](#)
January 20-22, 2017
Champlain Valley Expo
Essex Junction, VT



Herrick's Cove Wildlife Festival

Tips for Taking Trapping Photos

Photos are important. They provide a lifelong memento of your activities and accomplishments. But when used on social media, they also influence how others see you. In today's world, our only communication with others is often through the photos they view of us online. This means that a lot of responsibility comes with the photos we take and post to these platforms. Keep in mind the considerations on the left below when taking photos while on the trap line.

— Excerpted from Wisconsin's [Regulated Trapping and Social Media](#)

Limit photos of furbearers in traps and don't post photos of animals in traps to social media. Such images can be offensive to some and saved and used by others without your permission.

Move the furbearer away from the dispatch site and onto a well-lit natural area free from blood.

Place the furbearer in a respectful manner on the ground in front of you. Straddling the animal, holding it by its back legs, or holding it around the chest looks disrespectful.

Wipe any blood from the animal, put the tongue in its mouth, and firmly close the jaw. Brush or clean the fur.



Photo courtesy Brent Teillon

If All Else Fails, Keep Your Humor

There are three men in the woods — a hunter, a trapper, and a stupid guy. The hunter goes out and comes back an hour later with a bear. The trapper asks, "How did you get that?" The hunter says, "I find tracks, I follow tracks, I find bear, I shoot bear, bear stop."

The trapper goes out and comes back an hour later with a deer. The stupid guy asks, "How did you get that?" The trapper says, "I find tracks, I follow tracks, I find deer, I shoot deer, deer stop."

The stupid guy goes out and comes back two hours later bruised and nearly dead with broken limbs. The hunter and trapper ask, "What happened to you?" The stupid guy says, "I find tracks, I follow tracks, I find train, I shoot train, train don't stop."



Everybody's going' surfin'...



Here are some interesting and informative website links for the technologically minded.

www.furbearereducation.org

Furtakers of America. This site is dedicated to the smallest and least understood segment of the American Sportsperson community — trappers, and the furbearers they harvest. Check out the newly released “*Trapping in Today's World*” video produced by VT trapper Rick Schoonover and featuring several VFWD staff. This video targets high school aged students and the adults they interact with. Copies of the video are available either from this website, from [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com), or from Rick Schoonover (broaxell1@hotmail.com).

www.conservewildlife.org

Northeast Furbearer Resources Technical Committee. This site presents the current professional outlook on trapping and furbearer management. It is the combined work of numerous wildlife scientists responsible for the conservation of furbearer populations in the states and provinces of the Northeast.

www.nationaltrappers.com

The National Trappers Association is committed to defending and promoting the safe and ethical harvest of furbearing mammals and to the preservation and enhancement of their habitats.

www.fishwildlife.org

Website of the International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies. IAFWA represents North America's fish and wildlife agencies to advance sound, science-based management and conservation of fish and wildlife and their habitats in the public interest. Best Management Practices for Trapping can be found here.

www.furbearers.org

Furbearers Unlimited is a nonprofit organization dedicated to developing, promoting and supporting educational programs based upon scientific, technical, and legal study and analysis for the restoration, wise use, management, and conservation of furbearers and other natural resources.

www.native-languages.org/legends.htm

Native Languages of the Americans. A Minnesota nonprofit corporation dedicated to the preservation and promotion of endangered American Indian languages. This site has lots of wonderful Native American folklore and traditional stories about furbearers.



Your purchase of hunting and fishing licenses as well as equipment supports Fish and Wildlife Restoration.



Fish & Wildlife Department

Vermont Furbearer Management Newsletter

100 Mineral Street, Suite 302
Springfield, Vermont 05156-3168

www.vtfishandwildlife.com