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S. D. Extension Trapper Program

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Recommended Citation

South Dakota State University, Cooperative Extension, "S. D. Extension Trapper Program" (1976). *SDSU Extension Fact Sheets*. 708.

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S.D. Extension Trapper Program



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Cooperative Extension Service
South Dakota State University
U. S. Department of Agriculture



S.D. Extension Trapper Program

By: W. Alan Wentz, Extension Wildlife Specialist



Most of South Dakota's predators are valuable furbearers and provide recreation for hunters and trappers. Predators are normally useful, since their regular diet consists of rodents, rabbits, insects, and other small animals. But, because most predators are opportunists, they occasionally cause damage to domestic livestock or crops.

Residents of eastern South Dakota can call on one of four Extension Trappers for help with predator or furbearer problems. The trappers are employees of the South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks and have two main duties: 1) animal damage control through teaching and assistance, and 2) the encouragement of sport trapping.

Animal Damage Control

Individuals suffering crop or livestock losses due to wildlife may request the assistance of the Extension Trapper directly through the regional offices of Game, Fish and Parks, the County Extension Office, Wildlife Conservation Officer, or the Extension Service at South Dakota State University.

The Extension Trapper attempts to visit you promptly, usually within 48 hours after receiving the complaint. He examines the damage, identifies the species of animal responsible and suggests appropriate methods to alleviate the problem.

Extension Trappers are familiar with a wide range of wildlife damage problems, including beaver damage to field corn and shade trees, sheep losses to coyotes, and poultry losses to various small predators. They will show you how to use numerous techniques to not only stop wildlife damage but also to prevent it from happening again.

When wildlife damage can be controlled best by trapping, the Extension Trapper will teach the proper trapping techniques. The landowner will then use these techniques to capture the offending animal.

Landowners who have wildlife problems may purchase traps and other supplies from the Extension Trapper. Occasionally the Extension Trapper may suggest the use of a live trap, a predator call, or mechanical restraints (such as fencing) to control or prevent further damage. Traps and supplies may not be sold to individuals interested in sport trappings.

As a rule, the Extension Trapper is able to adequately instruct the landowner in one visit. He rarely makes additional visits concerning the same complaint, since he normally doesn't take an active part in any control work. Extension Trappers do not distribute any type of poisons, nor do they participate in large scale suppression of predator populations.





Recurring and persistent problems are often indications that farm management practices may need changing. In these cases, the Extension Trapper may suggest changes or refer the problem to the county Extension agent.

Landowners experiencing damage caused by ground squirrels, pocket gophers, birds, and other animals should contact their county Extension agent for information on these problems.

Trapping as a Sport

Much of the Extension Trapper's time is spent conducting educational programs on sport trapping as a form of recreation and source of income. These programs cover the life history of furbearers, the art of trapping, how to prepare pelts for sale, wildlife damage control, predator calling, and other related topics.

The Extension Trapper uses color slides, free literature on trapping, demonstrations, and displays in his presentations. Programs can be given in classrooms, meeting halls, summer camps, or any other group meeting place.

Teachers, FFA chapters, 4-H clubs, sportsmen's clubs, scout troops, and other groups are encouraged to request these presentations. These programs may be arranged by directly contacting the Extension Trapper or through the local County Extension Office or conservation officer.

The South Dakota Extension Trapper Program has been well received over the last several years. Other states, such as Missouri and Kansas, also have extension trapping programs. South Dakota is unique in having four Extension Trappers assigned to wildlife damage control, as well as one or more individuals per county (county agents and conservation officers) who can refer damage complaints or requests for trapping presentations to the Extension Trapper.



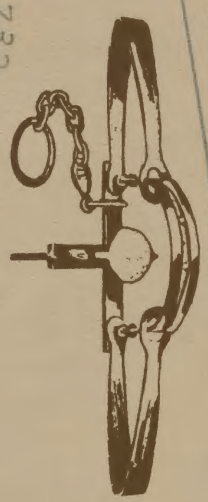
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File: 9.3—2,000 printed at an estimated cost of ?c each—rev. EMC 677—3-76—5935

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