

# Saskatchewan Trapping Regulations

Humane Trapper Education Course

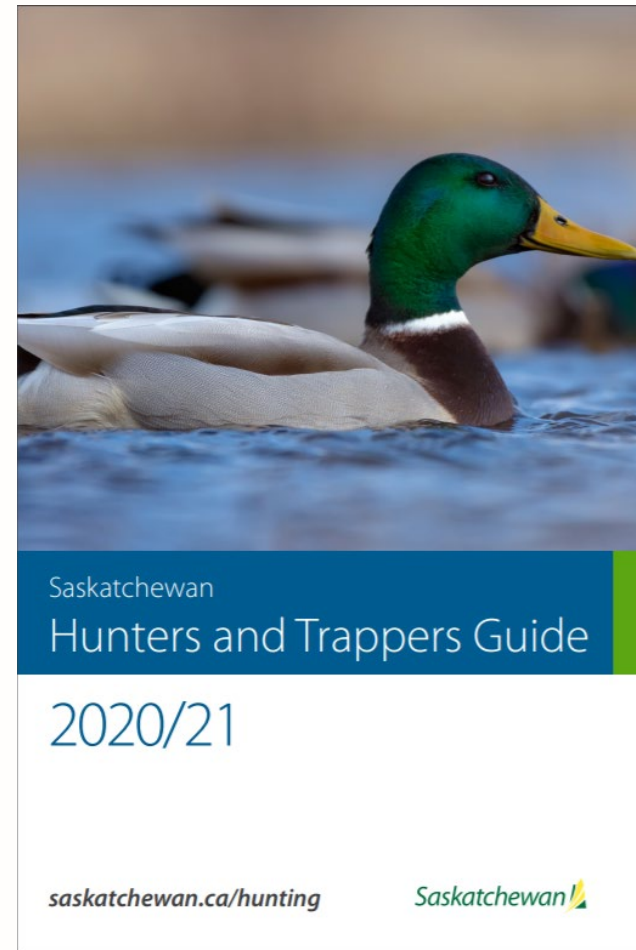
Updated January 2021

# Remember!

- You are responsible for knowing the laws that apply to your activities.
- Changes are made annually to regulations annually.

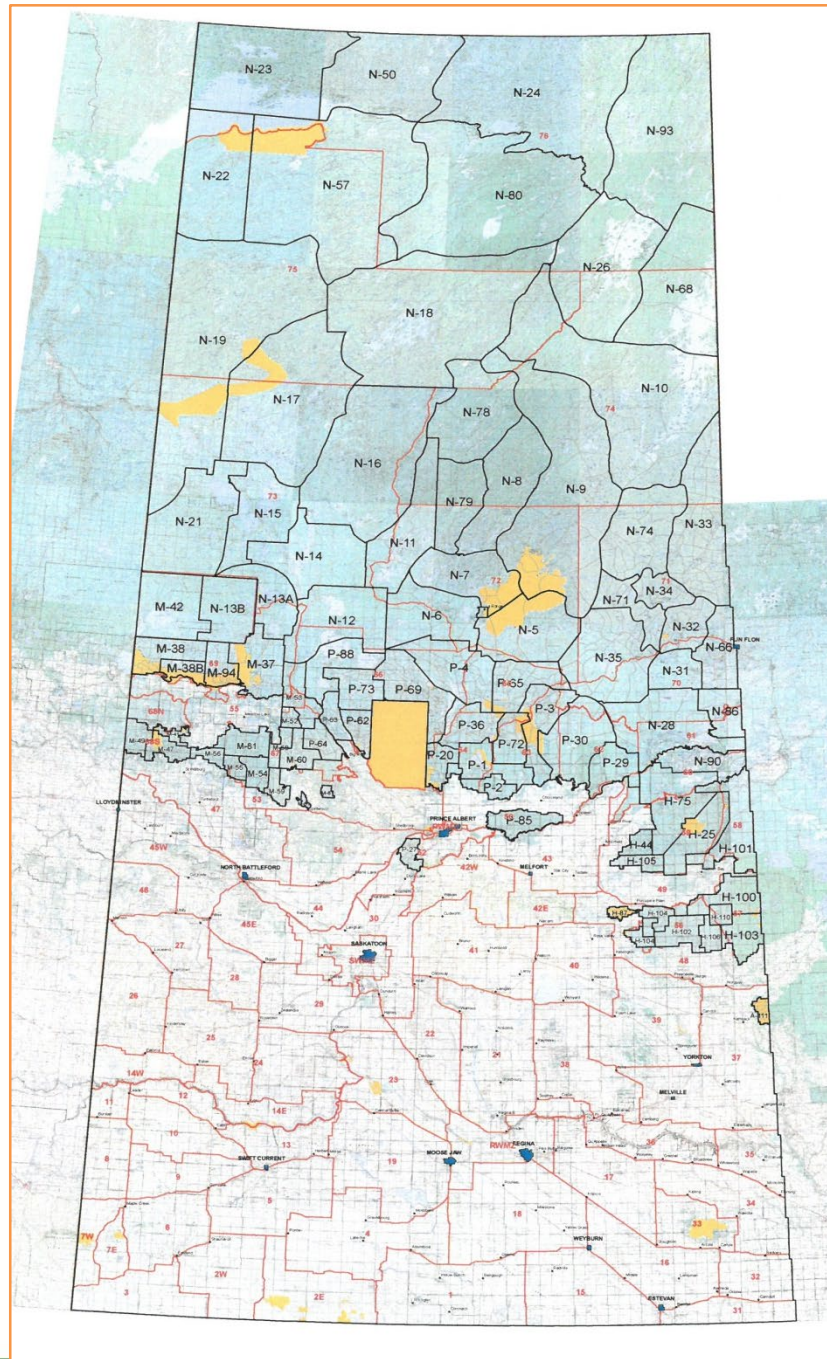
# Remember!

- Be sure to check the current *Saskatchewan Hunters and Trappers Guide* or talk to a conservation officer if you are unsure.



# Fur Harvest Management in Saskatchewan

- Furbearer conservation, including all aspects that relate to the harvest of furbearers, is under provincial jurisdiction and managed by the Saskatchewan Ministry of Environment.
- For management purposes, the province is divided into North and South Fur Conservation Areas (NFCA and SFCA).
- While many regulations apply provincially to both NFCA and SFCA, a number are specific to each, so it is important to be aware of the regulations that apply in your area.

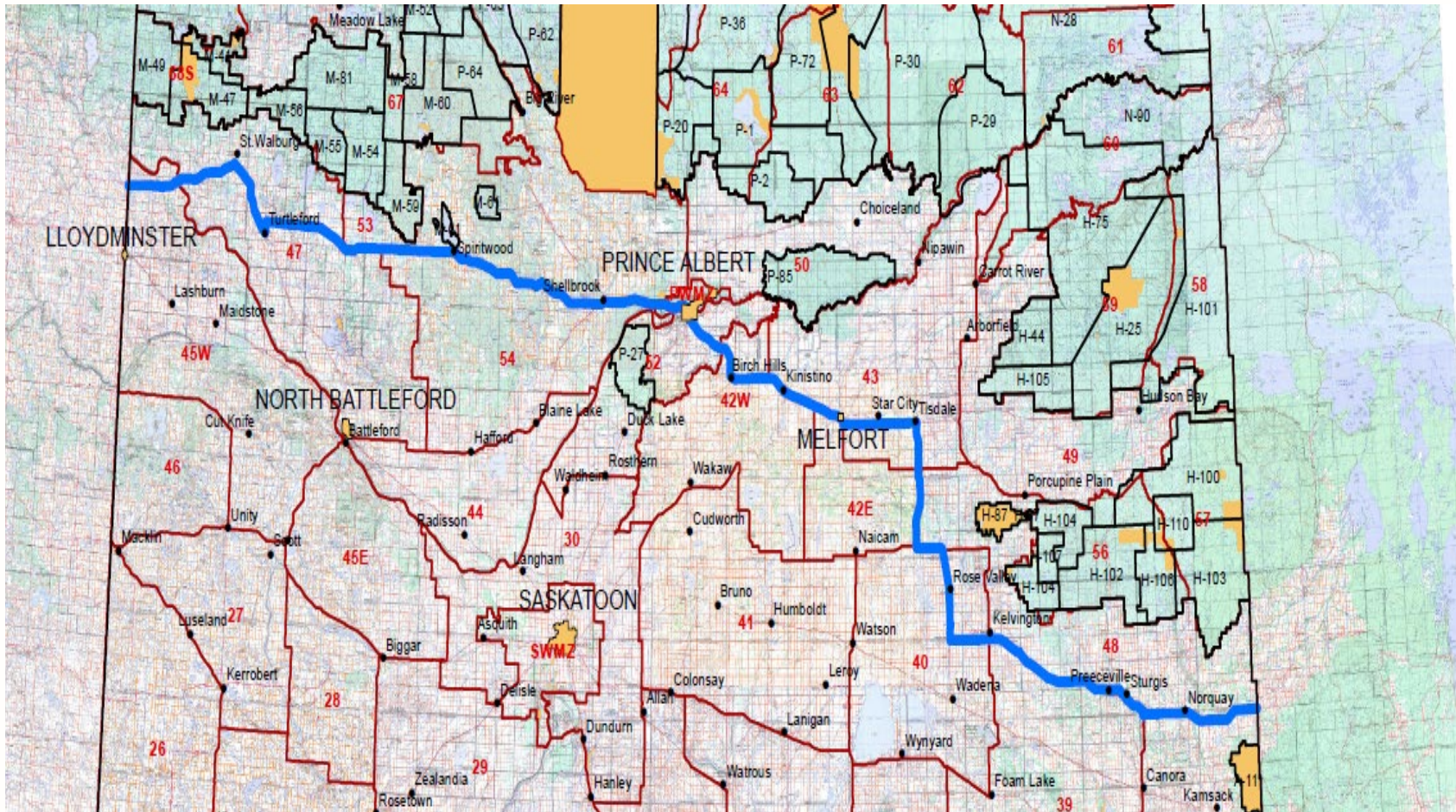


# NFCA Special Areas

- In addition to the formal NFCA blocks shown in green on the map, all vacant Crown lands north of the line shown in bold blue on the map (see next slide) are considered special areas within the NFCA.
- These special areas are open and do not require a trapper to be a member of a block.
- All regulations applicable to the NFCA apply to these special areas.
- Contact the local ministry office to obtain permission.



# Southern Boundary of NFCA in Regulations



# Definition of Trapping in Saskatchewan Regulations

- Trapping is included under the definition of hunting in Saskatchewan.
- Unless specifically exempted, the rules that pertain to hunting with firearms will also apply to shooting or trapping of furbearers under a trapping licence.



# Do I Need a Licence to Trap?

- You require a fur licence to harvest most furbearer species. Some species also require additional permits.
- You do not require a licence to harvest coyotes with a firearm, to trap raccoons and skunks or to trap beaver in rural municipalities that have passed an open season bylaw.
- However, regardless of the species, you need a fur licence if you wish to sell the pelt.

# What Do I Need to Get My Licence?

- You must be 12 years of age.
- You must have your firearms safety/hunter education certificate.
- You must have a valid Saskatchewan Wildlife Habitat Certificate.
- You must either take this course or pass a challenge exam.

# Where Do I Get My Licence?

- SFCA licences are available online through the automated Hunting, Angling and Trapping Licensing System (HAL), through any vendor or ministry office with front counter service.
- NFCA and youth licences are only available at local ministry offices with front counter service.

# How Long is My Fur Licence Valid?

- Your fur licence is valid for the purposes of trapping until August 31 following the date of issue.

# Where Can I Go Trapping?

- In the NFCA, outside of the special areas, you must be voted in by members of the trapping block you are applying for and then you will be assigned a zone or area for your use.
- In the SFCA, you can trap on any land provided you have the permission of the landowner. You need additional permission of the owner or occupant of any residence or livestock handling facility within 500 metres of your sets.
- On Crown lands, permission is required from the appropriate representative of the Crown or the Crown lease holder.



# When Can I go Trapping?

- Most of Saskatchewan furbearers are protected outside of specified season dates that are intended to cover the period when the fur is prime.
- Season dates for all Saskatchewan species are shown annually in the *Hunters and Trappers Guide*.
- Some species such as coyotes, beaver (in designated rural municipalities only), raccoon and skunk can be harvested year-round, but the pelt will be of little value outside of the colder months.

# What If I Want to Hunt Fur Animals During an Open Big Game Season?

- Provided they are not hunting with or aiding a big game hunter, a licensed trapper may hunt fur bearer animals – other than cougar – province-wide or black bear in the SFCA.
- In the NFCA, a trapper conducting normal black bear trapping operations may use a firearm to harvest black bear. Normal black bear trapping operations means the trapper has several traps operating at one time and checks them in a planned and regular manner.

# Are There Species-Specific Regulations?

- Coyotes can only be harvested without a licence, if using a firearm. If trapping or snaring, you must have a fur licence.
- There is no ministry requirement to hold a fur licence when harvesting beaver in RMs with open season regulations. However, most RMs require that individuals turning in beaver for bounties must hold a fur licence. Check your RM.
- There are minimum calibre requirements for big game species (e.g. black bear and wolf). Refer to Section 17 of *The Wildlife Regulations, 1981* (link below) or consult a conservation officer.
- <http://publications.saskatchewan.ca/#/products/1602>

# Special Restrictions for Trapping Bear

- Only mechanically activated foot snares are legal for the capture of black bear.
- In the SFCA, firearms may only be used to dispatch a black bear already caught in a foot snare.

# Special Restrictions for Trapping Cougar

- Harvest of cougar is restricted to the use of traps and authorized snares only.
- Firearms may only be used to dispatch an animal already caught in a trap or snare.
- Trappers are required to immediately report harvested cougar to the ministry to receive a permit to possess or sell the animal.



# Can I Carry a Firearm on an ATV or Snowmobile When I am Trapping?

- During an open season for big game other than wolf, you may carry a .22 calibre (or less) rimfire rifle in a vehicle while conducting normal trapping operations. A vehicle includes all-terrain vehicles (ATV) and snowmobiles.
- Outside of a big game season, an unencased, unloaded firearm may be carried on an ATV or snowmobile.

# Can I Use a Light When I am Trapping?

- A person may use a searchlight for the purposes of conducting normal trapping operations.

# Can I Use a Road-Killed Animal for Bait?

- Yes, if – to the best of your knowledge – the wildlife was legally killed.
- You must, within seven days of taking possession of the dead wildlife, provide the wildlife to a wildlife officer for inspection and apply for a free permit to possess the wildlife. To retain the skull or antlers, you will need an additional permit.

# Transport of Road-Killed Animals

- Road-killed animals show a higher prevalence for diseases such as chronic wasting disease.
- For this reason, permit conditions require that the animals be used as bait within 80 kilometres of where they were obtained.
- This is to reduce the risk of spreading diseases to new areas.

# What Traps Can I Use?

- It depends on what species you are targeting and whether you intend to use killing traps, restraining traps, live traps or snares.
- Most Saskatchewan furbearer species are covered under the Agreement on International Humane Trapping Standards (AIHTS), which generally dictates the types of traps that can be used.



# Agreement on International Humane Trapping Standards

- The AIHTS is an agreement between Europe, Russia and Canada intended to ensure that only the most humane traps available are used in capture of furbearers.
- The most humane traps also give trappers their best return, as kills are quicker and restrained animals suffer less injury.

# AIHTS and the Fur Trade

- This agreement is a benefit to trappers as it helps to secure an open door to foreign markets and to address criticism of the industry at home.

# What Determines if a Trap is Certified Under the AIHTS?

- Killing traps are certified based on meeting a required minimum average time between capture and time of unconsciousness (45 seconds for weasel; two minutes for marten; five minutes for all others).
- Restraining traps are certified based on the amount and nature of injuries suffered by a captured animal.
- All testing is conducted at a specialized facility at Vegreville, Alberta; tests must meet rigorous scientific standards.

# How Do I Find Out What Traps I Need for the Animals I Am After?

- The most up to date listing of certified traps is on the website of the Fur Institute of Canada (FIC).

[www.fur.ca](http://www.fur.ca)

- This list is updated immediately as traps are added.

# Are All Furbearers Covered Under the AIHTS?

- No. Saskatchewan species not included under the AIHTS are red and arctic fox, mink, wolverine, red, gray and fox squirrels, least and long-tailed weasels, and skunks.
- However, Saskatchewan has used provincial regulations to apply AIHTS standards to all fox and weasel species, leaving mink, wolverine, squirrels and skunk without standards in place or under consideration.



# Is it Mandatory to Use Certified Traps for all Species Covered Under AIHTS?

- Not necessarily. Some species have not yet had enough traps tested and certified. For these, it is still legal to use any type of otherwise legal trap.
- The FIC website also list those traps that have been certified for species where it is not yet mandatory to use certified traps. This list allows trappers to plan their trap purchases ahead certified traps becoming mandatory for those species.
- Note that all restraining traps must be modified to meet humane standards, even if there is no requirement to use certified restraining traps for a particular species.

# How Can I Modify My Restraining Traps to Meet Humane Standards?

- There are three acceptable ways to modify old style restraining traps to meet current standards:
  - Offset the jaws so there is a minimum of five millimetres between the jaws, when closed.
  - Fasten manufactured pads of a rubber-like substance to the trap jaws. Duct tape is not an acceptable substance.
  - Add lamination to the trap jaws to increase jaw thickness to nine millimetres or greater.

# Are There Any Other Restrictions on the Use of Traps?

- You cannot use foot-hold traps for beaver, muskrat, otter or mink - unless the trap is set so the animal drowns when caught.
- You cannot use foot-hold traps with an inside jaw opening more than 24 centimetres.
- You cannot trap black bears, except with mechanically-activated foot snares.
- You cannot use hooks or sharp devices to snag or spear furbearing animals.
- You cannot use traps with serrated jaws or teeth to take furbearing animals.

# Does the AIHTS Cover Snares?

- No. Snares are not currently included under the AIHTS and are regulated provincially.

# What Regulations Apply to Neck Snares?

- Saskatchewan recognizes two main types of neck snares: power snares and free-hanging or common snares. There are important differences in the regulations that apply to each.
- Power snares are defined as mechanically activated such that the snare is closed by a spring with a leg or arm no less than 30 centimetres in length, or by a lever and coil-spring system in which the spring is no less than 25 centimetres long.
- Mechanically activated spring-loaded snares that do not meet these standards are considered as free-hanging snares for regulatory purposes.

# What are the Regulations for Power Snares?

- Power snares can be used throughout the province.
- A permit from the Ministry of Environment is required and is available at no cost from a ministry office with front counter service.
- Power snares can be used for all furbearers, except black bear.

# Why Do I Need a Permit to Use Power Snares?

- The regulations require that you obtain a permit because the permit contains a number of conditions in addition to what is identified in regulation.
- These conditions help ensure that power snares are set in a manner that minimizes risks to people, pets and livestock.
- These conditions are law and failure to comply with them could lead to charges being laid and to loss of permit rights.

# What Are These Conditions?

- The most significant conditions are as follows:
  - The permit describes the break-away standards required to help reduce incidental capture of wildlife and livestock.
  - The break-away standard is the maximum allowable pressure that the snare will hold before it breaks away. The standard then determines what snare cable width can be used, depending on whether additional safeguards are in place, such as a pressure sensitive S-hook.
  - The permit also requires that in addition to getting the permission of occupants within 500 metres of a snare set, the permittee must also notify any additional landowners within 1.6 kilometres of the set.



# What Are the Regulations For Free-Hanging Snares?

- All free-hanging snares must be equipped with a locking device.
- Free-hanging snares are not allowed for general fur harvest in the SFCA.
- A permit from the ministry is required for their use and – in the SFCA – will only be issued to individuals resolving an active livestock predation complaint.

# How Often Do I Need to Check My Traps?

- In the SFCA, within five kilometres of a community of 1,000 or more people, you must check your traps every 24 hours.
- Anywhere else in the SFCA, you must check your traps every 72 hours.
- In the NFCA, you must check your traps every 120 hours.

# What Do I Do if I Harvest an Animal That is Not Legal For Me to Trap?

- Every effort should be made to set your traps in a manner that will target the species you are after and exclude or discourage other species.
- Inevitably, you will catch species that you cannot legally trap or trap at that time of year.
- It is mandatory that you immediately report these incidental captures to the nearest conservation officer.

# Can Someone Else Trap Where I Am Trapping?

- In the SFCRA, it is permissible to trap wherever you have permission.
- If more than one person has permission, they can trap near you.
- It is illegal to touch or interfere with any legally-placed traps or snares, unless authorized by the owner to do so.

# As a Licensed Trapper, Can I Harvest Fur Animals Using Just a Firearm?

- First, you must be in lawful possession of a firearm. If you are under the age of 18, you must obtain a federal minor's permit to possess a firearm.
- You can use a firearm to harvest fur animals, except cougar province-wide and black bear in the SFCA. However, you are subject to all regulations governing the use of a firearm for hunting as indicated in *The Wildlife Act* and *The Wildlife Regulations*.
- You cannot shoot or attempt to shoot any beaver in the SFCA on any land without the permission of the owner or occupant of the land.

# What Should Know When I Finish Trapping For the Season?

- Pick up all your traps and snares.
- It is illegal to leave a trap or snare set for a fur animal following the close of the open season for that animal.
- Even if trapping a species with an open season, such as coyotes, don't leave traps or snares out after you are done trapping. This can lead to accidental captures of livestock and pets, which puts all trappers in a bad light.

# Can I Buy Fur From Another Trapper and Sell Them With Mine?

- Yes, but you will need to purchase a fur dealers licence.
- If you are the holder of a fur licence, you will also need a special permit to hold both licences.
- The fur dealers licence costs \$60.00 and the permit is free. Both the licence and the permit are available through the Ministry of Environment by calling 306-933-5766 or email [lois.koback@gov.sk.ca](mailto:lois.koback@gov.sk.ca).

# Can I Export My Fur or Take Them to Another Province?

- Yes. A fur export permit is required when exporting fur or taking them out of province.
- The fur export permit can be acquired at a ministry field office with front counter service.



# Can I Keep Fur for My Own Use?

- Yes. Simply retain a copy of your licence as verification the furs were legally taken.

# So Is This All I Need to Know?

- No! These are just the main rules.
- A complete list of the regulations governing trapping can be found online:  
<http://www.publications.gov.sk.ca/details.cfm?p=1602>
- If in doubt, contact a conservation officer. Remember that ignorance of the law is not an acceptable excuse when an infraction is committed.

# A Safety Reminder

- Furbearer species are known to carry a variety of diseases including rabies, canine distemper, tularemia, tapeworm and ringworm.
- They are also carriers of mites and fleas that can be an irritant to humans.
- It is always advisable to wear gloves when processing animals and to wash thoroughly after handling.

# How Can Trappers Contribute to Furbearer Conservation?

- Report unusual species occurrences to the ministry.
- Turn in possibly diseased animals to the ministry or the Canadian Cooperative Wildlife Health Centre at the Western College of Veterinary Medicine in Saskatoon.
- Complete the annual status of furbearer survey available through the HAL website.

Questions?

[saskatchewan.ca](http://saskatchewan.ca)