

Chapter 3

Important Terms

You should know the following terms:

Ethics
Responsibilities
Public
Landowner
Privilege
Domestic animals
Occupied dwellings
Permission
Property
Humane
Daily catch
Carcasses
Proper size trap
Commitment of time
Trap theft

Learning Objectives

You should be able to:

- Define ethics and responsibilities
- Recognize four areas of responsibility: to the public, landowners, other sportsmen, and the resource
- Understand that trapping is a privilege granted by the public
- Understand responsibilities to the public in: avoiding and reporting illegal activities, displaying animals, disposing of carcasses, and avoiding pets
- Understand responsibilities to landowners in: obtaining permission, respecting property, acting courteously
- Understand responsibilities to other hunters and trappers in: sharing the resource, and cooperating and avoiding conflicts with other sportsmen
- Understand responsibilities to the resource in: obeying all trapping regulations and avoiding overharvest
- Understand responsibilities to the resource in trapping humanely by: checking traps early in the morning, using the right size and type of trap, using traps and sets that dispatch the animal

- Understand that trapping requires a daily commitment of time spanning several consecutive days
- Recognize the possibility of trap theft
- Learn tips for avoiding trap theft

Chapter 3

Ethics and Responsibilities

Ethics are principles of good conduct. Responsibilities are duties or obligations. Much of the criticism leveled against trapping has been brought on because of unethical and irresponsible actions by a few individuals. Trappers must fulfill certain obligations and subscribe to a code of good conduct in their dealings with the public, landowners, other trappers and outdoorsmen, and the resource.

Your privilege to trap is granted to you by the public. Landowners provide you with places to trap. The animals you trap must be harvested in a humane manner following good conservation principles. Other trappers and sportsmen and women deserve your respect because of your shared interest in the outdoor sports and wildlife resources. The continued use of our furbearer resources depends on ethical and responsible behavior when you are trapping.

The Public

You have a responsibility to conduct your activities so they do not offend the general public. Always keep in mind that trapping is a *privilege* granted by the people of the state. This privilege could be taken away if the general public decides they no longer want to allow trapping.

In granting the privilege to trap, the public requires that trappers follow the regulations established for trapping. These regulations are devised to make sure trapping follows good conservation practices. They also help ensure trapping will be conducted safely, without harming domestic animals. Violating these regulations goes against the public trust. Obey all trapping regulations. Illegal activities can get you in trouble and reflect poorly on other trappers. If you see other trappers acting illegally, report this to your wildlife officer.

Confine your trapping activities to out of the way places where there is little chance of catching a domestic animal. Avoid trapping close to occupied dwellings where someone's pet might get caught in your traps.

Don't put the animals you have caught on display. You may be proud of your accomplishments, but the average person does not like to see dead animals. Also, most people find the carcasses of dead animals offensive. After you have skinned

the animals, dispose of the carcasses properly and promptly.

A small number of people are very much opposed to trapping. You may encounter some of these people in public or as you are checking your traps. They may say things that are designed to offend you or make you angry. You should avoid getting into a debate or a shouting match with these people. You will not be able to change their minds. If you lose your temper, it makes you and all trappers look bad in the public's eye. The best thing to do is to simply tell them that you do not agree with them and walk away.

Respect the Public

- Remember trapping is a privilege granted by the public.
- Obey all trapping regulations; report illegal activities to your wildlife officer.
- Do not trap near occupied dwellings where someone's pet may be caught.
- Do not put dead animals on display.
- Dispose of all animal carcasses properly.

Landowners

Most of your trapping will probably be done on private property. You have an obligation to conduct your activities in a courteous and responsible manner according to the landowner's wishes. Always remember you are a guest. If your activities cause problems for the landowner, you may be asked to leave.

Before you trap on anyone's land, you must get written permission. This is not only a courtesy, it is the law. Make sure you know exactly where you are allowed to trap. Some landowners may not want you to trap in certain places.

You should respect the rights of landowners and their property. Be careful that you do not cause any damage to the landowner's property as you run your trapline. Do not travel across unharvested fields. If you use a vehicle, ask where you will be allowed to take it. When the ground is muddy, do not drive your vehicle across fields or dirt roads making ruts. Be careful not to damage fences when you are crossing them. Make sure you close all gates that you have opened. Be observant as you travel across the property. If you see a problem, report it to the landowner. Offer to help fix it if you can be of assistance. Be courteous in your coming and going. Try to check your traps during the daylight hours or at least at a time when you know the landowner will be awake. If you must check your traps in the dark, inform the landowner.



in an area, consider moving elsewhere. If you do trap in an area with another person, keep your traps a considerable distance away so they do not interfere with the other trapper. If you know who this trapper is, you may be able to reach a mutual agreement about who will trap where.

You may encounter people hunting in places where you have traps. It is a good idea to tell these people you are trapping, especially if they are hunting with dogs. They will be able to avoid your traps if you give them the approximate location of your sets. Also, if someone is hunting while you are checking your traps try to check your traps quickly and move on so you do not interfere with their hunt.



Respect Landowners

- Always get permission to trap.
- Do not damage crops, fences, or other property.
- Be courteous, do not disturb people as you check your traps.

Respect Other Trappers and Hunters

- Be willing to share the resource; do not assume you are the only person who has permission to be on the property.
- Do not disturb someone else's traps.
- Do not interfere with the activity of others, try to cooperate.

Other Trappers and Hunters

Anyone who purchases a hunting license and fur taker permit can harvest wildlife as long as they follow the laws. You will probably encounter other trappers and hunters in the field. Remember that we are all entitled to share in the resource. These people, as long as they are obeying the law, have as much right to be there as you do.

Often landowners will grant permission to more than one person to trap or hunt on their land. If you are uncertain about another trapper or hunter, first ask the landowner. If someone is trespassing, or otherwise hunting or trapping illegally, ask the landowner to report them to the authorities.

If you come across someone's traps, do not disturb them. Ohio's trapping regulations prohibit you from disturbing another person's traps without permission. If someone is already trapping

The Resource

As a trapper and conservationist, you have a responsibility to use our furbearer resources wisely. You also have a responsibility to the animals themselves. An ethical trapper takes care to ensure that the animals are treated humanely.

Obeying the rules and regulations for trapping is the first step in making good, conservative use of this resource. These laws are established to allow for the harvest of furbearers when they are the most valuable. They also act as a guide to help ensure that enough animals remain to replenish the population.

Within these guidelines, the trapper must also be responsible for making some decisions. Never attempt to trap all the animals from an area. Leave some animals for breeding stock. You can tell you have taken the surplus animals when your daily catch falls off sharply. If the population of a certain animal is low, you should avoid trapping it altogether.

You have a responsibility to see that the animals you catch are not wasted. The animals should be skinned or sold to a fur buyer promptly. Do not let animals lay around and spoil from lack of attention. The carcasses of some animals like muskrats, raccoons, and beaver can be used for food. Muskrats, raccoons and beaver make good table fare. Sometimes you can sell these carcasses, or give them to someone who wants to eat them. You can also eat them yourself.

A trapper must take measures to make sure the animals he catches are treated as humanely as possible. Checking your traps early in the morning is a good way to achieve this goal. Most animals are caught during the night. Checking your traps early in the morning ensures that no animal spends too much time in a trap. Ohio law requires that traps be checked at least every 24 hours.

Using the proper size and type of trap for each animal also helps you capture the animal humanely. Using a foothold trap that is too large could cause an animal unnecessary discomfort and possible injury. Some traps and sets are designed to kill the animal immediately. These may be the best choice for some animals found in areas where it is safe and legal to use them. Often when you are trapping near water, traps can be fastened so the animal enters the water and drowns. This ensures a quick, humane death.

Respect the Resource

- Obey all trapping regulations.
- Do not trap too many animals from one area.
- Do not leave animals too long in your traps, check your traps early in the morning.
- Use the proper size and type of trap for each animal.

How is Trapping Different than Hunting?

Trapping and hunting are alike in many ways. In each case, trappers or hunters are pursuing wild animals. This means that trappers and hunters have many of the same responsibilities. However, trapping is different than hunting in several ways, and trappers have a number of special rules they must follow.

The main difference between trapping and hunting is how the individual takes the animal. A hunter must be on the spot and make visual contact with the animal. A trapper, on the other hand, places the trap, then leaves. The animal is captured without the trapper present. The trapper then returns to collect the animal.

This means the trapper must make more than one trip afield to get the animal. If you are hunting, you may choose not to go out on a certain day. Maybe the weather is bad, or you have other things to do. A trapper does not have this option. If you have traps set, you must check them every day regardless of what the weather is like or what other things you might want to do.

“Hunting can be done on a day-by-day basis. Trapping requires a commitment of time every day for several consecutive days.”



Hunter Calendar

			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		31



Trapper Calendar

			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

Most successful trappers plan to run their traplines for several days or more. This means they must dedicate a certain amount of time each day to checking their traps. It may take only an hour or two for a short trapline, but as long as the traps are set, the trapper must go every day and check them. This is the commitment you must make as a trapper.

Trap Theft

Trappers have an obligation to behave ethically and responsibly in the field. However, it is possible that you could be the victim of unethical or illegal acts by others. Trap theft is a problem that has plagued trappers throughout history. There are unethical individuals who may steal your traps, your catch, or both.

Trap theft can occur at any time and in any location, but it is more likely to happen in areas that have greater public access. The more remote the area, the less likely you are to encounter a thief. Trapping near roads and highways, especially around bridges and culverts can expose you to a greater risk of trap theft. Nevertheless, bridges and culverts can provide some good locations for catching animals. You have to weigh this against the odds that your traps might be stolen. Catching a few extra animals could offset any loss you might experience to theft.

The following are some tips to help you avoid trap theft.

Avoiding Trap Theft

- Check your traps early in the morning and remove the animals before anyone sees them.
- Keep a low profile as you check your traps. Do not display your catch.
- Do not set traps near parking areas or other public access locations.
- Use drowning sets in water trapping to make the catch less noticeable.
- Make your sets behind areas of cover where they are not visible from roads or highways.

Chapter 3 Study Guide

Review Questions

1. Define Ethics: _____

2. Define Responsibilities: _____

3. List the four things trappers have a responsibility to do:
A. _____, B. _____,
C. _____, D. _____.
4. You must have _____
_____ to trap on private property.
5. List at least four ways to avoid trap and fur theft:
A. _____, B. _____,
C. _____, D. _____.
6. Trapping differs from hunting because

