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n Target

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Providing leadership and advocacy for the enhancement of our fish and wildlife resources.
Ensuring the protection and advancement of our outdoor heritage, resources and
2nd Amendment Rights.



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PFSC On Target July/August 2018

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The mission of the Pennsylvania Federation of Sportsmen's Clubs, Inc. is to provide a statewide, united voice for the concerns of all sportsmen and conservationists; to insure that their rights and interests are protected; and to protect and enhance the environment and our natural resources.



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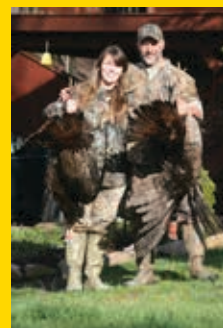
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Cover Photo:

Great memories from a Father-Daughter hunt! Proud dad, Todd Myers, Franklin County, with his daughter, Lea Zullinger, Perry County, showing off their Father-Daughter Duo.

Read more on page 29.





Best Management Practices

By: Todd Strohecker, PTA VP East

The Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies has been working in conjunction with state wildlife agencies, trappers' organizations, and individual trappers to establish Best Management Practices (BMPs) for Trapping in the United States. Part of the BMP process was the extensive testing of traps, trap features, and techniques to identify which were practical for use based on efficiency, animal welfare, selectivity, practicality, and safety. Much of the testing has proved what many trappers have known for years, but research backed by accurate data collection and conducted by professionals is far more credible to the public than conjecture. The following are some foothold trap modifications and features that many trappers feel reduce injury while still maintaining very good efficiency at harvesting target furbearers.

The vast majority of trappers believe that adequate swiveling in the trap chain is the most important modification one can do to their traps in regards to holding animals securely and without injury. Swivels in the trap chain allow the animal to move, twist, and turn with no binding of the chain between the trap and the anchor point. There is no consensus on how many swivels or swiveling points are needed, but most trappers are of the opinion of "the more swivels, the better". Conditions at the set and the type of terrain one is trapping factor in when deciding how many swivels to add to the chain. Areas with high grass are known to cause swivels to bind up so a trapper operating in this type of habitat may opt to add more swivels. Placement of swivels is important as well. Swivels located on the

chain closer to the trap are often the ones that do most of the swiveling. Many trappers like a swivel point at the trap, a swivel midway in the chain, and a swivel at the anchor point.

Since the jaws of a foothold trap are what contacts the animals paw and holds it, it stands to reason that their features play in integral role in reducing injury and efficient holding ability. Some traps have jaws padded with rubber while others have strips of steel round stock welded to the top or bottom of the jaw to create jaw laminations. Both padded jaws and laminated jaws are wider than standard jaws and more smooth. Laminations added using round stock provide a very smooth, rounded edge to come in contact with the paw. Both regular jaw and offset jaw traps (which have a 3/16" to 1/4" gap between the jaws) can be laminated. There are some trap models produced today which have a formed offset. The manufacturing process used to form the offset gap creates a wider jaw face with the excess steel. The wide jaw offset works like a laminated offset jaw creating a wider contact point on the paw. That being said, some models have very pronounced corners on the formed offset and are greatly improved by removing the jaws from the trap and smoothing both the top and bottom edges of the offset with a narrow vertical belt sander.

The best chain length for a foothold trap is often a debate among trappers. Many eastern trappers prefer rela-



tively short chains while a longer chain is often preferred in the west. Some of this may be that western trappers are often trapping coyotes which are known to pull out single stakes on a short chain, and eastern trappers are many times trapping agricultural fields and want to keep catch circles as small as possible. Many of the traps found in the BMPs

were tested with shorter lengths of chains from 6"-18". It is believed that the shock from an animal lunging is reduced on a short chain. Some trappers who opt to use a longer chain install shock springs in the chain which help reduce the shock from an animal lunging on a longer chain.

On the subject of the trap chain, the point at which it attaches to the trap can make a difference in how the trap performs. The majority of footholds have the chain attached to either the center of the base or to the side of it. Footholds which have a side chain attachment seem to allow more paw movement inside the jaws than traps with a center chain attachment. This is especially true with traps that have a square or hexagonal jaw shape. Many of the traps tested in the BMPs had the chains attached to the center of the base. This is called "center swiveling" in trapper circles.

The modern foothold trap is an important tool for the harvesting of wild fur and for the management of wildlife. Foothold traps are designed to hold furbearers securely and without injury. Through recent research and in the field observations by expert trappers throughout the years, we are learning how to make these tools even more efficient and effective as a live capture restraining device.

PTA

