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Representing SPORTSMEN on Capitol Hill**



# On Target

The Official Publication of the  
Pennsylvania Federation of Sportsmen's Clubs

**November/December 2017**





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PFSC On Target November/December 2017

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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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PFSC is one of Pennsylvania's oldest and largest conservation organizations, formed in 1932.

PFSC welcomes stories, art, and photographic contributions. We will consider, but assume no responsibility for unsolicited proposals, manuscripts, art, or photographs.

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Mercer County  
Red Fox

Photo by  
Charlie Sykes





ENCOURAGING THE  
**CONSERVATION**  
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## “PERMIT FURBEARERS” GENERATE EXCITEMENT ABOUT TRAPPING

By: Todd Strohecker, PTA Vice President - East

**Be Responsible!  
 Be Respectful!  
 Be Ethical!**

Throughout history, trapping has always been associated with the fur trade. The fact that the fur producer practices their craft for monetary gain is where trapping differs the most from hunting and fishing. The value of fur is driven by supply and demand and the size of the harvest is directly proportional to the dollar value placed on each species during that fur harvesting season. Trapping is and always will be a commercial activity for the most part and this is evident in the laws and regulations that pertain to trapping.

The trapping laws are put in place to protect the furbearer resource and to ensure the activity does not unnecessarily affect the non-trapping public and/or non-target species. Trappers should be given the freedom to harvest the surplus furbearers in the most efficient way possible. This ensures the activity is profitable for the trapper and also lessens the surplus animal populations that can be detrimental to property owners and sportsmen and women alike.

When fur prices are low, it becomes much more difficult for trapping to be profitable. If trapping is not profitable, partici-

pation in the activity drops. This is coupled with the fact that people have less time for things like the outdoor pursuits than they did in previous generations. Our youth have become busier and busier with sports and extracurricular activities, so even if they have the “fire and desire” to hunt, trap or fish, what they lack is the time. Whether it be hunters, anglers, or trappers, their strength is in their numbers and we as an association do not want to see our ranks diminish.

Over the last 17 years, fur prices were only really spectacular for a short period from 2012 to 2014. The rest of the time, prices on wild fur were mediocre (and I hate to be negative BUT) to what we currently are experiencing as abysmal. That being coupled with the fact that our population has become busier and busier would lead one to believe that we should have experienced a mass exodus from the trapping ranks. **Surprising to many is that trapping participation did not decline as much as some of the other outdoor pursuits.**


It is of my opinion that the opportunity to harvest three special furbearers in this state helped greatly in encouraging new folks to participate in trapping. These species being the bobcat, fisher, and most recently the river otter. Whereas common farmland species like raccoons, foxes, and muskrats are trapped commercially for monetary gain, the bobcat, fisher, and otter are looked at as unique furbearers and a sense of satisfaction is gained by harvesting any one of them.

Due to the species populations and the large number of fur harvesters in Pennsylvania, these furbearers have short seasons with a bag limit of only one. It is obvious that these furbearers are being managed to give trappers a unique and special opportunity, because at this point it would be impossible to manage them as a commercial species and still protect the resource.

What the bobcat, fisher, and otter have done is bring excitement to trapping. Grandfathers, fathers, sons, grandsons, uncles, wives, friends, and siblings are participating in these seasons together and are making memories that last a lifetime. I have seen many of the folks participating in these permit species sharing the experience with others. The fellowship is actually part of the whole experience.



*Todd with a “Permit Furbearer” bobcat he trapped last season.*

These particular species 

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**Effective 1/1/2014** **Please Print Legibly**





## United Bowhunters of PA

<http://www.ubofpa.org/>

Wes Waldron, Chairman-Legislative Committee

The UBP is pleased that there is finally a near-full complement of the Pennsylvania Game Commission's, Board of Commissioners. With the confirmation of the Senate, Mr. Stanley I. Knick of Dupont, and Dr. Michael E Mitrick of York, both are now seated as District 7 and District 6 Commissioners, respectively.

Of course the replacement process to have a full complement of Commissioners still has a ways to go with the District 2 and District 3 seats now awaiting new members. As of this writing, and in our opinion due to the needless and unwarranted secrecy of the replacement process, few sportsmen are even aware of whom the candidates for those positions may be, let alone are ever aware of their qualifications. For the sportsmen and women of Pennsylvania this is truly a disservice.

The initial idea of a Governor's Sportsmen's Advisory Council was to give

the sportsmen's organizations of the Commonwealth at least a modicum of say in who should make the decisions regarding the management of this states wildlife, game, habitat and fish. In the beginning, each sportsmen's group provided a representative to the Council, and that individual reported back to his or her group on the how, what, and wherefore of the selection process. Unfortunately, it did not take long for the selection process to be revealed as purely political, and the involvement of the sportsmen as little more than window dressing.

Of course the actions of the GSAC, as well as the process for commissioner candidate selection for both the PGC and PF&BC have become so secretive, and the outcome of their efforts so politically orchestrated, that one has to opine if the council's existence is even necessary.

Of course this is Pennsylvania, where

politics has managed to involve itself with practically every facet of our lives. And while many of us have learned to live with, and yes even depend upon those folks in the Capitol, when it comes to our wildlife and habitat resources, a lot of us chose to depend upon, and put our faith and expectations in, trained professionals rather than politicians with personal agendas and a "good old boy" appointment plan. And since we mentioned "personal agendas, the UBP still awaits the passing of Senate Bill 192 and Senate Bill 30 so that our game and fish agencies can begin a financial recovery that continues to be blocked by a small, disgruntled group of House members.

One must ponder if an occasional wage freeze (and term limits) on the General Assembly would perhaps result in a bit of enlightenment. Would that this could be arranged.

*UBP*

The United Bowhunters of Pennsylvania is a nonprofit organization dedicated to the preservation, promotion, and protection of bowhunting opportunities in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. The UBP supports game management based on sound biological principles and a "resource first" philosophy.

### Permit Furbearers Continued

reside in some of the most beautiful and remote portions of our state, and the seasons are bringing life back to hunting camps that would be otherwise empty at that time of year.

While the general trapping of wild furbearers will always be a commercial activity, the opportunity to harvest the permit furbearer species has kept people excited about trapping and enticed some new trappers to our ranks. It has encouraged some folks who may have not had the interest or time to make trapping their primary outdoor pursuit to give it a shot on a smaller scale. The permit seasons have been the catalyst for some outdoorsmen and women

to now say they phrase "Yes, I'm a trapper." That is about as much of a success story as one can ask for.

*PTA*

### PHOTOS & STORIES WANTED

Have a photo and/or story of a youth you'd like us to run in a future edition?

Send them to [info@pfsc.org](mailto:info@pfsc.org)

Photographer's name, name and age of the youth in the photo/story, details and location, and youth's address so we can send them a complimentary copy, must be included with submission.



*William Calwell of New Milford was the Winner of the Savage Stevens 301 20ga at the SCFSC Youth Field Day.*

*Photo by Dustin Walker*