

WS Directive

2.450 03/10/04

TRAPS AND TRAPPING DEVICES

1. PURPOSE

To establish guidelines for WS personnel for using certain types of animal capture devices in managing wildlife damage.

2. REPLACEMENT HIGHLIGHTS

This directive replaces ADC Directive 2.450, Traps and Trapping Devices, dated 4/8/94.

3. POLICY

The use of all traps, snares, and other animal capture devices by WS employees will comply with applicable Federal, State, and local laws and regulations related to animal capture for managing wildlife damage (WS Directive 2.210, Compliance with Federal, State, and Local Laws and Regulations). Traps and trapping devices will not be used unless appropriate authorization is granted by landowner (WS Form 12A, 12B, 12C, 12D or 12F). All traps and trapping devices are to be checked as frequently as possible and no less frequently than required by law, unless specific exemptions that may be provided for in applicable wildlife regulations are obtained. All traps used by WS will be labeled (Property of U.S. Government, Property of USDA, Property of Texas, etc., as appropriate), either with an attached tag or stamped directly on the trap. Other trapping devices will be identified as required by State law.

All traps and trapping devices will be set in a manner which minimizes the chances of capturing nontarget species. Nontarget animals captured will be released alive if it is determined that they are physically able to survive. In the rare event that an animal determined to be a licensed, lost pet is captured, reasonable efforts will be made to notify the owner, to seek veterinary assistance if necessary, or to provide the animal to appropriate local authorities. Target animals captured in direct control projects will be dispatched immediately, removed from capture devices, and properly disposed (WS Directive 2.505, Euthanizing Wildlife; WS Directive 2.510, Fur, Other Animal Parts, and Edible Meat; WS Directive 2.515, Disposal of Wildlife Carcasses). Captured animals intended for release, relocation, or captivity will be handled and transported appropriately to achieve project objectives (WS Directive 2.501, Translocation of Wildlife).

Appropriate warning signs will be posted on main entrances or

commonly used access points to areas where foot-hold traps, snares, or rotating jaw (Conibear-type) traps are in use. Signs will be routinely checked to assure they are present, obvious, and readable. Signs must be removed when equipment is no longer in use.

WS recognizes the value and use of the trapping Best Management Practices (BMP) guidelines for private fur harvest and other trapping activities being developed and promulgated by State wildlife management agencies and the International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies. WS recognizes that these guidelines for different regions of the United States are under development and continuing revision for 23 species of North American mammals, and that they will be periodically updated based on the availability and public use of commercial capture devices. Insofar as practical, WS intends to utilize these guidelines as a basis for policy formulation, recognizing that some devices used in wildlife damage management are not commercially available and that not all devices recommended in the BMP guidelines for general public use meet the more stringent performance requirements, particularly for efficiency and durability, for use in Federal wildlife management activities.

a. Foot-hold Traps and Snares. Foot-hold traps or snares are not to be set closer than 30 feet from any exposed animal carcass or part thereof, having meat or viscera attached, including remains of animals previously removed from traps or snares that may attract raptors or other nontarget animals. If an animal carcass could be dragged or moved by scavengers to within 30 feet of set foot-hold traps, snares, or M-44's the carcass will be secured to restrict movement (WS Directive 2.455, Scents, Baits, and Attractants). These restrictions do not apply to animal carcasses used to attract bear or mountain lion to approved capture devices or to foot-hold traps set for the purpose of live-capturing birds, as provided for in laws or regulations governing wildlife capture, insofar as such procedures are consistent with agency policy and other authorizing documents and have been approved by the WS Regional Director.

Capture devices used in restraining sets must incorporate pantension devices, if appropriate, to prevent or reduce the capture of nontarget animals, unless such use would preclude capture of the intended target animals.

Foot-hold traps equivalent to size No. 3 or larger, when used in restraining sets, are limited to types with smooth, rounded offset jaws that may or may not be laminated or to padded-type jaws. Foot-hold traps with teeth or spiked jaws are prohibited (WS Directive 2.335, Wolf Damage Management). Unless specifically authorized by the WS Regional Director, replacements to agency capture device inventory should be selected from the various commercially available devices or equivalents listed in regional Best Management Practices guidelines for each species.

If it is necessary to use foot-hold traps or snares under fence

lines, reasonable efforts should be taken to obtain the approval of adjacent landowners; judgment should be used to avoid capture of livestock and other domestic animals.

The use of break-away locks or stops is encouraged when livestock, deer, or other large animals may be exposed to snare sets.

When setting traps and snares, caution should be used so that captured animals will not be conspicuous, particularly along public roads and trails.

Appropriate notification signs must be posted near bear and lion foot-snare sets.

Foot-hold traps will not be used to take bear.

b. Pole Traps. Foot-hold traps, leg snares, or tangle snares may be set on poles or roosting structures to capture birds causing damage or considered a human health or safety risk, if such devices are authorized by the applicable depredation permit. Appropriate Federal, State, or local special purpose permits shall be obtained and in the possession of the authorized WS person when performing the capture function.

Traps should not exceed size No. 1-1/2 for most raptors. This limitation does not preclude the use of larger, modified traps to capture eagles. Trap springs should be modified to produce the lightest jaw closure sufficient to catch and hold the target raptor. Trap jaws should be sufficiently padded to reduce the possibility of injuring the raptor's legs.

To reduce unnecessary stress to the captured birds, traps will be checked at least twice daily, but not less than required by appropriate permit(s); a slide wire, or similar device, shall be used to allow the raptor to rest on the ground.

c. Rotating Jaw Traps. Rotating jaw (Conibear-type) traps equivalent to size 330, or with a jaw spread exceeding 8 inches, are restricted to water sets. Use of all rotating jaw traps will comply with Federal, State, Tribal, or local laws or authorizing permits.

d. Cage Traps. Use and placement of cage traps by WS personnel will comply with applicable laws, regulations and authorizing permits. In addition to other requirements, cage traps loaned to cooperators or members of the public, in addition to appropriate property labeling, will also be labeled as "Loaned Equipment." Cooperators will be responsible for replacing lost, damaged, or stolen equipment (WS Directive 4.165, Loaning Equipment).

e. Decoy Traps. Decoy traps are used for capture of groups of animals, usually birds, that are attracted to other animals maintained in the trap. Ample food and water will be maintained in such traps used by WS personnel.

4. TRAPPER EDUCATION

All employees whose duties involve animal capture will participate in a trapper education course as recommended by Best Management Practices guidelines. State Directors may provide for continuing trapping education for appropriate employees on an annual basis at district, State, or regional meetings.

5. EXCEPTIONS

Unless otherwise mentioned, any exceptions to this operational policy may be authorized on a case by case basis by the WS Regional Director.

6. REFERENCES

WS Directive 2.210, Compliance with Federal, State, and Local Laws and Regulations (3/1/04).

WS Directive 2.335, Wolf Damage Management (4/29/03).

WS Directive 2.455, Scents, Baits, and Attractants (2/17/04).

WS Directive 2.501, Translocation of Wildlife (7/30/03).

WS Directive 2.505, Euthanizing Wildlife (7/28/03).

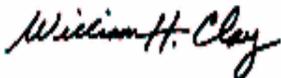
WS Directive 2.510, Fur, Other Animal Parts, and Edible Meat (10/8/03).

WS Directive 2.515, Disposal of Wildlife Carcasses (7/30/03).

WS Directive 4.165, Loaning Equipment (10/31/03).

50 CFR Part 21 - Migratory Bird Permits, Subpart D - Control of Depredating Birds.

50 CFR Part 22 - Eagle Permits.



Deputy Administrator