



New Mexico Department of Game and Fish

# 2020–2021 NEW MEXICO FURBEARER



## RULES & INFO

Rules and Information for Furbearer Trapping and Hunting

[wildlife.state.nm.us](http://wildlife.state.nm.us)

*Conserving New Mexico's Wildlife for Future Generations*

## A Message from the Director



Thank you for purchasing a license and contributing to wildlife conservation in New Mexico. All wildlife benefits.

Also appreciated are your observance of the rules and regulations that govern how species are managed in the state and for the ethical practices you exemplify in the field.

This past January, the New Mexico State Game Commission finalized changes to the furbearer rule, and some significant changes have been adopted. These changes are being instituted by the Department this license year and most notably include:

- Mandatory furbearer and trapper education requirement.
- Adoption, wherever feasible, of internationally developed best management practices for trapping.
- Closures of identified high-use recreation areas for the use of land sets.
- New expanded seasons for nutria and raccoon.
- Review and update of the furbearer rule every four years.

Thank you again for spending time to become aware of the new changes and to ensure you understand the important information contained in this booklet.

Your support and contributions to the better management of furbearer species in the state of New Mexico is truly appreciated.

Be well and enjoy all that this beautiful and diverse state has to offer!

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Michael B. Sloane". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Michael B. Sloane, Director — New Mexico Department of Game and Fish

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## Mission of the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish

To conserve, regulate, propagate and protect the wildlife and fish within the State of New Mexico, using a flexible management system that ensures sustainable use for public food supply, recreation and safety, and to provide for off-highway motor vehicle recreation that recognizes cultural, historic and resource values while ensuring public safety.

## New Mexico State Game Commissioners

P.O. Box 25112, Santa Fe, NM 87504; Commissioner emails available online: [www.state.wildlife.nm.us](http://www.state.wildlife.nm.us)

Chair: Sharon Salazar Hickey, Los Alamos; Vice Chair: Roberta Salazar-Henry, Las Cruces; Jimmy Ray Bates, Sr., Albuquerque; Gail Cramer, Mayhill; Tirzio J. Lopez, Cebolla; David Soules, Las Cruces; Jeremy Vesbach, Placitas

## New Mexico Department of Game and Fish

One Wildlife Way, Santa Fe, NM 87507 . . . . . 1-888-248-6866

Michael B. Sloane, Director; Vacant, Deputy Director; Vacant, Assistant Director; James Comins, Assistant Director; Robert Griego, Colonel – Field Operations

## Regional Offices

- Northwest Office: 7816 Alamo Rd. NW, Albuquerque, NM 87120. . . . . (505) 222-4700
- Southwest Office: 2715 Northrise Drive, Las Cruces, NM 88011. . . . . (575) 532-2100
- Northeast Office: 215 York Canyon Road, Raton, NM 87740 . . . . . (575) 445-2311  
P.O. Box 1145, Raton NM 87740
- Southeast Office: 1615 W. College Blvd., Roswell, NM 88201 . . . . . (575) 624-6135

## Conservation Officer Contact Information

<http://www.wildlife.state.nm.us/enforcement/law-enforcement-contact-information/>

## Online Licenses, Applications and Harvest Reporting

<https://onlinesales.wildlife.state.nm.us>

## Important Telephone Numbers

- General Information, License Sales and Harvest Reporting . . . . . 1-888-248-6866
- Trapper Education Program Information . . . . . (505) 476-8041
- Operation Game Thief (OGT)**. . . . . **1-800-432-4263**
- 24-hour Depredation Hotline . . . . . 1-888-727-4883
- Mexican Wolf Interagency Field Office . . . . . 1-888-459-9653

# Trapper Education

Licenses and General Information: [www.wildlife.state.nm.us](http://www.wildlife.state.nm.us)

## Furbearer Education Requirements

Effective April 1, 2020, every person purchasing a Trapper License must complete one of the furbearer trapper/hunter education courses and quizzes described below. All courses are available free of charge. Whether you plan to trap or hunt or both will determine which course is required. However, the New Mexico Trapper Education course meets all the educational requirements, regardless of whether you hunt, trap or do both. The New Mexico Department of Game and Fish (NMDGF) encourages everyone to take this course.

Trapper Education provides information and instruction for responsible and ethical trapping and hunting of furbearers in New Mexico. Courses must be provided or approved by NMDGF. These courses provide: 1) essential information needed to be a responsible and ethical trapper, 2) the laws governing furbearer trapping and hunting and 3) information about furbearer species in New Mexico.

To enroll you must log into your NMDGF account (the same as when buying a license or applying for the draw), then click 'Trapper Education' to complete the course you need. For assistance logging into your account contact the NMDGF Information Center: 1-888-248-6866. If in the past you have ever purchased a license in New Mexico but are unable to log into your account, DO NOT CREATE A NEW ACCOUNT! Please call for assistance.

## Which Course Are You Required To Take?

### Trappers Who Have Never Taken a Trapper Education Course

If you plan on trapping and have never taken a trapper education course, you are required to take the New Mexico Trapper Education Course. NMDGF, with assistance from the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (AFWA), has developed the online New Mexico Trapper Education Course. This course satisfies all of the education requirements for setting traps or snares for furbearers and for hunting furbearers in New Mexico. Upon successful completion of this course, participants will receive a Course Completion Certificate. This certificate should be saved and/or printed. The New Mexico Trapper Education Course can be found by logging onto your NMDGF account and selecting 'Trapper Education'. Once complete, your account will show that you have taken the course and it will be printed on your license. No need to carry proof of completion in the field! This course meets all education requirements and no other course or quiz is required.

### Trappers Who Have Taken Trapper Education in Another State

If you plan on trapping and have already completed a trapper education course offered through a different venue (another state wildlife management agency or an NMDGF-approved non-state entity), you are required to take the New Mexico Furbearer Law and Species Identification Course. To determine whether a trapper education course is approved contact the NMDGF Trapper Education Program: (505) 476-8038. The New Mexico Furbearer Law and Species Identification Course focuses specifically on the regulations that must be followed in New Mexico and you must successfully pass a course quiz before a license can be purchased.

# Trapper Education

Licenses and General Information: **1-888-248-6866**

## *Trappers who have taken trapper education in another state — continued.*

The course materials and quiz can be found by logging onto your NMDGF account and selecting 'Trapper Education'. You will be required to enter your trapper education certificate number from the NMDGF-approved course you previously completed. To verify completion of the previously-completed course, you may either submit a copy of this certificate to NMDGF, or you must carry it while trapping or hunting. Alternatively, to eliminate the need to submit or carry a certificate in the field you may take the New Mexico Trapper Education Course which meets all education requirements.

## **Furbearer Hunters (no trapping allowed)**

If you only hunt furbearers (you will not be setting traps or snares), you are required to complete the Hunt Only Course (New Mexico Furbearer Hunt Course). This is an abbreviated version of the New Mexico Furbearer Law and Species Identification Course which covers only the information applicable to hunting furbearers. You must successfully pass a course quiz before a license can be purchased. The course materials and quiz can be found online by logging onto your NMDGF account and selecting 'Trapper Education'. The Hunt Only Course does not cover trapping and does not satisfy the requirements to set traps or snares in New Mexico. If you think you might trap at any time in the future, you should complete the New Mexico Trapper Education Course which meets all furbearer hunting and trapping requirements. It is illegal to set any trap or snare without having completed an approved trapper education course. NMDGF encourages all furbearer hunters to take the full New Mexico Trapper Education Course.

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*Foothold trap placed flush with the surface of the ground. NMDGF photo.*



# License Requirements

Licenses and General Information: [www.wildlife.state.nm.us](http://www.wildlife.state.nm.us)

## While in the Field You Must Have All of the Following

### New Mexico Residents

(see page 5 for residency requirements)

1. Trapper License: Required for all furbearer trappers and hunters 18 years of age and older. The license will display whether you are authorized to hunt and trap, or hunt only.
2. Junior Trapper License: Required for all furbearer trappers and hunters 12–17 years of age (Hunter Education also required if hunting furbearers).
3. Habitat Management and Access Validation: Required for all hunters, trappers or anglers, see page 4.
4. Habitat Stamp: Required for all hunters, trappers or anglers on U.S. Forest Service or Bureau of Land Management lands, see page 4.
5. Written Permission: All hunters and trappers on private lands must possess written permission from the landowner or person authorized to grant permission.
6. Trapper Education Certificate: All trappers that have completed Trapper Education in another state or jurisdiction but have not had NMDGF verify completion of an approved course must possess a certificate while in the field.

No license is required for residents 11 years of age or younger, however, all other laws apply. No license is required for residents who are taking nongame species.

### Nonresidents

1. Trapper License: Required for hunting of furbearers or trapping of any furbearer or nongame species for nonresidents 12 years of age and older. The license will display whether you are authorized to hunt and trap, or hunt only.
2. Habitat Management and Access Validation: Required for all hunters, trappers or anglers, see page 4.
3. Habitat Stamp: Required for all hunters, trappers or anglers on any U.S. Forest Service or Bureau of Land Management lands, see page 4.
4. Written Permission: All hunters and trappers on private lands must possess written permission from the landowner or person authorized to grant permission.
5. Trapper Education Certificate: All trappers that have completed a trapper education course in another state or jurisdiction but have not had NMDGF verify completion of an approved course must possess a certificate while in the field.

Nonresidents must possess a Nonresident Trapper License to hunt protected furbearers or trap any animal (furbearers and nongame). If you have any current New Mexico nonresident hunting license, you may hunt and possess nongame species (coyotes, rabbits and skunks), but you may not set traps or snares. To set traps or snares you must have a Nonresident Trapper License. Residents of states that do not allow trapping by New Mexico residents may not legally purchase a New Mexico Nonresident Trapper License.

# License Requirements

Licenses and General Information: **1-888-248-6866**

## Over-the-Counter (OTC) License Fees

License Type	Resident	Nonresident
Trapper License . . . . .	\$20 . . . . .	\$345
Junior Trapper License . . . . .	\$9 . . . . .	Not Issued
Game Hunting License. . . . . (allows both small game and nongame hunting for nonresidents)	Not Applicable . . . . .	\$65
Nongame Hunting License . . . . .	Not Issued . . . . .	\$65
Habitat Improvement Stamp . . . . .	\$5 . . . . .	\$5
Habitat Management and Access Validation . . . . . (\$1 vendor fee will apply for all purchases)	\$4 . . . . .	\$4

## Habitat Management and Access Validation (HMAV)

A habitat management and access validation (HMAV) must be purchased by all hunters and trappers, except individuals 17 years of age or younger, and 100% disabled veteran card holders. Only one HMAV is required per license year, and it can be used in conjunction with all trapping, hunting and fishing licenses. Fees are used to: lease access to private lands for public use; provide public access to landlocked public land; and improve, maintain, develop and operate State Game Commission property for fish and wildlife habitat management. If required, the HMAV will be added automatically to your shopping cart when the trapper license is first purchased.

## Habitat Stamp

The Habitat Stamp is required for everyone, except trappers 11 years of age or younger, hunting or trapping furbearers or nongame on U.S. Forest Service (USFS) or Bureau of Land Management (BLM) properties. This includes disabled veteran card holders. The stamp must be purchased once per license year and can be used in conjunction with all trapping, hunting and fishing licenses. Funds from the sale of Habitat Stamps are used to improve wildlife habitat throughout New Mexico. A Habitat Stamp is not required to hunt or trap on other public or private property.

## Military and Veteran Licenses

### 50% Discount for Resident Active Military and Veterans

New Mexico residents who are active duty military or veterans are eligible to receive 50% discounts on licenses, permits and stamps. The discount may be claimed when applying for or purchasing any license, permit or stamp online, at NMDGF offices, at license vendors or by telephone. Residents claiming this discount must be able to provide upon request proof of active duty military or veteran status. Discounts do not apply to: application fees, license vendor fees, administrative fees, the federal Duck Stamp or the Resident Disabled Veteran Game Hunting & Fishing License.



## New Mexico Residency Requirements

To qualify for New Mexico resident license(s), an individual must meet one of the following criteria:

1. A United States citizen who has resided in N.M. for a period of not less than 90 days immediately preceding the date of application (or purchase) for the license, has been domiciled in N.M., and has not claimed residency elsewhere for any purpose. Temporary or seasonal residents and home owners or P.O. box holders, who maintain a primary residence outside of N.M., do not qualify for resident licenses.
2. A citizen of another country who is legally in the United States and has actually lived in N.M. for at least 90 days immediately preceding his/her license application (or purchase).
3. A student, not otherwise entitled to claim residence, who is attending any educational institution in N.M., has attended and actually has lived in the state for at least one full semester immediately preceding the application (or purchase) for a license. Students must present a certificate or letter verifying their enrollment and attendance from the proper authorities of the educational institution.
4. A member of the U.S. military, not otherwise entitled to claim residence, who is permanently assigned to a military installation located within N.M. and who presents with his/her application a certificate or letter that verifies the military assignment and is signed by the commanding officer. The spouse or dependent of such person, living within the same household and similarly certified by the person's commanding officer may also purchase resident licenses.

## License Refunds and Transfers

New Mexico Trapper Licenses are nontransferable and nonrefundable. For more information telephone the NMDGF Information Center: 1-888-248-6866.

## License Information Is Public Record

Pursuant to the New Mexico Inspection of Public Records Act, Sections 14-2-1 et. seq. NMSA 1978, information provided when applying for licenses and permits is public record and must be disclosed to anyone when properly requested, except as provided by law.

## Parental Responsibility Act

The Parental Responsibility Act requires the New Mexico State Game Commission to suspend the recreational and professional licenses of anyone who does not comply with court-ordered child support obligations. The purpose is to discourage parental neglect of children by suspending hunting, trapping and fishing privileges until failure to pay court-ordered child support has been corrected and a \$25 reinstatement fee has been paid. For more information telephone NMDGF Field Operations Division: (505) 476-8065 or the NMDGF Information Center: 1-888-248-6866.

## Fur Dealer License

A fur dealer license is required for any person, firm or corporation engaged in the business of buying or selling unprocessed skins or pelts of any furbearing animal in New Mexico. Trappers or hunters selling their own pelts and residents who purchase or sell less than 50 unprocessed pelts per year are exempt. Fur Dealer licenses may only be purchased at the NMDGF Santa Fe Office. To purchase a fur dealer license and for additional rules and restrictions please call the Field Operations Division at (505) 476-8064.

# General Rules

Licenses and General Information: **1-888-248-6866**

## Seasons and General Regulations

- There is no open season to hunt or trap mink, river otter, black-footed ferret, marten, or coatimundi.
- Nutria is a nonnative, invasive species that has caused extensive damage to wetland and riparian habitat in the United States. Their distribution is restricted in New Mexico to the Rio Hondo in Chaves and Lincoln counties. The trapping season for nutria is open year-round to prevent population increase and expansion.
- There is no closed season or bag limit for nongame species such as coyotes and skunks, however, hunters and trappers must still abide by NMDGF rules regarding trapping and hunting.
- State Game Commission Lands–Prairie Chicken WMAs are open to hunting and trapping furbearers and nongame species from November 1 to March 15, 2021 by individuals who hold a valid trapper license and HMAV stamp. For all other wildlife management areas each hunter or trapper must have written permission from NMDGF. Permission is not guaranteed. Restrictions may be placed on this permission, and this permission may be rescinded at any time for violations of the restrictions.

### Seasons (statewide)

**Badger, bobcat, fox, ringtail, and weasel:** November 1, 2020–March 15, 2021.

**Beaver and muskrat:** April 1–April 30, 2020; November 1, 2020–March 31, 2021.

**Nutria:** April 1, 2020–March 31, 2021.

**Raccoon - all legal methods:** April 1–May 15, 2020; September 1, 2020–March 31, 2021.

**Raccoon - restricted methods:** May 16–August 31, 2020

(Restricted methods include cage traps, foot-encapsulating traps, and hunting).

### Legal Shooting Hours

Restricted to the period one-half hour before sunrise to one-half hour after sunset except that a licensed furbearer hunter is authorized by the Department to hunt for and take raccoons by use of artificial light while hunting at night with a rim-fire rifle or handgun no greater in size than a .22 caliber, shotgun, bow or crossbow during open season. The artificial light used for raccoon hunting must be a headlamp or hand-held flashlight. It is unlawful for any artificial light to be cast from a vehicle while raccoon hunting. Licensed trappers may check and remove furbearers or nongame from their traps at any time of day.

### Legal methods of Taking Furbearers

Legal methods of taking furbearers include any sporting arm (see definitions), falconry, traps and snares. Restricted-use pesticides may not be used for the take of any furbearer. Raccoon may be hunted or trapped during the extended season with a current trapper license. Only cage traps and foot encapsulating traps are allowed for raccoon trapping during this period.

### Hunting from Roads

You may not shoot at any protected furbearer from a road or from within the right-of-way fences of any maintained public road. If there is no right-of-way fence, you may not shoot at any protected species furbearer from any part of the maintained surface of the public road. A public road is any road, street or thoroughfare which is open to the public or which the public has right to access and which has been paved, graded or maintained using public funds. In addition, you may not shoot at any protected species furbearer from within or upon a motor vehicle or aircraft. **Mobility Impaired Hunters** - Any licensed furbearer hunter who has a Mobility Impaired card is allowed to shoot at, take or attempt to take a furbearer, during its their respective open season, from a stationary motor-driven vehicle, only if: 1) the vehicle has been parked completely off of

the established road's surface; and 2) the established road has no right-of-way fence. The holder of a Mobility Impaired card may not shoot at, take or attempt to take any protected species furbearer from within the right-of-way fence on any established road.

### **Off-road Travel**

Licensed hunters and trappers may not drive or ride in a motor vehicle which is driven off an established road on public land. Written permission is required to drive or ride in a motor vehicle off-road on private land. Exception: snow-mobiles, or vehicles used to retrieve game in an area not closed to vehicular traffic.

### **Check Requirements**

All land sets must be visually checked every calendar day. Water sets must be checked at least once every other calendar day. A licensed trapper may designate an agent to check their set traps and snares on alternating check days, but the licensed trapper must personally check the traps every other check day. For example, for land sets operating Monday through Friday, the trapper checks Monday, Wednesday, and Friday and his or her agent checks Tuesday and Thursday. Any person may be designated as an agent for any licensed trapper, but the agent must possess written permission from the trapper and a valid trapper license. The permission must include the licensed trapper's full name, contact information, and the agent must know the location of traps.

### **Dogs**

Dogs are allowed for hunting all furbearers during open season.

### **Artificial Light**

It is illegal to use a spotlight or any other artificial light to hunt any furbearer (except raccoons, see legal shooting hours above) or nongame species including coyotes and rabbits, even if you are on private land and have landowner permission, unless you have an artificial light permit.

### **Bag Limits**

The bag limit for mink, otter, masked or blackfooted ferret, Pacific (pine) marten and coati mundi is zero (0). It is illegal to harvest any of these species. For all other furbearer species there currently is no bag limit, however, NMDGF may set a bag limit annually for any furbearer species to address significant changes in statewide populations or to address critical Department management needs. Annual bag limits, if set, shall expire March 31st each year.

### **Catchpoles**

A release device or catchpole must be carried by trappers, and all captured animals must be removed or released from any trap or snare at the time of check. In cases where assistance is required for safe release of the animal, or when biological data is sought by the Department, the Department must be notified as soon as possible.

### **Tampering with Traps**

It is illegal to destroy, damage, disturb, steal or remove any trap, snare, or trapped wildlife without permission of the owner of the trap or snare. However, domestic animals caught in traps may be released at any time. New Mexico Law (Chapter 17-2-7.1, NMSA 1978) prohibits interference with another person who is lawfully hunting, trapping or fishing. To report illegal traps or other poaching activity call Operation Game Thief: 1-800-432-4263 as soon as possible. Removing or destroying traps (or other evidence) prevents officers from prosecuting poachers and is illegal.

# General Rules

Licenses and General Information: **1-888-248-6866**

## Restrictions Applying to All Traps that Could Reasonably Be Expected To Catch a Furbearer

This includes traps set for nongame species such as coyotes and skunks.

### Marking Traps and Snares

Each trap or snare must be either permanently marked with, or have a tag securely attached with, a Department-issued user identification number or the name and address of the trapper using the trap or snare. Trappers may use either their Trapper ID number, if issued, or their Customer Identification Number (CIN) as a trapper ID.



### Size Restrictions - Land Sets

No foothold trap with an outside jaw spread larger than 6 1/2 inches, or 7 inches maximum if laminated above the jaw surfaces, or tooth-jawed trap may be used in making a land set. No body-grip trap with an inside jaw spread greater than 7 inches may be set on land. Body-grip traps with inside jaw spreads of between 6 and 7 inches set on land must be recessed in a cubby at least 8 inches from the entrance.



### Offsets

All foothold traps with an inside jaw spread equal to or greater than 5 1/2 inches used in making a land set shall be off-set a minimum of 3/16 of an inch between the contact surfaces of the closed jaws, unless they have been constructed or modified so that a portion of the jaw is padded with a soft material such as rubber or canvas.

### Size Restrictions - Water Sets

No foothold trap with an inside jaw spread larger than 7 1/2 inches or body-grip trap with a jaw spread greater than 12 inches shall be used in making a water set. Body-grip traps used in water sets with a jaw spread of eight inches or more must be submerged in water to their jaw pivot or deeper.

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*Top: Foothold trap jaw spread.  
NMDGF photo.*

*Bottom: Recessed cubby.*

### Bait

It is unlawful to place, set or maintain any land set within 30 feet of any bait over two ounces in weight which is visible to airborne raptors. Bones that are entirely free of bait are legal.

## Setbacks

Setback distances are designed to reduce conflicts with other public land users by minimizing the chance of people and pets coming into contact with your traps. This protects your traps and avoids negative interactions with other public land users.

There is a minimum setback distance of a **1/2 mile** for all land sets from:

- An established and maintained public campground or boat-launching area.
- An occupied dwelling without written permission of the occupant of the dwelling.
- A designated and signed roadside rest area, public picnic area or trailhead. "Trailhead" shall mean an officially designated, mapped, maintained and marked terminus of any trail closed to all vehicles having three or more wheels, and is published on the most current map issued by the state or federal land management agency responsible for that property.

There is a minimum setback distance of **150 feet** for all land sets from:

- Any man-made livestock or wildlife catchment, pond, or tank containing water, except on private land.

There is a minimum setback distance of **75 feet** for all land sets from:

- The edge of any public road or trail (including any culvert or structure located beneath it) if no right of way fence is present, except on private land. Land sets may not be placed within any right of way fence on any public road. "Public road" shall mean any road, street or thoroughfare open to motorized vehicle travel which was constructed and is maintained with public funds and is open to the public; or any road, street, or thoroughfare open to motorized vehicle travel that is officially numbered or named on the most current published map issued by a municipal, state or federal agency and is open to the public. "Trail" shall mean any officially designated, mapped, maintained, and marked path open for public use and published on the most current map issued by a state or federal land management agency.

## Swivels

Each foothold trap set on land must have at least two separate swivel points in the anchor chain. At least one of these swivel points must be within six inches of the trap.

## Anchoring

All traps or snares set on land must use stakes, chains, drags or other anchoring that will prevent any furbearer, coyote or wolf caught from escaping with the trap.

## Breakaways

Any snare set on land must have a lock or break-away device which is designed to release or fail when a maximum of 350 pounds of pressure is applied to it. Locks or break-away devices must be attached in a way which leaves no part of the snare attached to an animal when it releases or fails. All snares must be securely anchored and cannot be attached to a drag. Exception: foot snares.



*Left to right: Drag, 18" stake, 24" stake and earth anchor (disposable type). NMDGF photo.*

# General Rules

Licenses and General Information: **1-888-248-6866**

## It is illegal:

### Trapping Licenses

- To hunt, trap or kill any furbearer without a trapping license.
- For any nonresident to trap for any species without having a trapping license.
- For any nonresident to hunt, kill or possess any nongame species without having a trapping license, nongame license or any big-game license.

### Hunting /Trapping Areas, Seasons and Hours

- To hunt or kill furbearers outside of their established seasons.
- To hunt or kill a mink, river otter, black-footed ferret, marten, coatimundi, Mexican wolf or lynx or to intentionally trap for mink, river otter, black-footed ferret, marten, coatimundi, wolf or lynx.
- To hunt for furbearers outside of legal shooting hours.
- To cast the rays of artificial light (spotlight) into any field or pasture where big game or livestock may be while in possession of a weapon (even if you are only hunting nongame).
- To kill any endangered species.
- To hunt or trap on private land without written permission.
- To place or maintain a land set in an area closed to trapping.
- To trap, hunt or kill any beaver on public land within the Cibola, Lincoln or Gila National Forests.

### Vehicles and Land Use

- To shoot at furbearers from a motor vehicle.
- To shoot at furbearers from or across any paved, graded or maintained public road or from within the fenced right-of-way of any paved, graded or maintained public road.
- To park any motor vehicle or camp within 300 yards of any man-made water hole, water well or watering tank used by wildlife or domestic stock without the prior consent of the private landowner, private-land lessee, public-land lessee or public-land management agency.
- To drive off-road or on a closed road on any public land.
- To litter and/or pollute streams, lakes and other waters.
- To leave a fire unattended or to improperly handle fire.

### Checking Traps

- To not check land sets every calendar day. Trappers using an agent must ensure traps and snares are checked on alternating checks by themselves and their agent.
- To not check water sets every other calendar day. Trappers using an agent must ensure traps and snares are checked on alternating checks by themselves and their agent.
- To not release or remove any captured animal at the time the trap is checked.
- For any trapper to not have a catch pole or other release device while trapping.

## Trap and Snare Restrictions

- To use any trap on land that does not have at least two (2) swivel points in its anchor chain.
- To set any trap or snare on land without stakes, chains, drags or other anchoring such that any furbearer, coyote or wolf caught will be prevented from escaping with the trap.
- To use a foothold trap that has a jaw spread over 6.5 inches, or 7 inches if outside laminated in land sets.
- To use a foothold trap that has a jaw spread over 7.5 inches in water sets.
- To use a body grip trap with a jaw spread over 7 inches on land.
- To use a body grip trap with a jaw spread of 6–7 inches on land without the trap being recessed in a cubby at least 8 inches from the entrance.
- To use any body grip trap with a jaw spread of more than 12 inches in water sets.
- To use any foothold trap in a land set with an inside jaw spread of 5.5 inches or greater which does not have at least a 3/16-inch offset unless the trap has padded jaws.
- To use any trap or snare that is not permanently marked with or doesn't have a tag securely attached with, a Department issued user-identification number or the name and address of the trapper using the trap or snare.
- To set any snare on land which does not have a breakaway device or lock that has been designed to fail at 350 lbs. or less.
- To anchor a snare with a drag.

## Firearms and Manner and Method of Take

- To use or place poison to kill any furbearer.
- To discharge a firearm within 150 yards of a dwelling or building (not including abandoned or vacated buildings on public land) without the permission of the owner or lessee.
- To recklessly or carelessly handle a firearm.
- To hunt while under the influence of alcohol or other intoxicants, including medical marijuana.

## Setback Distances

- To place a land set on public land within ½ mile of an established and maintained public campground or boat-launching area; a designated and signed roadside rest area, public picnic area or trailhead; or an occupied dwelling without written permission of the occupant of the dwelling.
- To set a trap or snare on land within 150 feet of a man-made livestock or wildlife catchment, pond or tank containing water on public land.
- To place a land set on public land within 75 feet of a public road or trail or within the right-of-way fences of any public road.
- To place, set or maintain any land set within 30 feet of any bait over two ounces in weight which is visible to airborne raptors.

# General Rules

Licenses and General Information: **1-888-248-6866**

*It is illegal: — continued.*

## **Pelt Tagging, Reporting and Possession of Furbearers**

- For any person to transport a bobcat or bobcat pelt out of the state before getting it pelt tagged, or for any person to possess a bobcat or bobcat pelt after April 14th annually which has not been pelt tagged.
- For any person to present a bobcat taken in another jurisdiction for pelt tagging in New Mexico.
- For any person to fraudulently present a bobcat for pelt tagging which was taken by another person or for any person to falsify pelt tagging or harvest reporting information.
- For any person to sell, trade, barter, possess or otherwise dispose of any bobcat pelt without it having been pelt tagged.
- To possess or transport any furbearer in a live condition.
- For any resident to purchase 50 or more untanned pelts without a fur dealer's license or for any nonresident to purchase any untanned furbearer pelts without a nonresident fur dealer license.
- For any fur dealer to charge a fee for pelt tagging any bobcat.

## **Tampering with Traps and Snares**

- For any person to destroy, damage, disturb, steal or remove any trap, snare or trapped wildlife without permission of the owner of the trap or snare. Domestic animals may be released from a trap or snare by anyone.

## **Fur Dealers**

A fur dealer license is required for any person, firm or corporation engaged in the business of buying or selling unprocessed skins or pelts of any furbearing animal in New Mexico (see page 5).

## **Operation Game Thief (OGT)**

OGT is an anonymous tip line for reporting wildlife crimes that may have occurred anywhere in the state. Rewards are paid for any case in which charges have been filed, and a conviction is not required to receive a reward. OGT is funded solely through donations from individuals and organizations and not from tax or license fees. Rewards range from \$50–\$750.

**OGT Hotline** (24 hours, 7 days a week)

1-800-432-4263 or [www.wildlife.state.nm.us/ogt](http://www.wildlife.state.nm.us/ogt)





## Mandatory Harvest Reporting

Harvest reporting is required for anyone who has purchased a trapper license, regardless of whether or not he/she hunted or trapped. Harvest reports must be submitted by April 7 for the 2019–20 license year. Reports submitted after the deadline will be charged an \$8 fee.

Failure to submit a harvest report will result in rejection of all draw license applications (deer, elk, etc.). False or fraudulent reporting can result in license privileges being revoked. Harvest Reports can be submitted online: <https://onlinesales.wildlife.state.nm.us> or by telephone: 1-888-248-6866.

## Possession and Transfer

Transfer of a harvested furbearer or its parts to another person (except a licensed fur dealer) requires a possession certificate be provided to the person who is receiving the furbearer or furbearer parts. A sample possession certificate is provided and also available online: <https://www.wildlife.state.nm.us/publications/>.

It is illegal for any person to hold, retain, transfer, sell or attempt to sell live furbearers.



## Possession Certificate

Use this certificate if you transfer a harvested furbearer or its parts to a person or organization.

I, \_\_\_\_\_ tel.: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_-\_\_\_\_,  
Full name of license holder. Telephone number. Please print.

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address of license holder required. Please print.

on this day: \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_ at: \_\_\_\_\_,  
Date of transaction; Place of transaction.

hereby convey to: \_\_\_\_\_ the following game animal(s) or parts:  
Full name of person receiving game animal(s) or parts.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Detailed description of the kind and number of animals donated or the kind, approximate weight and specific parts donated.  
(Example: one bobcat weighing approximately 22 lbs.)

for the purpose of, \_\_\_\_\_,  
Donation, taxidermy and/or meat processing.

taken in GMU \_\_\_\_\_ under license #: \_\_\_\_\_ and taken on: \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_.

Donor: \_\_\_\_\_ Recipient: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature of license holder) (Signature of recipient)

By signing we understand and acknowledge to postdate, predate or otherwise falsify a Possession Certificate is unlawful.

# Bobcat Pelt Tags

Licenses and General Information: **1-888-248-6866**

In 1978, NMDGF implemented mandatory bobcat pelt tagging in response to the International Union for Conservation of Nature (ICUN) prohibition on export of any bobcat pelt out of the United States without a permit from the U.S. Department of Interior. Bobcat pelts appear similar to several species of spotted cats which are considered endangered in other countries. Bobcats are not threatened or endangered in New Mexico or the U.S.; they are abundant in the state and can be found in every habitat type.

These regulations are defined by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), an international agreement between governments to ensure that international trade in plants and wildlife does not threaten their survival. CITES specifies that every bobcat harvested in New Mexico must have a pelt tag. The NMDGF pelt tagging requirement also allows for biological data collection to monitor total harvest, harvest distribution throughout the state, and bobcat population demographics.

## All Bobcats Harvested in New Mexico Must Be Pelt Tagged

Every person who takes a bobcat in New Mexico must present the pelt for tagging in New Mexico prior to transporting the pelt out of the state, prior to selling the pelt, or no later than April 14, annually, whichever occurs first.

Pelts can be tagged at any NMDGF office or participating fur dealer. Hunters and trappers, except residents 11 years of age or younger, must present a current New Mexico trapping license at the time of tagging. There is no charge for pelt tagging at any location. A list of participating fur dealers is available by contacting the NMDGF Furbearer Program: (505) 476-8041.

Bobcats taken outside of New Mexico must be tagged in the state where taken and will not be tagged in New Mexico.

Be sure your pelt is properly tagged before attempting to sell it. Fur dealers may not purchase a pelt that has not been tagged.

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*Furbearer auction.  
NMDGF photo by  
Elise Goldstein.*



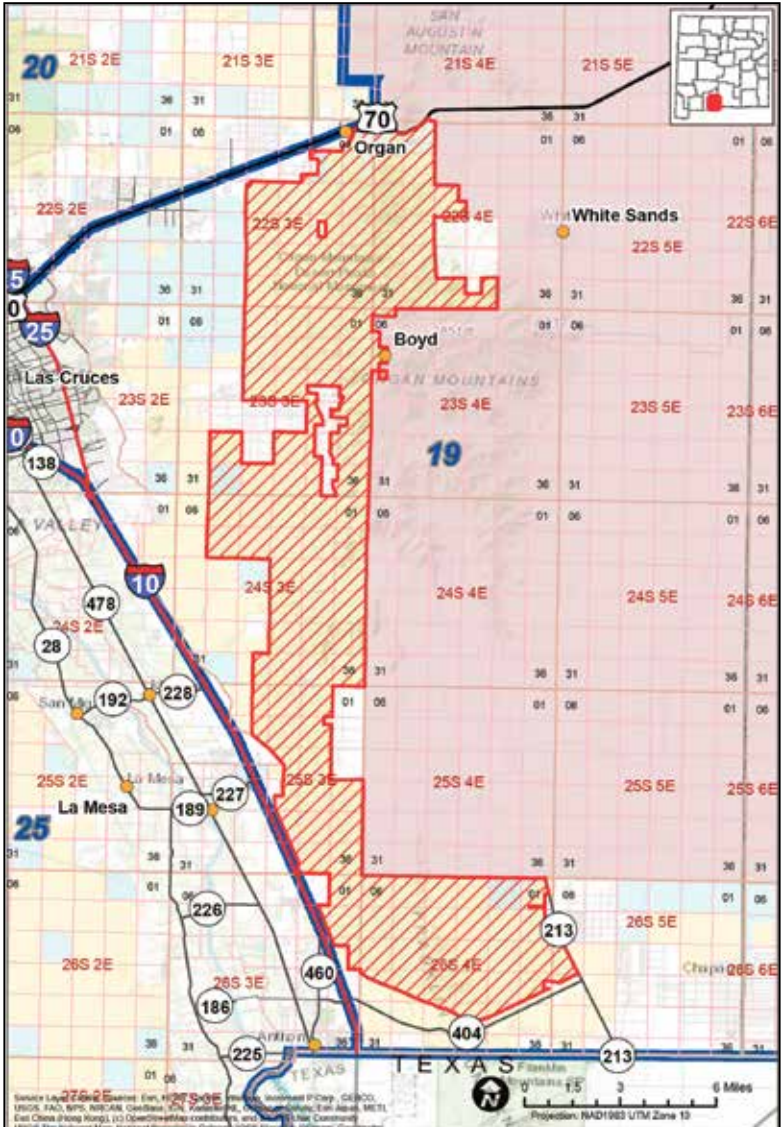


# Closed Areas

Licenses and General Information: **1-888-248-6866**

## Organ Mountains, Desert Peaks National Monument

Land sets are not permitted on BLM land within the red shaded portion of the Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks National Monument.



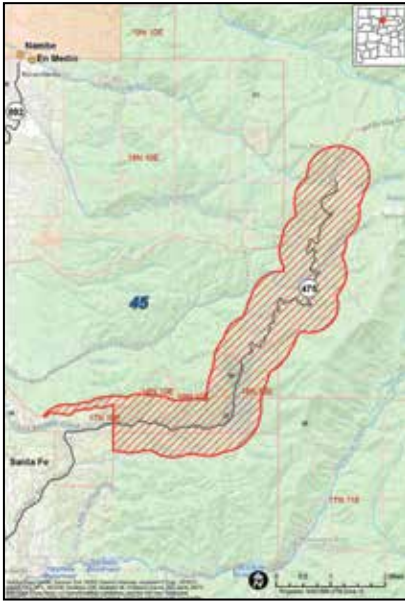


# Closed Areas

Licenses and General Information: **1-888-248-6866**

## NM 475, Santa Fe Ski Area

Land sets are not permitted on U.S. Forest Service lands within one-half mile of NM 475, east of Santa Fe to the Santa Fe Ski Basin (red shaded area).



## NM 150, Taos Ski Area

Land sets are not permitted on U.S. Forest Service lands within one-half mile of NM 150, north of Taos to the Taos Ski Basin (red shaded area).



## Federal and State Lands

The following areas may be closed by their land management agency. Contact the agency prior to furbearer trapping or hunting.

- Valles Caldera National Preserve
- Portions of the Wild Rivers Recreation Area
- Orilla Verde and Santa Cruz Lake Recreation Areas
- Chihuahuan Desert Rangeland Research Center
- New Mexico State Parks
- National Parks and Monuments
- National Wildlife Refuges

## Areas Closed to Beaver Trapping

The Cibola, Gila and Lincoln National Forests are closed to beaver trapping.

# Definitions

Licenses and General Information: [www.wildlife.state.nm.us](http://www.wildlife.state.nm.us)

**Any sporting arm:** Any firearm, muzzle-loader, compressed air gun, shotgun, bow or crossbow. All firearms, except handguns, must be designed to be fired from the shoulder.

**Bait:** The flesh, hide, fur or viscera of any animal. Bones free of flesh are not considered bait.

**Body-grip trap:** A rotating jaw trap designed to capture a furbearer by the body.

**Foothold trap:** A trap designed to capture a furbearer by the foot, but does not include foot encapsulating traps.

**Foot encapsulating trap:** Any trap with a push or pull-activated trigger located inside an enclosure recessed from an opening of no more than two inches in diameter, as measured across the opening from side to side, not corner to corner. Foot encapsulating traps include 'dog proof' and 'egg' traps.

**Furbearer:** Any quadruped defined as a fur-bearing animal in 17-5-2 NMSA 1978 (muskrat, mink, weasel, beaver, otter, nutria, masked or blackfooted ferret, ringtail cat, raccoon, pine marten, coatimundi, badgers, bobcat and all species of foxes). Not all furbearers may be taken (see Seasons, page 6).

**Jaw spread:** The distance between the jaws when measured across the center of the trap and perpendicular to a line drawn through the pivot points of the jaws when the trap is set.

**Laminated:** Any modification to the jaw thickness of a foot-hold trap by fastening a strip of metal (rod or flat stock) to the trap jaw, or a trap that is manufactured with cast jaws, which increases the contact surface area of the jaw.

**Land set:** Any foothold trap or snare set on land.

**Snare:** A wire or cable with a single closing device designed to capture a furbearer.

**Trap:** Any foothold trap, foot encapsulating trap, cage trap or body-grip trap set to capture a furbearer.

**Water set:** Any trap or snare set fully in water.



*Laminated trap.  
NMDGF photo.*

# Bobcat or Lynx

Licenses and General Information: **1-888-248-6866**

## Know the Difference between a Bobcat and a Lynx

Bobcat are common to almost all habitats in New Mexico. Bobcats are closely related to the Canada lynx that inhabits the boreal forests of Canada and parts of the northern United States. Parts of northern New Mexico are classified as lynx range, and though there are no established populations here, transients may occasionally be observed.

A few key identification characteristics can help distinguish between a lynx and a bobcat:

**Range:** The only potential habitat for lynx is high elevation forests in the San Juan and Sangre de Cristo Mountains. If you are not in this area, then you will not see a lynx.

**Body characteristics:** Lynx have much longer legs in comparison to their body size, almost like a bobcat on stilts. They have larger feet for running on top of snow. The tufts on their ears are much longer, often two inches or greater.

**Pelage (coat) patterns:** The easiest way to distinguish a lynx from a bobcat, other than by its range, is the tail. Depicted in the pictures below, the tip of a bobcat's tail is black on top, and white on the bottom. In contrast, the tip of a lynx's tail is completely black. Another common difference, although there are exceptions, is lynx rarely have black spots or bars on the undersides and insides of their limbs.

There is no open season for Canada lynx in New Mexico. Any lynx caught while trapping in New Mexico must be released alive, and the incident must be reported to NMDGF within 24 hours. If you are not certain whether you have caught a bobcat or a lynx, please contact your local conservation officer or the NMDGF Furbearer Program: (505) 476-8041.



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*Left: Bobcat. NMDGF trail camera.*

*Right: Lynx. U.S. Forest Service photo.*



# Mexican Gray Wolf

Licenses and General Information: [www.wildlife.state.nm.us](http://www.wildlife.state.nm.us)

The Mexican wolf is the rarest subspecies of gray wolf in North America, and therefore it is listed as a federal endangered species. Once common throughout portions of the southwestern United States, the Mexican wolf was almost eliminated from the wild by the 1970s.

In 1977, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) began efforts to conserve the species.

In 1998, Mexican wolves were released for the first time into the wild in the Blue Range Wolf Recovery Area, located within the Mexican Wolf Experimental Population Area. There are now at least 163 wolves distributed in at least 42 packs in Arizona and New Mexico. Mexican wolves primarily inhabit the Gila forest area of southwest New Mexico.

For trapping in the USFWS Mexican Wolf Experimental Population Area (MWEPA)—especially those areas located in portions of Catron, Grant, and Sierra counties—NMDGF strongly encourages use of techniques that minimize incidental wolf capture and potential injury, such as shortened chains, swivels, shock springs, and laminated, off-set or padded jaws on foothold traps. If signs are evident that wolves are present, avoid the area if possible.

If you are trapping in southwestern New Mexico, there is the possibility you will encounter the federally endangered Mexican wolf. If you capture a Mexican wolf, you must report the capture as soon as possible to the USFWS Interagency Field Team to arrange for radio-collaring and release of the wolf. If the wolf is released or has pulled out of the trap, it must be reported within 24 hours. The USFWS can be contacted at: 1-888-459-9653 or (928) 339-4329.

To learn more about the Mexican wolf recovery program visit:  
<https://www.fws.gov/southwest/es/mexicanwolf/>.

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**Background: Gray wolf paw print (actual size).**



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*A coyote (left) and Mexican gray wolf (right) can be difficult to differentiate at a distance. Mexican gray wolves weigh two to three times more, have larger, blocky heads with more rounded ears, and feet larger in proportion to the body. Not all wolves have radio collars. Photo courtesy of the Mexican Wolf Inter-agency Field Team.*

# Releasing Animals

Licenses and General Information: **1-888-248-6866**

At times, you will catch animals that you do not wish to keep. You are required to carry a release device or catchpole to safely release these animals uninjured from your traps or snares. All captured animals must be removed or released from any trap or snare at the time of check. If you cannot release the animal yourself, NMDGF must be notified as soon as possible. You may not kill 1) any furbearer outside of the established season, 2) any furbearer for which there is no season, 3) any federal or state threatened or endangered species (including by the use of a body-grip trap or snare). If you capture one of these species, you must release it alive and unharmed. If the animal is injured, killed, or releasing it would be dangerous, your local NMDGF officer must be contacted as soon as possible.

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*Below: Catchpole used to safely release an animal. NMDGF photo.*



# Beware of Rabies

Licenses and General Information: **1-888-248-6866**

In recent years, rabies has been detected in some furbearers in New Mexico. All mammals are capable of contracting rabies. Wild animals infected more often include skunks, foxes, coyotes, raccoons, bobcats and bats. Trappers should be aware of the potential risk of contracting rabies when harvesting an animal.

Rabies is caused by a virus that can be transmitted to humans through contact with the saliva, nervous tissue and/or brain tissue of a rabid animal. Rabies is transmitted only if the virus is introduced through a bite, contact with an open cut in the skin, or more rarely when infectious material such as saliva from a rabid animal gets into the eyes, nose or mouth. Some recommended precautions for trappers include:

- Wear protective gloves when handling and skinning animals. Open wounds or scratches increase the risk of infection when protective gloves are not used.
- Always err on the side of caution. Use goggles and a skinning apron if possible.
- Clean tools with a disinfectant such as a 10% bleach solution
- Wash thoroughly with soap and water, iodine solution or alcohol solution after handling and skinning animals.
- If bitten or otherwise possibly exposed to a rabid animal, thoroughly wash the area with soap and water and seek medical care as soon as reasonably possible.
- If attacked or bitten by a potentially rabies-carrying species, the animal may be required by law to be tested for rabies, depending on the species and the ability to retrieve it. Report the incident as soon as reasonably possible to your local NMDGF conservation officer for assistance with safely collecting the animal.
- The presence of rabies after skinning need not be a cause for concern, provided the skin(s) and tissues are dried completely. Drying renders the virus no longer viable or active.

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*Gray fox. NMDGF photo.*



# Research Assistance

Licenses and General Information: [www.wildlife.state.nm.us](http://www.wildlife.state.nm.us)

## Swift Fox vs. Kit Fox: Call for Samples

Kit fox and swift fox are closely related species that occur in New Mexico. They are similar in appearance, with yellow-gray coats on top that fade to a lighter shade on their undersides. The best way to distinguish between the two species is the location(s) where they occur and the type of habitat where they are found. There are a number of counties where both species occur (Chaves, De Baca, Eddy, Guadalupe, San Miguel, and Torrance), but each occur in different habitats in these counties. Swift fox are a grassland species, found in the shortgrass prairies of the Great Plains, and they occur only in the eastern half of New Mexico. Kit fox occur throughout lower and middle elevation shrubland, desert and desert-grassland habitats west of the Pecos River.

The NMDGF Furbearer Program is interested in working with trappers to collect samples from kit and swift fox to monitor these species across the state. Trappers and hunters can assist NMDGF by collecting tissue samples (a piece of the foot-pad about the size of a pencil eraser) from any kit or swift fox harvested. Samples can be stored in small paper envelopes at room temperature or in Ziploc bags in the freezer. Trappers who participate are requested to provide detailed location information for each sample, including the GPS coordinates (if possible), the county, township and range. Samples can be submitted to the local NMDGF office or mailed to: NMDGF Santa Fe Office, One Wildlife Way, Santa Fe, NM 87505.

### Kit Fox Range



### Swift Fox Range



## Collared or Ear-tagged Animals: Treat Them the Same

NMDGF conducts studies across New Mexico to monitor the state's furbearer populations. Some of these studies use GPS tracking collars or ear tags to track the animals across the landscape. The GPS collars store data about the animals' movement patterns, habitat preferences, and population survival rates.

**Harvest of collared or ear-tagged animals is allowed.** These animals may be treated the same as those not wearing a collar or ear tag, (e.g. If you have caught a collared or ear-tagged animal and would normally harvest it, you may do so. If you would normally release the animal, because of the sex, size, etc., you should do so as well). However, NMDGF requests you report the harvest and if applicable return the GPS collar for data recovery.

To report harvest of a collared or ear-tagged animal, contact the NMDGF Furbearer Program: (505) 476-8041, or the local NMDGF office or conservation officer. The cooperation and participation of trappers and hunters are truly appreciated.

# Management Practices

Licenses and General Information: [www.wildlife.state.nm.us](http://www.wildlife.state.nm.us)

## Best Management Practices (BMP)

The Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (AFWA) represents North America's agencies responsible for managing fish and wildlife resources to help advance sound, science-based management and conservation of fish and wildlife and their habitats in the public interest. AFWFA worked with state wildlife management agencies, trapping organizations, veterinarians, and university researchers to develop BMPs for regulated trapping in the United States. This effort was motivated by a desire to improve the welfare of wildlife captured by traps, enhance the awareness and understanding of modern regulated trapping and sustain regulated trapping as a wildlife management technique. Common traps were extensively field-tested and evaluated based on five criteria: animal welfare, trap efficiency, trap selectivity, trapper & public safety and practical application. Data collection, including safety evaluations, was undertaken following widely accepted international standards for testing traps from the International Organization for Standardization (ISO). The resulting BMPs describe different types of traps, how they work, how traps should be set, and what training may be needed for people who use BMP traps.

The BMP program has demonstrated with science-based information that many models of traps, including footholds, can be used in a humane, selective, and efficient way. The set of recommendations, one for each of the harvested furbearer species in the United States, include practices, equipment and techniques that will continue to ensure the welfare of trapped animals, avoid unintended captures of other animals, improve public confidence in trappers and wildlife managers, and maintain public support for trapping and wildlife managers.

NMDGF develops regulations on trap types, size and modifications using the BMP recommendations.

The majority of trappers use BMP recommendations when selecting traps, tuning and modifying their traps, and setting them in the field. You are strongly encouraged to read the BMPs for the species you trap, and use traps found in this resource. Modifications like off-set jaws, laminations, shock-springs, and swivels improve a trapper's productivity, ensure welfare of trapped animals, and improve public confidence in trappers and wildlife managers.



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You can find BMPs online at:  
<https://www.fishwildlife.org/afwa-inspires/furbearer-management>.

*These recommendations have helped improve the humaneness and efficiency of traps and increase success when trapping.*

# Free GPS on Your Phone

[www.blm.gov/maps/frequently-requested/new-mexico/hunting-maps](http://www.blm.gov/maps/frequently-requested/new-mexico/hunting-maps)

## New Mexico Maps: Trapping & Hunting Areas, Land Status

BLM-New Mexico has partnered with the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish (NMDGF) to provide free maps of trapping and hunting areas on public lands. Download the CarryMap app to your mobile device, then download New Mexico maps at: [www.blm.gov/nm/huntingmaps](http://www.blm.gov/nm/huntingmaps).

Some of the many features include:

- Up-to-date land-status maps.
- NMDGF Game Management Units, Wildlife Management Areas, Unitization Agreements and other designated areas.
- NMDGF Officer Districts and contact information.
- State Trust land hunting access points, lands withdrawn from hunting, and campsite locations.
- GPS mapping capability.
- Record tracks, mark waypoints, and share data.



# Off-Highway Vehicles

Registration and information: [www.B4uRide.com](http://www.B4uRide.com)

## Know the Laws, Operate Safely and Enjoy!

New Mexico's off-highway vehicle (OHV) laws are to ensure safe and responsible use of OHVs to protect all citizens. OHVs include all-terrain vehicles (ATVs), recreational off-highway vehicles (ROVs), off-highway motorcycles and snowmobiles. All OHVs must be registered or properly permitted and equipped with a Forest Service-approved spark arrestor. Nonresidents may register an OHV in their home state or can purchase a New Mexico nonresident permit at [www.B4uRide.com](http://www.B4uRide.com).

All operators and passengers younger than 18 years of age must wear a Department of Transportation (DOT) approved helmet, and goggles or safety glasses. Operators younger than 18 years of age must carry proof of successful completion of an OHV safety training. Every rider is responsible for knowing and obeying the laws. Before riding on public land, visit [www.B4uRide.com](http://www.B4uRide.com).

## New Mexico OHV Code of Ethics

- Learn about the area where you are planning to ride. Before you ride, contact public land managers or private property owners to understand area restrictions and ask for permission. Obtain maps of the area(s) and remain on roads, trails and/or areas designated for OHV use.
- Be courteous on the trail. Allow right-of-way to hikers and horseback riders. If you encounter horses pull off the trail on the low side, stop your engine, remove your helmet, and speak to the rider. Wait until all horses have passed 50 feet beyond your location before restarting your engine.
- Minimize the OHVs impact on other hunters and anglers using the trail. Respect seasonal closures. Avoid operation during peak hunting hours. If retrieving game with an OHV, operate at midday to minimize disturbance to others. Cross streams where designated and at a 90-degree angle wherever possible.
- Leave gates and fences as you found them, and remember it's unlawful to travel or hunt on private property without the owner's permission.
- Leave areas cleaner than you found them. A plastic trash bag and bungee cords can be helpful to remove trash.
- Obey trail markers and closure signs. If it's posted closed, stay out!
- Keep your OHV quiet. Excessive sound stresses wildlife and annoys property owners and other recreational users. It also contributes to your own riding fatigue. Less sound allows you to ride more comfortably and others to enjoy their outdoor experience.
- Approach livestock or wildlife on the trail slowly. Sometimes range cattle will pass the afternoon under shade trees along the trail. If you startle them, they may run directly into your path. Give them time to react, allow as wide a berth as possible. Remember, it is unlawful to pursue or harass livestock.
- Never mix riding with alcohol or drugs. It's illegal, and it's dangerous.
- Familiarize yourself with New Mexico's laws and requirements for OHV use by visiting: [www.B4uRide.com](http://www.B4uRide.com) or telephoning: (505) 222-4728.

# Releasing a dog from a

Licenses and General Information: [www.wildlife.state.nm.us](http://www.wildlife.state.nm.us)

It is important for hunters and other outdoor recreationist to remember that traps may be on the landscape in many areas around the state during late fall and winter. The easiest way to avoid any encounter is to keep your pets leashed while hiking. However, hunting dogs are normally off-leash, and if your hunting dog or pet is caught the most important thing is to remain calm. By you remaining calm your animal will calm down, and releasing it will be much easier. Most traps and snares are simply designed and easily operated. Larger foothold and body-grip traps can be more challenging, but the operation principles are the same. Taking a moment to evaluate the situation will help you decide how best to release the animal, and it will help speed up the process by not taking unnecessary or unproductive action. A dog in a trap will be frightened but not necessarily injured, so it is important that your actions do not cause injury.

**IMPORTANT:** If you suspect a trap or snare has been set illegally DO NOT remove or destroy the trap or snare. Note or record the location if possible with GPS waypoints and a photograph, then call your local Conservation Officer or Operation Game Thief (OGT) as soon as possible. Officers will investigate the scene, equipment and evidence (trap) in order to verify whether or not it is illegal. The sooner you call, the more likely officers can make a case, and by not removing or destroying evidence you are aiding in the prosecution of poachers. It is also illegal to steal, remove or destroy a legally set trap, so always leave the trap where found.

## Foothold Traps



*Left: Coil-spring and double long spring foothold traps. Right: Where to apply pressure for coil-spring (top) and double long spring (bottom) foothold traps. NMDGF photos.*

Foothold traps are designed to capture and hold up to dog-sized animals without causing injury. If your dog is caught in a foothold trap, it is NOT in a life-threatening situation. In most cases you are at greater risk of getting bitten by your dog than your dog is of being harmed by the trap. Therefore, it is important to let the dog calm down for a moment prior to taking action. Waiting about 60 seconds or more to gather your thoughts and to locate the two pieces of equipment you need (a leash and a coat or shirt) will significantly reduce your chances of being bitten. To open a foothold trap, compress the levers or springs on either side of the trap by using your hands or feet.



# trap or snare

Licenses and General Information: [www.wildlife.state.nm.us](http://www.wildlife.state.nm.us)

By following these steps you will ensure that both you and your pet are safe and that your pet is released as quickly as possible:

1. Attach a leash, rope or belt to your dog's collar. This will greatly aid you in controlling your dog to prevent injury and to keep from getting bitten. Thread the end of the leash through the sleeve of a coat or shirt.
2. Slide the coat or shirt down over your dog's head as far as possible, leaving only the tip of their nose sticking out of the cuff. This will act as a blindfold as well as a muzzle, calming them down and preventing them from biting.
3. While holding the leash to keep your dog's head away from the trap, step on both levers or springs at the same time. Place your foot so the ball of your foot is as close to the trap jaws as possible then roll your weight forward to compress both springs or levers simultaneously. Footholds restrain an animal through mechanical advantage not spring strength so it may be necessary to push down firmly to get the levers or springs loose but once they break free the springs compress relatively easily.
4. Once you have compressed the levers or springs your dog's foot will be free.

**REMEMBER!** By remaining calm and removing the trap within a few minutes, you will ensure that neither you nor your dog will be injured.

*Right (top to bottom):*

1. Thread leash through sleeve.
2. Cover head but leave nose exposed.
3. Keep head away from trap.
4. Compress the levers or springs.



*Position feet.*



*Apply weight to open.*



*Open coil-spring trap.*

# Releasing a dog from a

Licenses and General Information: [www.wildlife.state.nm.us](http://www.wildlife.state.nm.us)

## Body-Grip Traps

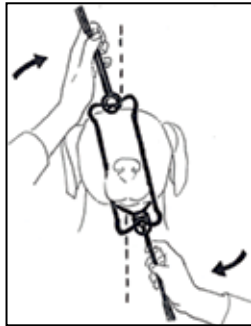
Large body-grip traps are illegal to set on land in New Mexico, so it is unlikely you will encounter one. If your dog does get caught in an illegally set large body-grip trap, **it is in a life threatening situation**, and quick and decisive action is required.

Smaller body-grip traps can be removed quickly by compressing the springs with a firm hand grip:

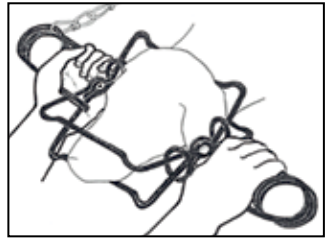
1. Squeeze both springs and rotate the trap 90 degrees to relieve pressure on the dog's windpipe. Be careful not to twist the head and neck of the animal.
2. Compress each spring separately by using both hands until the safety catch can be fastened. Repeat the procedure for the second spring.
3. Slide the animal's head from between the loosened jaws.



*Squeeze.*



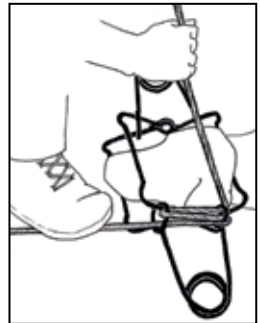
*Rotate.*



*Remove.*

Larger body-grip traps that cannot be compressed with a firm hand grip can be released using a rope or leash:

1. Thread the leash or rope twice through the loops of the spring. Keep the trap in a horizontal position to prevent injury to the animal.
2. Place a foot in the loop of the leash or stand upon the rope. Pull the free end of the leash or rope until the spring is fully compressed.
3. Place the safety catch on the spring. Repeat on the second spring.
4. Remove the trap by sliding it over the head of the animal.



*Right: Using a rope to compress the spring of a larger body-grip trap. Illustrations courtesy of the Idaho Department of Game and Fish.*

# trap or snare

Licenses and General Information: [www.wildlife.state.nm.us](http://www.wildlife.state.nm.us)

## Snares

Snares are designed to catch a furbearer by the foot or body and, depending on how they are set, can be lethal. When a dog is accustomed to being leashed and it is caught in a snare, it typically will stop pulling as soon as the cable has been pulled tight. Dogs unaccustomed to being leashed may panic when caught, and this can be lethal if you do not act quickly.

Snares are made of multi-strand steel aircraft cable and usually have a one way lock. By simply opening the lock you can remove a snare almost instantly from your dog. If you cannot loosen the lock, snares can be cut with short-nosed cable cutters which can be purchased for about \$20 at most hardware supplies. Common wire cutters (e.g. Leatherman-style tools, lineman pliers, etc.) do not cut a cable well. Placing a coat or shirt over your dog's head as described and illustrated on page 29 may help to control your dog.

### To remove a snare:

1. Attach a leash, rope or belt to your dog's collar. This will help to control the dog and keep it from pulling the cable any tighter or becoming entangled in nearby brush.
2. Position your dog where there is slack in the tail of the cable, then calm the animal to prevent any additional tightening of the loop.
3. Pinch the cable together at the front of the lock mechanism to release tension and allow the lock to slide.
4. While holding the lock open, slide the lock up the cable to open the loop and remove it from the dog.  
A sharp knife or scissors may be useful to cut hair that is caught in a lock, but be careful to not cut yourself or the dog.
5. If the lock will not slide, the cable must be cut. Short-nosed cable cutters allow you to easily cut cable that other cutters cannot get to due to hair or skin around the cable.
6. If you do not have cable cutters, and the lock is equipped with a breakaway (as required by law), you may be able to open the breakaway with a set of pliers, such as a Leatherman tool. Bend the breakaway 'S' or 'J' hook open until the cable or lock comes loose. Loosening the lock or cutting the cable are both easier, but if the first two options are not possible, opening the breakaway is an alternative.



*Right (top to bottom): 1. Snare lock; 2. Grip cable in front of lock; 3. Pinch cable; 4. Slide lock up cable; 5. Short-nosed cutters; 6. Breakaway.*



**New Mexico Department of Game and Fish**  
*Conserving New Mexico's Wildlife for Future Generations*

# **Trapping serves an important role in the recovery of furbearer populations.**

Not long ago, river otters had vanished from New Mexico. Through interagency efforts otters were trapped in Washington state and reintroduced in New Mexico. Today, a healthy and vital otter population thrives in the upper Rio Grande.