Trapping General Conditions

Pursuant to the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Title 50, Section 31.16, the following conditions apply to the trapping of furbearing animals on National Wildlife Refuges.

1: State and Federal Requirements – Trapping will be done in compliance with State and game laws and regulations and may be further restricted by general and special conditions of the Refuge Trapping Permit. Permittees will also comply with all other regulations and conditions affecting access to and use of the National Wildlife Refuges.

2: Trapping Permits – Any persons exercising the privilege of trapping furbearing animals within National Wildlife Refuge boundaries must possess a valid State trapping license and a Refuge Trapping Permit issued by the refuge manager. Trappers will carry such State trapping license and Refuge Trapping Permit while trapping, and when requested to do so, will exhibit them to any Federal or State agent authorized to enforce the game and fish laws of the State or of the United States. Permits are not transferrable.

The refuge manager may at any time, before or during the trapping season, halt or limit trapping on the refuge or any portion thereof. Conditions of the permit may be modified as needed. Any changes will be made by an addendum (signed by both the issuing office and the permittee) which should be attached to and becomes part of the permit.

3: Approved traps, trap inspection and removal – Furbearing animals authorized to be taken on the refuge may be taken only by methods approved by both the State and the refuge manager.

Trap types, sizes, sets, baits, scents and locations will be selected to minimize the taking of non-target species.

All leghold traps with jaw spread greater than 5 ½ inches will be of the “off set-jaw” type (jaws with an opening of not less than 3/16” when closed). Steel leghold traps having teeth, spiked, or serrated jaws, (either attached or as part of the trap) are prohibited. Conibear traps size 330 or larger are prohibited for land use. Use in water sets for beaver or otter is acceptable unless prohibited by State regulation or a refuge trapping condition.

In order to reduce the accidental trapping of birds of prey, the use of sight-exposed bait is prohibited. Sight-exposed bait means any visible animal part or facsimile thereof, (excluding dry skeletal items from which the skin, hair, feathers, and flesh have been removed) used to visually attract an animal to a trap or traps.

The possession or use within the boundaries of the refuge of any trap or captive device that does not comply with State and refuge requirements is prohibited. Any such illegal traps or devices found on the refuge may be seized and retained by the refuge manager.

Permittees are required to visit and inspect each trap set at least once every 24 hours, unless specifically waived by the refuge manager.

Inspection shall occur between one-half hour before sunrise and one-half hour after sunset, unless otherwise specified by State or refuge permit provisions. At the close of the trapping season, the permittee shall remove all the traps and equipment from the refuge. This will be done within a time frame designated by the refuge manager.

4: Use of vegetation – The permittee may cut on the refuge for use in trap sets only such species and amounts of brush or timber as the refuge manager shall designate.

5: Tending another person’s traps – No person may attend another person’s traps or trap line unless specifically authorized by the refuge manager.

6: Non-target species – Every effort will be made to prevent the capture of non-target species. However, if an unauthorized animal is found alive and in satisfactory condition in a trap, it shall be immediately released. Animals found dead or seriously injured in the trap shall be disposed of as designated by the refuge manager.

7: Reports – Permittees shall submit a report (or reports) of traptake, of both target and non-target species, as required by refuge special conditions. The capture of all non-target species, regardless of conditions, will be reported. (The permittee will not be prosecuted for accidental take which he or she reports.) Trappers should also promptly report the presence of diseased animals to the refuge manager.

If the refuge trapping conditions permit the mailing of trap-take reports, such reports must be sent by certified mail with the permittee retaining the signed receipt as proof of submission.

8: Penalties – Failure of a permittee to comply with any of the trapping provisions or with any applicable Federal or State law or regulation may be sufficient cause for refusal of any other use or privilege on the refuge for which a permit may be required.

The permit may be revoked or suspended by the issuing officer for just cause, such as violation, non-compliance with permit conditions, or nonuse (50 CFR 25.43)

Permittees who wish to appeal adverse decisions should follow the appeals procedures designated in 50 CFR 25.44.

9: Damages – The United States shall not be responsible for any loss or damage to property, including but not limited to, animals and equipment; for injury to the permittee, partner(s) or assistant(s); or for damages or interference caused by wildlife or employees or representatives of the Government carrying out their official responsibilities.