



Trapping in British Columbia FAQ for Municipalities

December 2016

Thank you for taking time to read about trapping in British Columbia. Below are some common questions and answers The Fur-Bearers hear from municipalities regarding trapping:

1. Are traps legal?

[Yes](#). The provincial government permits the use of leg-hold, Conibear, snare, and other types of lethal or restraining (body-gripping) traps on both public and private property.

2. Aren't traps humane?

Traps cannot be humane – they are devices that hold an animal against its will until they asphyxiate or a trapper returns to kill the animal. No matter the animal, they will desperately try to get away from the trap, often causing themselves significant harm in the process. Trap testing done as part of a [trade agreement](#) even allows for traps that caused several injuries in a point system, with a failure rate of 20%, to be labelled “certified humane” by the fur industry.

3. Don't traps only catch the animals they're set for?

No. By-catch is expected as part of trapping, as there's no way to prevent the wrong animal from exploring a trap – particularly when baited. Steps can be taken to mitigate this, or reduce it, but as trapping inherently takes place when no one is around, it is impossible to prevent.

4. Are pets really at risk from traps set by licensed trappers?

Yes. Through a Freedom of Information Act request, [a briefing note to the Minister of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations](#) indicated that the government was aware of 85 domestic pets killed by traps between 2003 and 2013. These are only those reported, and there are no requirements to report such “by-catch” unless it is an endangered or at-risk species.

5. Can trapping take place in my municipality?

[Yes](#). The only regulations that would directly impact the use of traps in municipalities are a requirement of a 200m setback from a dwelling (though there are times when it is allowed) and the requirement of consent from the owner of private property. The municipality does not need to be notified.

6. Can my municipality regulate trapping?

At this time (December 2016), [the answer is unclear](#). For several years, numerous municipalities have either passed by-laws or requested permission to pass by-laws related to the use of body-gripping or snare-type traps in their communities, but the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations has not definitively ruled on this.

7. Aren't traps necessary to manage wildlife populations?

Wildlife populations manage themselves through natural processes. If resources become scarce, wildlife move to areas where resources are available, or, through [natural selection](#), those most able to adapt to changing circumstances thrive. Population numbers are dependent on the [carrying capacity](#) of an ecosystem, not an arbitrary number set out in policy. Affecting population levels by removing manmade or artificial resources is more ecologically responsible than lethal control of individual animals. This is a process that took place long before trapping began – and will continue long after trapping ends.

8. Aren't traps necessary to manage nuisance wildlife?

Wildlife that comes into conflict with people, pets, or property, can be managed, mitigated, and prevented with many non-lethal methods. The Fur-Bearers, as well as many other non-profits and even for-profit businesses, base principals of co-existence on current science that indicates lethal control can be significantly detrimental to ecosystems and increase conflict. Further, removal of an animal through lethal means – or trapping – does not eliminate the root problem, which most frequently is an available resource/attractant, or human behaviour. More about [co-existence programs is available at TheFurBearers.com](#).

9. Won't requiring signs indicating traps result in people sabotaging traps?

There is no evidence to suggest this would be the case. But with that concern in mind, The Fur-Bearers do not advocate that signs be placed above traps, but in proximity to traps, much the way animal crossing signs are placed on roadways. The goal is to provide passersby with an abundance of information so they can make reasonable decisions and prevent unnecessary suffering to people and domestic animals.

10. Will setbacks from trails, roads, or pathways really make a difference?

Recreational use of our natural spaces is changing rapidly in British Columbia – [more people are accessing areas previously untouched](#). By establishing reasonable setbacks from spots where people are most likely to be – trails, roads, and pathways – the risk of injury or death due to traps decreases. On-leash dogs can commonly have long leads more than 3 metres (10 feet), making a setback of 10 metres (32 feet) a reasonable and responsible decision.

11. Wouldn't putting an identification tag on traps be expensive and harmful to trappers?

The tag does not need to contain a trapper's personal information – even though this is common practice throughout the United States. An ID tag can contain a trapper's license number, which is known to the Ministry of Forests, Lands, and Natural Resources Operations. These tags, which if stamped or attached would cost less than a dollar, will allow for responsible enforcement of trapping regulations and help reduce poaching.

12. Why don't we just make sure people keep their dogs on leash?

Leash laws are important for community safety, as well as the safety of pets. But, as any parent of a child or dog knows, accidents happen. Leashes get dropped, kids forget to hold your hand crossing the road, and it only takes a second for a little one to get out of arm's length. Putting in place setbacks and signage will help make sure that residents can make educated decisions, and take extra steps to protect their families.