

MIDWEST FURBEARER GROUP ANNUAL REPORT MAY 2012

MEETING TIME AND PLACE

This year's furbearer workshop was hosted by the Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC). The workshop was held at Trout Lodge in southeast Missouri from 1-4 May 2012.

ATTENDANCE

Thirty-six (36) participants attended this year's workshop, including state furbearer biologists (Figure 1) from 10 Midwest member states (North Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas, Oklahoma, Missouri, Illinois, Michigan, Ohio, Kentucky and Wisconsin) and attendees from other organizations/agencies including: U. S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, USDA APHIS Wildlife Services and National Wildlife Research Center, University of Mississippi, University of Missouri, Fur Takers of America, Missouri Trappers Association, Illinois Natural History Survey, and wildlife and private lands biologists from Missouri Department of Conservation. A complete list of attendees and contact information for state furbearer biologists is available in Appendices 1 and 2.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Attendees of the 2012 Midwest Furbearer Workshop were welcomed by Dan Zekor, Resource Science Center Supervisor. Local historian Bob Priddy gave an enlightening and humorous plenary talk covering trapping and its role in early Midwestern states. Missouri Department of Natural Resources supervisor Ken McCarty spoke on the role of fire and fire ecology in shaping habitat communities in oak forests. Numerous speakers presented information on issues relative to furbearer research and management (Appendices 3 and 4). Professional presentations were given on the following topics:

- The National Wildlife Research Center's furbearer research program
- Statistical Population Reconstruction as a Tool to Model Furbearer Populations
- Using Hair Snares to Estimate Bobcat Populations
- Organohalogenated Compounds in Illinois River Otters

- Effects of Climate and Trapper Success on River Otter Survival in Missouri
- Best Management Practices for Trapping in the United States
- Insights from Long-Term Studies of Raccoon Disease Ecology
- Badger Sighting and Land Use in Missouri
- Telazol as a Field Immobilizing Agent for Beaver (*Castor Canadensis*)
- Tickborne Disease Overview
- Tularemia and Plague Surveillance in the Midwest
- Issues with Urban Black Bears and Coyotes

The somewhat isolated setting allowed for relaxed, group participation in numerous discussions throughout the course of the meeting, during meals at the Trout Lodge Center, and evening bonfires. Otter, raccoon, transient mountain lion movements, and disease issues in fox populations were a few of the highlights of these discussions. The multi-state decline in red and grey fox populations, mountain lion movements and similar issues with otter and bobcat management pointed to the need for collaboration among states in collecting and analyzing harvest and observational data. As a result of these discussions we are moving towards uniform data collection and analysis using statistical population reconstruction for at least 2 species. This approach would allow states to use harvest data collected from CITIES registration to build robust population models for otter and bobcat. Comparing harvest, trapper effort and sex and age composition between states would enable us to measure the impact of different regulations and trapper numbers on population structure and growth.

We tried something a little different this year – an idea exchange among biologists. The concept was for biologists to bring an idea or product that they found particularly useful in their jobs or vocation. During this forum we saw a couple of new ideas and designs for bear traps, were presented information on new trail cameras, discussed techniques for cable restraints, otter trap designs, and had presentations on 2 dog-proof modifications of 220 conibears. The exchange of ideas fit well into the concept of collaboration and working together as all furbearer biologists face similar issues in their home states.

Forums such as the Midwest Furbearer Workshop provide valuable opportunities for state furbearer biologists to become acquainted with emerging issues and exchange information and ideas related to furbearer research and management. The need for state fish and wildlife agencies to establish and maintain furbearer biologist positions and support travel of furbearer biologists to the annual Midwest Furbearer Resources Workshop is imperative for exchanging information to promote quality furbearer management and research in each state. It is more important than ever that state agencies are in the forefront of issues related to furbearer management and trapping in order to protect the heritage and recreational opportunities of hunting and trapping for future sportsmen and sportswomen.

DIRECTOR ACTION ITEMS

1. The Midwest Furbearer Working Group requests continued support and funding for Best Management Practices (BMPs) for trapping. The Furbearer Working Group would like to emphasize the need to maintain commitment to BMPs by AFWA and Directors. BMPs have been used by several states to defend trapping through science and even allow new types of traps which were previously prohibited.
2. The Midwest Furbearer Working Group supports a multi-state approach to collection and analysis of harvest data for bobcats and river otters using statistical population reconstruction methods. These methods will enable states to assess impacts of harvest regulations and trapper effort on these high profile species.
3. The Midwest Furbearer Working Group requests continued support and funding for furbearer management and research positions. Increased involvement by several components of today's society has increased the need to carefully manage species and habitat in addition to sharing our knowledge and information with other organizations, agencies, and the public.
4. The Midwest Furbearer Group supports the creation of a trapper ethics DVD, with a national audience, through funding obtained from a multi-state conservation grant program.

DIRECTOR INFORMATION ITEMS

1. As a matter of procedure the group suggests that a representative of the Midwest Furbearer Group from the state that hosts the annual meeting be responsible for drafting the annual Midwest Furbearer Group report. A furbearer group member from the state hosting the Directors Meeting should attend that annual meeting to answer questions and record comments.
2. The group supports the procedure of using a web site to post and archive annual furbearer reports, power point presentations, and other pertinent information regarding the annual meeting. Host states will be responsible for updating and posting items to the web site annually. The web address for this year's information is www.motws.org/MWFBWS
3. The Midwest Furbearer Working Group thanks state Directors for their continued support of travel of state furbearer biologists to the annual Midwest Furbearer Workshop. With tight budgets and restricted travel this annual workshop continues to be a critical component of sound resource

management in the Midwest. Annual meetings allow for an open, thorough exchange of information and knowledge resulting in efficient, effective, and science-based management of these unique species.

TIME AND PLACE OF NEXT MEETING

The Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation will host the 2013 Midwest Furbearer Workshop; the Illinois Department of Natural Resources will be the alternate site. During 2013 the Eastern Black Bear Workshop and the 11th Mountain Lion Workshop will be held in May, timing for the Midwest Furbearer Workshop will be dependent on these meetings to facilitate attendance of both, a complete list of past host states is available in Appendix 6.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1. 2012 Midwest Furbearer Workshop Attendees.....	5
Appendix 2. Midwest Furbearer Biologists – Contact Information.....	6
Appendix 3. 2012 Midwest Furbearer Workshop - Agenda.....	9
Appendix 4. 2012 Midwest Furbearer Workshop – Abstracts.....	11
Appendix 5. Resolutions.....	17
Appendix 6. Host States of Midwest Furbearer Workshops.....	19