



Midwest Furbearer Group Annual Report June 2008

Meeting Time and Place:

The Nebraska Game and Parks Commission and the Nebraska Wildlife Society hosted the 2007 Midwest Furbearer Workshop, September 9-12, 2007, at the Doubletree Hotel and Convention Center in Omaha, Nebraska.

In order to transition the Midwest Furbearer Workshop back to a Spring meeting, a second meeting hosted by the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks was held June 9-12, 2008, at Bass Pro Shops and Comfort Suites Hotel in Olathe, Kansas.

Attendance:

Omaha: Representatives from 10 states attended the meeting including state wildlife biologists, research biologists from various Universities, federal biologists, and trappers and hunters representing various state and national organizations. The number of attendees representing these states is as follows: Iowa 4, Kansas 7, Kentucky 1, Minnesota 1, Missouri 1, Nebraska 12, Ohio 1, South Dakota 2, Wisconsin 2, Wyoming 1. The entire attendance contact list is available in appendix 1.

Olathe: Representatives from 11 states attended the meeting including state wildlife agency furbearer representatives from 9 states. The number of attendees representing these states is as follows: Illinois 1, Iowa 2, Kansas 16, Kentucky 3, Michigan 1, Minnesota 1, Missouri 1, Nebraska 1, New York 1, Ohio 1, and South Dakota 1. The entire attendance contact list is available in appendix 2.

Executive Summary:

Omaha: Attendees of the Midwest Furbearer Workshop met at the Doubletree Hotel and Executive Meeting Center, Omaha, Nebraska, on September 9-12, 2007. Nebraska was late to finalize plans to host the meeting and scheduling conflicts and the short turnaround time due to the fall meeting of the previous year caused the date of the Furbearer Workshop to remain in September rather than the typical spring date. A series of speakers presented a variety of topics related to furbearer research and management in the Midwest (see attached agenda). Attendees were afforded the opportunity to tour the Henry Doorly Zoo, Center for Conservation Research, where Dr. Doug Armstrong presented details of the Zoo's world-class facilities and efforts. We

were also given a behind the scene tour of the facilities including a chance to see the Midwest's only captively held dispersing mountain lion which was captured in Omaha in 2003.

We were extremely saddened to learn that Dave Hamilton the Furbearer Biologist for the Missouri Department of Conservation passed away the day before the meeting began. Dave had been very active in furbearer research and management for many years and was a leading participant in previous workshops. His legacy will continue through the great influence he had on fellow biologists and the profession of wildlife management as a whole. He was a friend and mentor to many of us and will be sorely missed by all that knew him.

We also learned that Dave Bostick (Michigan Department of Natural Resources) was returning to a position with the Forest Service in Washington. Dave was an active participant in Midwest furbearer issues and will be missed by all.

The Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks agreed to host the 2008 Midwest Furbearer Workshop. Past Midwest Furbearer Resources Workshop hosts can be found in Appendix 3.

Olathe: Attendees of the Midwest Furbearer Workshop met in Olathe, Kansas on June 9-12, 2008. Paper sessions were held at the Bass Pro Shops and the pre-meeting mixer and business meeting were held across the road at the Comfort Suites Hotel. This meeting was held just 9 months after the previous workshop as part of effort to transition the meeting from the Fall back to the Spring – without going a full year and half between meetings. A variety of topics were covered, including a series of presentations on river otters and mountain lions (see attached agenda). We also participated in a field trip to the KDWP- managed Marais des Cygnes wildlife area.

It was nice to welcome two new state furbearer representatives to the meeting (Adam Bump, Michigan and Jeff Beringer, Missouri). We also had furbearer representatives leave our ranks from Indiana (Bruce Plowman) and Ohio (Mark Witt). Obtaining travel approval has become a problem or continues to be a problem for some representatives, but this meeting was held close enough to one he was able to fund his own trip.

Kentucky or South Dakota will host the 2009 Midwest Furbearer Resources Workshop.

Director Action Items (from both meetings combined):

Retaining Furbearer Biologist Positions

The importance of retaining furbearer biologist positions was discussed at both business meetings. In an environment of tight budgets and frequent employee turnover, we would like to emphasize the importance of retaining and filling these positions. With currently rising pelt prices, license sales have increased in most states and traditional conflicts are bound to re-emerge. Efforts to ban or limit trapping in Midwestern states are also a constant threat to traditional furbearer management programs. We believe it is important to have a dedicated biologist to create well designed trapping or furharvesting regulations, monitor furbearer populations and harvest, coordinate diseases monitoring efforts, accurately respond to public and

media inquiries about sometimes controversial furbearer management techniques (like trapping), and perform the myriad other duties entailed in these positions.

Supporting a State Furbearer Representative Annually at the Midwest Workshop

A critical place for the exchange of ideas and activities related to the furbearer biologist's responsibilities mentioned above is the Midwest Furbearer Resources Workshop. It is hoped Directors recognize the importance of having a participant in these meetings and support at least one representative each year with travel allocation.

Director Information Items (from both meetings combined):

Updates on Best Management Practices for Trapping (BMP)

The BMP program aims to evaluate animal welfare, identify efficient and selective tools and techniques, and develop recommendations for state fish and wildlife agencies to consider as an element of their wildlife management programs. Regulated trapping is a necessary and effective wildlife management tool, and wildlife professionals across the country believe that trapping BMPs will ensure the continued improvement of this management technique. All 50 U.S. states support trapping BMPs.

Bryant White (AFWA) continues to work diligently with representatives from 37 states to improve animal welfare, trapper education, and user safety through the BMP process. A report introducing the BMP process was completed in 2006. To date, greater than 80 trap systems have been field-tested. Trap testing scheduled for 2008 includes capturing fisher, skunk, mink, muskrat and gray wolf. Best Management Practices reports have been completed for twelve species; beaver, river otter, fisher, muskrat, nutria, Eastern coyote (revised), Western coyote, red fox, gray fox, bobcat, raccoon, and opossum. Two new BMPs will be released in 2008; American marten and striped skunk. We are also preparing two "White Papers" for national publication on snaring technology and the ethical use of bodygrip traps on dry land that we plan to release by year end 2008.

The AFWA recently released its new "Ownership and Use of Traps by Trappers in the US" survey. The AFWA conducted a national Trapping Regulations Survey and results are available on the AFWA website. This survey was an updated repeat of the survey conducted in 1995.

We thank the MAFWA Directors for their continued support for agency staff to participate in the BMP process. This program is essential for responsible and professional wildlife management as it relates to trapping. Additional information about the BMP process can be viewed at http://www.fishwildlife.org/furbearer_resources.html

Cougar Field Workshop

The Midwest Furbearer Group formed a Large Carnivore Working Group (LCWG) to help agencies address cougar, timber wolf and black bear issues in the Midwest by developing a two-pronged approach, including professional development training to increase technical expertise, to help develop a communication/response strategy using the best scientific information available,

and utilize the knowledge and experience of the Working Group to help deal with issues on a regional basis. The second in a series of field workshops was recently completed, focusing on cougars.

Featuring retired cougar biologist Harley Shaw, the Cougar Network worked with the LCWG to organize the second Cougar Field Workshop designed to train biologists working in the Midwest and eastern U.S. to recognize cougar sign, and to initiate a plan of action to help conservation agencies deal with the communication and public service issues. The first Cougar Field Workshop was held in March 2007 on Ted Turner's spectacular Ladder Ranch in the heart of New Mexico's cougar country. The event was co-sponsored by the Missouri Department of Conservation, Ted Turner's Ladder Ranch, and the New Mexico Department of Game, and was considered a great success. Ten biologists from Michigan, Wisconsin, Nebraska, Missouri, Texas, Louisiana, and Florida spent time in the classroom and in the field learning the science and art of tracking cougars, including the use of remote cameras. Instructors included Harley Shaw, Travis Perry, Dave Hamilton, Rex Martensen, and Ric Winslow.

The success of the initial workshop reinforced the effort to continue the workshops annually and the second Cougar Field Workshop was held at the same location in February 2008. The instructors included the nearly the same group of accomplished mountain lion researchers and biologists with the addition of Jack Childs and Emil McCain of the borderlands jaguar project. The workshop was attended by 10 students made up of biologists from Florida, Kansas, Michigan, Missouri, Ontario, and Wisconsin.

On the first morning of this year's workshop the participants observed the placement of a GPS collar on a young adult female cougar that had been treed as part of the mountain lion research being conducted by Dr. Travis Perry, associate professor of Biology at Furman University. The collared cat will be used for future workshop training as well as a scent aversion study.

Topics of discussion and fieldwork included:

- Identifying sign including cougar kills, scrapes, tracks, and differentiating these from other carnivore sign

- Basic cougar behavior as known from research

- Evaluation of the significance of cougar presence

- Communication issues and public relations

The public relations sessions focused on the need to formulate a simple investigation/monitoring and communication plan within our agencies, including:

- A centralized record-keeping component to archive reports from the public;

- A mechanism for rapidly investigating those reports and incidents which have some evidence that can be evaluated, and acting upon them as the evidence warrants;

- A communications component that includes a protocol for effectively dealing with the media and the public, with well-crafted messages that reassures the public that your agency is capable of handling this issue.

Clearly there is a need to increase our experience, skills and knowledge in order to deal effectively with the public and maintain credibility regarding large predators such as mountain lions. The third Cougar Field Workshop has been scheduled for March 9-13, 2009.

Coursing Pen White Paper:

At the 2006 meeting of the MAFWA Directors, the issue of hound dog training (coursing) pens (i.e., fenced facilities used for training hounds to pursue furbearers) was discussed. The MAFWA Directors requested that a White Paper on coursing pens be prepared. Missouri and Wisconsin have recently addressed coursing pens through internal White Papers and/or regulations. Michigan is in the process of preparing an internal White Paper and has agreed to take the lead on drafting a broader paper addressing the issue of coursing pens in the Midwest. Missouri, Minnesota, and Wisconsin have offered to provide assistance with the paper, a first draft of which was recently provided to the Midwest furbearer biologists.

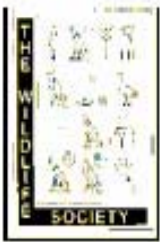
Use of Golden Malrin to Poison Wildlife

Golden Malrin is a widely used fly poison available over-the-counter that is apparently becoming increasingly used to poison wildlife in the Midwest. By mixing Malrin with soda pop, wildlife can be illegally targeted with the product. Particular concern has been expressed about the intentional poisoning of raccoons, perhaps primarily for damage related reasons (i.e. around sweet corn), but there is also some indication in Missouri at least the Malrin may be used a fur harvesting technique. It has been reported that “they don’t even make it off the porch,” and is apparently lethal quick enough to allow for the recovery of poisoned animals. Though the prevalence of raccoon or other wildlife poisoning with the product is not well known, 8 out of 10 farm stores in Missouri identified Malrin when called and asked if they “have that stuff used to poison raccoons.” Reference to using Malrin to poison raccoons and other domestic and wild animals can also be found on the internet, and such misuse is apparently occurring in several Midwestern states (Appendix 4). There is concern that the prevalence of misuse of this product is on the increase, and that if mixed with a different agent, it could be used to target virtually any species of wildlife. EPA is involved with the issue in Missouri.

**Submitted by: Sam Wilson, Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, and Matt Peek,
Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks**

Appendix 1

2007 Midwest Furbearer Resources Workshop Agenda and Meeting Attendees



Midwest Furbearer Workshop



Omaha, Nebraska 2007

Sponsored By:

The Nebraska Game and Parks Commission

With Contributions From:

The Nebraska Chapter of the Wildlife Society

September 9-12, 2007

Doubletree Hotel & Executive Meeting Center

Omaha, Nebraska

Sunday, September 9:

6 – 9:00 pm	Registration and Evening Mixer	Dakota Room
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Monday, September 10:

8:00 – 9:00 am	Breakfast and Registration	Iowa Room
9:00 – 9:05 am	Announcements and Introductions	
9:05 – 9:15 am	Welcome - Jim Douglas, Wildlife Division Administrator, Nebraska Game and Parks Commission	
9:10 - 9:35 am	Bill Clark (Iowa State Univ.), Population ecology of bobcats in Iowa	
9:35 – 10:00 am	Ron Andrews (IA DNR), Iowa's upcoming bobcat season	
10:00 – 10:15 am	Break	
10:15 – 10:40 am	Ron Andrews (IA DNR), Mountain lions in Iowa	

10:40 – 11:20 am	Break
11:20 – 11:50 am	Daniel Thompson (South Dakota State Univ.), Indicators of population saturation in a semi-isolated cougar population
11:50 am – 12:00 pm	Summary of Morning Session and Comments on Afternoon and Evening Events
12:00 – 1:30 pm	Lunch On Your Own
1:30 – 1:55 pm	Bryant White (AFWA), Trap testing and Best Management Practices for trapping publication plans
1:55 - 2:20 pm	Mark Statham (Kansas State Univ.), The biogeography of the North American red fox
2:20 – 4:20 pm	Tour of Henry Doorly Zoo, Center for Conservation Research
4:20 – 4:30	Day One Summary

Dinner Is On Your Own

Tuesday, September 11:

8:00 – 8:30 am	Breakfast and Registration	Iowa Room
8:30 – 8:35 am	Announcements	
8:35- 9:00 am	Carla McCullough (University of Nebraska), Hydraulic characteristics and dynamics of beaver dams in a Southeastern Nebraska watershed	
9:00 – 9:25 am	Justin Hoffman (University of Nebraska), Shifting distributional patterns of furbearer and non-game mammals in the Great Plains	
9:25 – 9:50 am	Dallas Virchow (Wildlife Services), Comparing Midwestern rabies cycles and diagnostic procedures	
9:50 – 10:15 am	Ricky Woods (Wildlife Services), Surveillance of Rabies in NE 2004-2006	
10:15 - 10:35 am	Break	
10:35 – 11:00 am	Heather Barton (Kansas State Univ.), Population dynamics of rabies and its host species, the striped skunk	

11:00 – 11:25 am	Dallas Virchow (Wildlife Services), USDA APHIS Wildlife Services Surveillance of Plague and Tularemia
11:25 – 11:50 am	Steven Vantassel (UNL), Internet Center for Wildlife Damage Management
11:50 am – 12 pm	Summary on Morning Session and Comments on Afternoon and Evening Events
12 – 1:30 pm	Lunch On Your Own
1:30 – 1:55 pm	John Olson (Wisconsin DNR), “Fur School U”
1:55 – 2:20 pm	Dave Hastings (FTA), New trap technologies in use
2:20 – 2:40 pm	Break
2:40 – 3:05 pm	Kevin Blecha (KCFWRU), Occupancy of river otters in Eastern Kansas
3:05 - 3:30 pm	Sam Wilson (NGPC) River otter home range and habitat use pilot study in Nebraska
3:30 – 3:55 pm	Ron Andrews (Iowa DNR), Iowa’s first river otter harvest season
3:55 – 4:00 pm	Day Two Summary and Update on Evening Events
5:30 – 6:30 pm	Social and Silent Auction Lewis and Clark Room
6:30 – 7:30 pm	Dinner Provided
7:30 – 8:30 pm	Social/Announce Silent Auction Winners
8:40 – 9 pm	Comments on Day Three Events

Wednesday, September 12:

8:00 – 8:30 am	Breakfast	Iowa Room
8:30 – 10:00 am	State Reports	

10:00– 10:10 am

Break

10:10 – 11:15 am

Business Meeting

11:15 – 11:30 am

Workshop Summary and Planning for 2008

11:30 am

Adjourn

Midwest Furbearer Workshop
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Doubletree Hotel & Executive Meeting Center
Omaha, Nebraska
September 9-12, 2007

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Wyoming

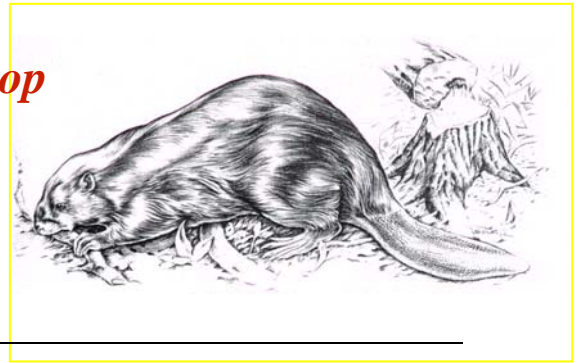
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Appendix 2

2008 Midwest Furbearer Resources Workshop Agenda and Meeting Attendees

Midwest Furbearer Resources Workshop

**June 9-12, 2008
Bass Pro Shops/Comfort Suites Hotel
Olathe, KS**



Monday, June 9

6:00-9:00 pm	Registration and Evening Mixer	Comfort Suites Hotel
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Tuesday, June 10

6:30-8:45 am	Breakfast and Registration	Comfort Suites Hotel
9-9:05 am	Welcome and Announcements	Bass Pro Shops
9:05-9:15 am	Welcome – Joe Kramer, Fisheries and Wildlife Division Director, Kansas Dept. of Wildlife and Parks	
9:15-9:40 am	Home range, habitat and movement of river otters in Southeast Kansas. Matt Peek (Kansas Dept. of Wildlife and Parks)	
9:40-10:05 am	Factors affecting the detectability of river otters in Eastern Kansas. Mackenzie Shardlow (Kansas State Univ.)	
10:05-10:30 am	River otter home range and habitat use in Nebraska. Sam Wilson (Nebraska Game and Parks Commission)	
10:30-10:45 am	Break	
10:45-11:10 am	Status and distribution of river otters in Kentucky. Erin Barding (Univ. of Kentucky)	
11:10-11:35 am	Results of Iowa's first ever bobcat harvest season. Ron Andrews (Iowa Dept. of Natural Resources)	
11:35 am-12:00 pm	Trapping on public lands in Kansas: manager opinions and frequency of conflict. Matt Peek (Kansas Dept of Wildlife and Parks)	
12:00-12:05 pm	Summary of morning session/logistics	
12:05-1:30 pm	Lunch on your own	
1:30-2:15 pm	on your own (self-guided tour of Bass Pro Shops)	
2:30-8:00 pm	Tour Marais des Cygnes Wildlife Area, BBQ, bobcat trapping demo	

Wednesday, June 11

6:30-8:15 am	Breakfast	Comfort Suites Hotel
8:30-8:35 am	Announcements	Bass Pro Shops
8:35-9:00 am	An Introduction to Illinois' online trapper education course, www.trapped.com . Bob Bluett (Illinois Dept. of Natural Resources)	
9:00-9:25 am	An update on recent activities of the AFWA Furbearer Work Group. John Erb (Minnesota Dept. of Natural Resources)	
9:25-9:50 am	Emerging issues in Missouri: Malrin poisoning of raccoons and DNA databasing captive large carnivores. Jeff Beringer (Missouri Dept. of Conservation)	
9:50-10:15 am	Hound Dog Training (Coursing) Pen Issue Paper – Adam Bump (Michigan Dept. of Natural Resources)	
10:15-10:40 am	Break	
10:40-11:30 am	Survival, landscape use, and diet of coyotes in the Chicago metropolitan area: implications for management. Stan Gehrt (Ohio State Univ.)	
11:30-11:55 am	Rabies host ecology of the striped skunk (<i>Mephitis mephitis</i>): Habitat use on a tall grass prairie with localized human disturbance. Sarah Bowe (Kansas State Univ.)	
11:55 am-12:00 pm	Summary of morning session/logistics	
12:00-1:15 pm	Lunch	
1:15-1:40 pm	CSI investigations of Iowa's mysterious cat sightings. Ron Andrews (Iowa Dept. of Natural Resources)	
1:40-2:05 pm	Mountain lion investigations in Missouri. Jeff Beringer (Missouri Dept. of Conservation)	
2:05-2:30 pm	Assessment of “mountain lion” evidence from the Midwest (all)	
2:30-2:50 pm	Break	
2:50-3:20 pm	SCI Newell Cat Video (Iowa Dept. of Natural Resources)	
3:20-3:45 pm	Distribution and status of the eastern spotted skunk (<i>Spilogale putorius</i>) in Kansas. Matt Peek (Kansas Dept. of Wildlife and Parks)	

3:45-4:15 pm	Discovering Iowa's bobcats. Derek Broman (Iowa Dept. of Natural Resources)
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4:15-4:25 pm	Wrap up
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Thursday, June 12

8:30-11:30 am	business meeting/state reports	Comfort Suites Hotel
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11:30 am	Adjourn
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Midwest Furbearer Workshop
Attendees
Bass Pro Shops and Comfort Suites Hotel
Olathe, Kansas
June 9-12, 2008

Last Name	First Name	Affiliation	E-mail
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Appendix 3

Past Midwest Furbearer Resources Workshop Host States

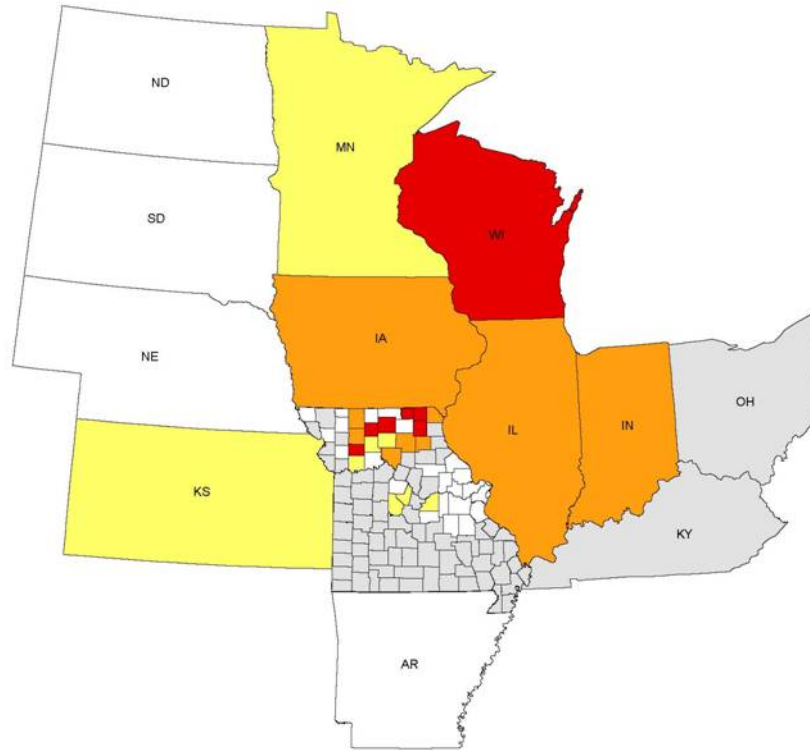
PAST MEETING HOST STATES

1979	KANSAS
1983	WISCONSIN
1984	ILLINOIS
1985	IOWA
1987	MINNESOTA
1988	INDIANA
1989	MISSOURI
1990	NEBRASKA
1991	SOUTH DAKOTA
1992	OHIO
1993	OKLAHOMA
1994	NORTH DAKOTA
1995	WEST VIRGINIA
1996	MICHIGAN
1997	ILLINOIS
1998	KANSAS
1999	WISCONSIN
2000	MISSOURI
2001	OHIO
2002	IOWA
2003	MINNESOTA
2004	ILLINOIS
2005	NORTH DAKOTA
2006	MICHIGAN
2007	NEBRASKA
2008	KANSAS

Appendix 4

**Perceived Use of Malrin in the Midwest as Indicated
by State Furbearer Representatives and Conservation Officers**

Perceived Misuse of Golden Malrin in the Midwest



Level of Misuse

- High
- Moderate
- Low
- Unknown/None
- No Data

Midwest states are rated
by feedback from state
furbearer biologists and
conservation agents.