

## POSITION STATEMENT OF THE NORTH DAKOTA CHAPTER OF THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY REGARDING FURBEARER DAMAGE MANAGEMENT AND CONTROL

Furbearers are recognizably an important renewable resource and provide numerous benefits to the ecosystem as well as many sportsmen and landowners. However, furbearers sometimes cause significant damage to private and public property, other wildlife species, fish and wildlife, habitats, agricultural crops and livestock, forest and pastures, urban and rural structures, and might threaten human health and safety or be a nuisance. Prevention or control of furbearer and other wildlife damage, which often includes removal and relocation or euthanasia of the animals responsible for the damage, is an essential and responsible component of the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation. Before furbearer damage control programs are undertaken, careful assessment should be made of the problem, with assurance that the techniques to be used are effective and biologically and socially appropriate.

The policy of the North Dakota Chapter of The Wildlife Society regarding furbearer damage management and alleviation of associated problems is to:

- 1) When appropriate, support sustained, regulated harvests of the furbearer species as a necessary first step for minimizing damage. This should include annual trapping/snaring and hunting seasons for the fur species commensurate with harvest regulations for those species.
- 2) Support and develop furbearer damage prevention, reduction and/or control programs that are biologically and socially appropriate, safe, and economically effective and practical for all furbearer species, including those that do not have established harvest seasons.
- 3) Encourage research to improve methodologies used for: a) monitoring furbearers; b) assess the damage caused by furbearer species; c) assess potential alternatives for damage prevention or control; d) preventing and controlling damage; which include health hazards and nuisance problems; e) monitoring the effectiveness and practicality of the efforts directed toward the management of furbearer conflicts; and f) understanding people's tolerance for wildlife conflicts.
- 4) Encourage and support educational programs in furbearer identification, furbearer management, and damage prevention/damage control.
- 5) Support the development and implementation of science-based laws and regulations governing furbearer damage prevention and control.
- 6) Not support payments for furbearer damage in any form.
- 7) Not support furbearer damage management on any lands (except those areas where policies and regulations do not allow hunting or trapping) where access by fur hunters or trappers is denied or where access fees for hunting are charged. Restricted access can create an artificial environment resulting in abnormally high survival rates of some species of furbearers on these types of lands.

\*Furbearers, as defined in the North Dakota Century Code 20.10-01-02, include mink, muskrats, weasels, wolverines, otters, martens, fishers, kit or swift foxes, beavers, raccoons, badgers, wolves, coyotes, bobcats, lynx, mountain lions, black bears, red or grey foxes. In addition, for the purpose of this statement, furbearers also include skunks and opossums.

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