

OKAUCHEE LAKE MUSKRAT REMOVAL

There have always been a lot of muskrats in Okauchee Lake. This is because the lake provides habitat which muskrats prefer: stable water conditions, plenty of aquatic vegetation and elevated shorelines for den sites. Then factor in that they have three litters a year, and you can quickly be overrun with muskrats. There will always be some muskrats present in the lake. Even with consistent trapping/removal new ones will continue to arrive (spring and fall) from the many lakes, rivers and marshes in the area. The goal is to keep their numbers at a manageable level to minimize the damage that their digging/burrowing causes to the shoreline.

I first started trapping muskrats on Okauchee Lake back around 1972, primarily for high school friends who lived on the lake (Forseths/Gambels - Stumpy Bay). At this time there were several lake residents who also trapped them. They did a good job of keeping the muskrat population under control. As time went by these older trappers moved on/left. Around 1995 there was no one left on the lake trapping muskrats. The population levels really started to increase such that I was getting more calls to come out and remove problem muskrats for individual property owners. Since then I believe that I have trapped just about every bay, island and shoreline of the lake.

The best time to trap/remove the muskrats would be in the spring and fall. Right after the ice goes out in the spring (around April 1st) the muskrat mating season starts. They are very active at this time, and easier to catch. The water clarity is very clear with less vegetation, making it easier to locate their burrows. Many of the piers are out of the water allowing access to burrows that are later hidden. There is also no boat traffic and conflicts with fisherman casting next to shore. Every female muskrat removed in the spring will mean around twenty less muskrats come fall. Early spring is my preferred time to remove muskrats. The next best time is in the fall right before the lake freezes over for the winter. At this time the new arrivals (muskrats relocating from other areas) will be digging up the shoreline creating their winter den sites. A lot of the shoreline damage occurs when these "runner rats" (term biologists use to describe dispersing muskrats moving into new areas) arrive.

I use "colony" traps to catch the muskrats. Colony traps look and function similar to a standard "cage trap." One advantage with these traps is that they do not have any "snapping" parts, making them people/pet friendly in an urban environment. They are "species specific," being designed to catch only muskrats. They are set under the water in the muskrat burrow entrance. As the muskrat enters the trap a door lifts up allowing the muskrat to enter, then the door shuts behind it trapping the muskrat inside. The trap is set under water so that the muskrat is drowned (an approved dispatch method in accordance with all international trapping laws/standards).

I would like to trap the Okauchee Lake muskrats for one week in the spring and one week in the fall. This would be the most efficient way to remove them. Currently I am coming out and trapping for individual property owners all year long. I am removing some muskrats, but not enough to actually lower the overall population. It costs the lake

residents more, ties up a lot of my time and results in only a portion of the lake getting trapped. Trapping a larger portion of the lake is necessary to reduce muskrat numbers.

The cost for this service would be \$1,000 in the spring and \$1,000 in the fall. I would secure all of the DNR permits and trapping licenses (reference attached DNR regulations). I will trap the muskrats and dispose of them (Sanimax - pet food). Should the residents need assistance with digging up old muskrat burrows and making repairs I can provide assistance. I can also work with individual residents who have related animal problems (skunks, raccoons, possums, etc.).

Thanks,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. Groehler' with a stylized flourish at the end.

Arnold Groehler

Nuisance Wildlife Guidelines

General Guidelines and Definitions:

- Landowner: The owner or occupant of any land and members of his or her family may, without a license and subject to all other restrictions except seasons, hunt or trap on their own property for coyote, beaver, fox, raccoon, woodchuck, rabbit, and squirrel year-round.
- Landowner Assistant/Agent: All persons assisting a landowner (i.e., acting as an agent of a landowner) in the removal of animals causing damage must possess the following in accordance with NR 12.10(3)(c):
 - a) A valid hunting license if shooting the animal or a valid trapping license if trapping the animal; and
 - b) Written approval from the landowner, which includes:
 - Name, address, and phone number of landowner;
 - Name, address, and phone number of person removing wild animals;
 - Property location and removal activities;
 - Authorized time period of removal and species of animals authorized for removal; and
 - Signature of the landowner or lessee and date.
- Animal Relocation: Animals that have been live-captured may not be relocated to DNR-controlled lands. When relocating animals to private property, the person must have permission from the owner of the land where the animal is being released, in accordance with NR 12.10(1)(a)3., s. 169.04(2)(a)2.
- Animal Carcass Care and Disposition: Fur from furbearing animals killed under a written animal damage/removal permit may be retained by the trapper, landowner, or agent and sold **only** if the permit authorizes the person to retain the carcasses as a condition of the permit. Furs from furbearing animals which did not require a special permit for harvest, such as beaver, coyote, fox, raccoon, and unprotected species, can be retained by a landowner under the authority of s. 29.337 or by an assistant/agent trapping with written authorization (as described above); furs from these species may also be retained and sold during the closed season.

The fur from rabbits retained by a landowner under the authority of s. 29.337 or by an agent/assistant trapping with written authorization (as described above) may be retained and sold during the closed season. Landowners under the authority of s. 29.337 or agents/assistants trapping with written authorization (as described above) who retain squirrels may sell the tails, skin, claws, and skulls during the closed season. All other animals which are not salvageable must be disposed of in a sanitary manner, or as required in any written permit.

- Trap Tagging Requirement: Each trap used under a trapping license shall be tagged with a metal tag stamped with the name and address or DNR customer ID number of the owner of the trap.

BEAVER

- A nuisance/damage removal permit is not needed for a landowner, lessee, or an agent of the landowner to hunt or trap beaver causing damage [NR 10.13(1)(a)1., s. 29.337(1)].
- Landowners, lessees, or agents of landowners may remove a beaver dam. People who are an agent of the landowner must have written authorization from the landowner to remove the dam (see above requirement for agents) [NR 12.10(1)(b)(3)].
- Only the landowner may set traps on a beaver dam. This privilege cannot be transferred to an agent or employee UNLESS the landowner is a corporation or municipality, in which case an employee or elected official may set traps on a beaver dam [NR 10.13(1)(b)(5)].
- A DNR permit is required to remove a beaver lodge/house, whether active or vacant [s. 29.885(2)(b), and 29.088(3)].
- For more information, see:
<http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/waterways/factsheets/beaverdamage.pdf>

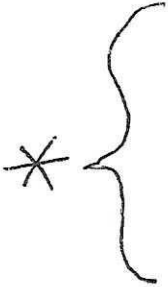
Shooting

- Must comply with shooting hours (1/2 hour before sunrise to 20 minutes past sunset) [NR 10.06(5)].
- No artificial lights or shining are allowed [s. 29.314].
- Must have a valid Small Game, Conservation Patron, or Sports License (landowners are exempt; see above) [s. 29.024(1), 29.337(1)].

Trapping

- May not trap with steel-jawed traps that have a jaw spread larger than 8 inches (at any time) and smaller than 5½ inches, except during the open muskrat/mink season [NR 10.13(1)(b)9, 11]. Traps with teeth must be set underwater at all times [NR 10.13(1)(b)10].
- May not trap with body-gipping-type traps that have a jaw spread less than or equal to 60 square inches, measured from the maximum outside points on the width and height of the jaws of a trap that has not been set, except during the open muskrat/mink season [NR 10.13(1)(b) 11].
- Snares must be set so at least one-half of the set snare is located underwater at all times, must be non-spring-activated, must not exceed 5 feet in length, and the diameter of the wire or cable may not exceed 1/8 inch. Each snare must have a swivel [NR 10.13(1)(b) 13 and 14].
- Agents/assistants must have a Wisconsin trapping license.

MUSKRATS

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- Landowners, occupants, and/or agents may, without a permit, trap or shoot muskrats that are causing damage to dikes, dams, shoreline, or roadways [NR 12.10(1)(b)1(d)].
 - An agent of the landowner is also required to have a valid hunting or trapping license when removing these animals (see above for agent requirements) [NR 12.10(3)c, 29.024].
 - A landowner/occupant may solicit an agent to aid in the removal of muskrats when causing damage [NR 12.10(3)(c)].

BATS

- Eight species of bats are recorded in Wisconsin, and four of the five cave-dwelling bats (Big Brown, Little Brown, Northern Long-eared, and Eastern Pipistrelle) are state-listed as threatened. The fifth species, the Indiana Bat, is federally endangered. All five species are protected [NR 27.03]. The three migratory species of bats recorded in Wisconsin (Eastern Red Bat, Hoary Bat, and Silver-haired Bat) are on the "watch list."
- Do not attempt to exclude bats during the summer months when the colony is established and the young are unable to fly. Bat exclusions may not be conducted from June 1 through August 15.
- A landowner/occupant may solicit an agent to aid in the removal of these animals when causing damage [NR 12.10(3)(c)].
- No unauthorized person may handle or kill any endangered or threatened species of bat.
- There is a Broad Incidental Take Permit for public health that allows for measures to help the public deal with bat removals in homes and offices; for more information about the permit please see <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/ERReview/Documents/BatConservationPlan1-10-11b.pdf> and the form at <http://dnr.wi.gov/files/PDF/forms/2300/2300-330.pdf>.

COYOTE, BEAVER, FOX, RACCOON, WOODCHUCK, RABBIT, AND SQUIRREL

- Landowners and occupants may trap or shoot these species at any time [s. 29.337(1)].
- When causing damage or nuisance, agents may also assist with removal [NR 12.10(1)(b)].
- Landowners/occupants are not required to have a hunting or trapping license to shoot or trap these species on their own property, year-round. However, an agent of the landowner/occupant is required to have a valid hunting and/or trapping license, and if the season is closed, the agent must also have written authorization from the landowner when removing these animals (see above for agent/assistant requirements) [s. 29.337, 29.024. NR 12.10(1)(b)1.c].
- A landowner/occupant may solicit an agent to aid in the removal of these animals when causing damage or nuisance [NR 12.10(3)(c)].

CROWS, COWBIRDS, GRACKLES, AND RED-WINGED BLACKBIRDS