

The Indiana Department of Natural Resources and the Indiana State Trappers Association Continue to work together in **Promoting Our Trapping Heritage**

Text and Photos by Justin Harrington

Our cover photo this month is of the students and instructors setting traps together at a beaver lodge on Snipe Marsh at Salamonie Reservoir. Justin Harrington shared these photos and the story below. --editor

For the fourth year straight, the Salamonie Reservoir Trapping Camp has been a success for instructors and students alike. Each fall, this course has been continually generating good interest from the public throughout northern Indiana. The talented instructors make this two-day event a great primer on trapping for those interested in trapping for the first time, or for those who have not trapped for a long time but want to get back into the sport.

Dedicated instructors, Scot Dahms, John Adams, and Chuck Iser, have decades of trapping experience and are great at holding attention of kids and adults during the instructional sessions.

Classroom and field sessions tie together many topics, including safety, trapping regulations, furbearer biology, and a wide

array of trapping techniques. Students walk away with a better understanding of trapping, furbearer biology, and why laws are set in place to regulate trapping.

This year, there were two USDA-APHIS-Wildlife Services biologists who attended to learn more about the course and take disease samples of the furbearers that were caught during the event, which provided a close-up example on another benefit of regulated trapping.



Scot Dahms using a hitch-mount skinning attachment owned by John Adams to demonstrate the skinning of a raccoon caught during the land-trapping session.

Without trapping and its benefits, Americans would eventually have to pay more to mitigate the resulting wildlife conflicts. The International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies estimates that the United States would incur a total cost of \$70.5 billion nationwide in wildlife-associated damages, which equals an amount close to \$247 cost per citizen, if hunting and trapping were lost.

Hunter and Trapper Education courses help promote these beneficial activities. Because of this, hunter and trapper recruitment is an important initiative for wildlife management in every state. Not only do events like this encourage memberships in conservation clubs by attendees, but it increases the purchase of trapping licenses, which help fund more and improved trapping opportunities in Indiana and many other states.

If you're an experienced trapper, please consider helping out in events such as this by contacting your local natural resources agency for more information.

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