

Wieland explains state trapping requirements

Written by Holyoke Enterprise

By Jack Wieland, Colorado Division of Wildlife, DWM

The passing of Amendment 14 in 1996 by 52 percent of Colorado's voters changed how wildlife can be taken in Colorado by restricting the use of leghold traps, body-grip (conibear) traps, snares, nets and poisons.

This amendment still allows landowners the ability to remove birds and wild and domestic rodents (except beaver and muskrat) by the restricted methods listed above. For example, homeowners may still use mouse and rat traps and poisons.

There are also four limited exemptions to the amendment which allow the ability to:

- 1) control wildlife damage to commercial crops and livestock on private land by allowing landowners to trap for a 30-day period on one land parcel per calendar year;
- 2) protect human health and safety by a Health Dept.;
- 3) take wildlife for bonifide scientific research, falconry, live relocation or medical treatment of the animal;
- 4) manage fish and non-mammalian aquatic wildlife by the Division of Wildlife.

The most complaints I receive at this time of year deal with coyotes and calves. How does this amendment apply to the rancher with coyote problems during calving season or the landowners with coyotes visiting their poultry houses? In order for a rancher or landowner to legally trap, snare or poison coyotes that are causing damage, a series of events must take place first before the trapper is called.

First, the rancher/landowner must try other reasonable methods to alleviate the problem. These methods depend on the locations of the animals to be protected and include, but are not limited to: strategically placed lights, motion sensor lights, sirens or radios, protection dogs, calling and shooting, etc.

If these methods are not successful, the rancher/landowner must contact the local District Wildlife Manager (DWM) in writing within 10 days. The letter must state they are having coyote problems and need a trapper to assist them. Once the letter is received, the DWM will issue the rancher/landowner a trapping permit that will be good for a 30-day period on one contiguous parcel of land, per year.

After the trapping period is complete, the trapper will need to tell the rancher/landowner how many animals were removed. This information is then placed on the trapping permit and mailed to the issuing DWM.

The trapper has many restrictions to follow as required by the Dept. of Agriculture regulations, which detail the legal use of padded jaw leg hold traps, passive-nonmechanical foot snares, conibear style kill traps, live traps and registered poisons.

There are also special conditions regarding anchor chains, pan tension, stops on non-lethal snares, breakaway poundage on lethal snares and specific location information where traps can't be placed.

If you have questions about coyote trapping or would like to confirm that you are in compliance, please contact me at 970-854-3512.