

## **2004 Trapping, Wildlife, and Tourism Statistics (New Mexico Game & Fish)**

- 767 estimated trappers in New Mexico (95% in-state)
- 7,344 target animals trapped (by-catch unknown)
- \$671,000 generated by trapping (licenses, equipment, pelt sales)
- 449,000 New Mexicans wildlife-watch
- 387,000 tourists visit New Mexico to wildlife-watch
- \$931,500,000 generated by wildlife-watching in New Mexico

Target Wildlife Legally Trapped: Badgers, Beaver, Bobcats, Coyote, Fox (Gray, Kit, Red, Swift), Muskrat, Nutria, Raccoon, Ringtail, Skunk (Spotted, Striped), Weasel(s)

Non-Target Animals Trapped include: Black Bears, Birds, Cats (domestic), Coati, Deer, Dogs (domestic), Javelina, Mountain Lions, Skunk (hooded and hog-nosed), Squirrels

### **New Mexico Trapping Regulations**

Traps may be encountered year-round. There are no bag limits, trap limits, or game units. Trapping is allowed anywhere on public lands outside 25 yards of a public hiking trail or road; 50 yards of a livestock/wildlife watering area; one-quarter mile of dwelling, public campground, rest, picnic, or boat-launching area (*Exceptions: No trapping Los Alamos county; Rio Grande recreation area in Taos County; Valle Vidal; McGregor military range unit 28; Valles Caldera unit 6*).

State law requires that traps be checked every 24 hours by the trapper. Traps must be marked either with the trapper's name and address or a trapper ID number. The location of traps is not shared with Game & Fish wardens, nor is there any requirement that trappers post signs on public lands to inform the public of where traps are located to protect their pets and children.

### **New Mexico Trapping Survey, 2005**

Poll conducted by Research & Polling, Inc.

Trapping on public lands has not been a hotly debated issue among the general population of voters in New Mexico. In fact, just 41% of voters statewide are aware that trapping is actually legal on public lands in New Mexico. Many voters (33%) believe trapping is illegal, while the rest are unsure (26%). Respondents were informed that trapping is legal on public lands in New Mexico and given a brief description of the different types of traps that are commonly used, as well as the rules trappers are supposed to follow.

Voters were also read some of the arguments that supporters have given to ban leg-hold, snare and lethal traps on public lands in New Mexico and arguments opponents to such a ban have given. Voters were then asked if they would support or oppose banning these types of traps on public lands in New Mexico. Overall, 63% of voters statewide say they either *strongly support* (41%) or *somewhat support* (22%) placing a ban on leg-hold, snare and lethal traps on public lands, while 22% are opposed to such a ban. Support for banning trapping is strongest among female and Anglo voters as well as those who participate in outdoor activities such as backpacking, bird/animal watching, and hiking.

A random sample of registered voters statewide was interviewed by telephone. Telephone numbers were generated from the Research & Polling, Inc. database. All interviews were conducted between August 16<sup>th</sup> and August 24<sup>th</sup>, 2005. A total of 398 registered voters statewide completed interviews, along with an oversample of 155 registered voters in Grant County. Thus, a total of 553 telephone interviews were completed.

The poll suggests that approximately 50,000 New Mexican households have personally encountered traps on public lands or know someone who has. According to the poll, New Mexico residents have found a variety of non-target animals in traps including dogs, deer, bear, rabbits, quail, and coatis— none of which can be legally trapped in the state.

## **Support For Banning Certain Types of Traps on Public Lands**

*Question: (A) Opponents of trapping argue that it is a cruel way to kill animals who can suffer for long periods of time, especially since some trappers do not always check their traps every 24 hours. Critics believe that public lands belong to everyone and that the traps pose a danger to everyone who uses trails and roads on public lands as well as their pets and horses since there is no way to identify where traps are being laid. Pets, other domestic animals and unintended wildlife are injured or even killed by traps every year. Opponents also believe unlimited trapping could be hurting certain populations of animals like bobcats and foxes since trappers are not required to report their kills and there is no limit as to how many animals are killed.*

*(B.) Supporters argue that trapping is an important source of revenue for trappers and the state of New Mexico, as well as being a tradition often passed down through family generations. Supporters also argue that trappers are required to check their traps every 24 hours and free any animals that are trapped by accident. Supporters also argue that trapping helps to control predators such as coyotes and skunks and helps to control wildlife disease. Some supporters are concerned that a ban on trapping using leg-hold and lethal traps is the first step to placing greater restrictions on hunting.*

*After hearing these arguments do you support or oppose banning leg hold, snare and lethal traps on public lands in New Mexico? Is that strongly or somewhat?*

	Statewide Sample (N=398)	Participate in Hunting		Participate in Hiking		Participate in Horseback Riding		Participate in Camping		Participate in Fishing		Participate in Backpacking		Participate in Bird/Wildlife Watching	
		Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Strongly support	41%	27%	46%	47%	36%	43%	41%	42%	40%	36%	47%	46%	41%	51%	36%
Somewhat support	22%	25%	21%	21%	22%	19%	22%	24%	18%	23%	21%	28%	20%	17%	25%
Depends/mixed feelings	9%	11%	9%	8%	10%	6%	10%	10%	8%	11%	7%	3%	11%	10%	9%
Somewhat oppose	9%	12%	8%	9%	10%	9%	9%	8%	12%	11%	8%	8%	10%	9%	10%
Strongly oppose	13%	21%	10%	13%	13%	18%	12%	13%	12%	16%	10%	13%	12%	13%	13%
Don't know/won't say	5%	5%	6%	2%	9%	4%	6%	3%	10%	4%	7%	2%	6%	1%	8%