



## SPECIAL NEW YORK FACT SHEET

### NEW YORK:

Born Free USA's latest undercover trapping investigation — five years after our landmark Victims of Vanity investigation ([www.victimsofvanity.com](http://www.victimsofvanity.com)) — once again reveals the truth of trapping: that it is ruthless, dangerous, archaic, and takes place in private, public, and protected lands, including in the Adirondack Park of New York.

### THE ADIRONDACK PARK

In November 2015, our investigator followed a trapper to Adirondack Park: a six-million-acre park and forest preserve, consisting of both state-owned and private land. With more than 10,000 lakes, 30,000 miles of rivers and streams, a diverse range of habitats, and more than 2,000 miles of trails, the park is the largest National Historic Landmark in the United States. The park receives up to 10 million visitors annually, who come to hike, camp, ski, bike, and rock climb. These visitors bring along their friends, loved ones, and animal companions.

And yet, in the midst of this pristine wilderness, our investigator documented a trapper as he set up his trap line, using Conibear traps to catch several beavers: a species that was nearly wiped out in the early 19th century due solely to trapping. He skinned the beavers for their pelts, and used their carcasses as bait for the Conibear and leghold traps he set on land, targeting coyotes and bobcats. He also set traps for mink, martens, otters, and fishers.



PHOTO: ROBBIE'S PHOTO ART

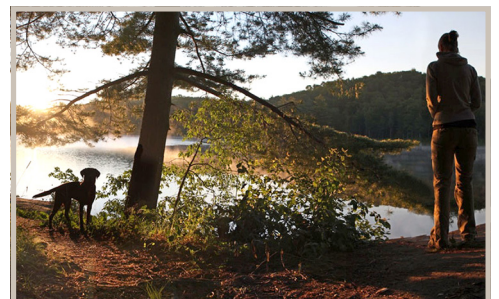


PHOTO: LAKE PLACID CVB





## OUR FINDINGS

### • Alleged Illegal Activity

The trapper routinely broke several trapping regulations, including damaging beaver dams in order to entice the beaver to the location, setting traps nearby [image 1]; using the organs of an animal as bait and leaving it uncovered in a tree-mounted trap, set low to the ground [image 2]; and placing large Conibear traps on land (something he admitted he knew was illegal) [image 3]. He told our investigator not to film as he set the traps, but the investigator still managed to obtain some footage.

### • Dangerous Trapping

A basic truth of traps is that they are terrifyingly indiscriminate; they cannot control what they catch. However, this trapper set several Conibear traps next to bridges, roads, and trails frequented by the park's hikers and their animal companions [image 4]. While it is illegal to place traps within 100 feet of public roads, the areas under bridges are exempt. Legal or not, setting traps mere feet below a bridge puts the millions of visitors who travel over them at risk.

### • Cruelty

The trapper took our investigator to a place he called a "great killing area." After dismantling a dam, the trapper blocked the only entrance with a row of Conibear traps [image 5], condemning the beaver to death when the animal returned to repair his dam and secure his home [image 6].

Conibear traps are advertised as "quick-kill" and thus, trapping interests claim, more humane. However, our footage disproves that theory: a beaver found dead under water, a Conibear trap shut around his chest and abdomen [image 7]. This beaver slowly died by drowning, which can take up to 20 minutes.

The trapper also made use of a drown pole trap, which is a leghold trap attached to a pole. The trap is set along the river bank. When the beaver is trapped and struggles to swim away, the drown pole drags the animal to the bottom of the river and slowly drowns him. Many trappers prefer this method for trapping beavers, simply because it is more convenient... to the trapper.



## THE AMERICAN BEAVER: More than Just a Pelt

This trapper valued the pelt of the beaver above all else, but this animal is worth more than just fur. The American beaver — one of only two species of beavers worldwide — is a symbol of North American wilderness as well as a vital keystone species, responsible for creating and maintaining important freshwater wetland ecosystems.

The ponds that beavers create with their leaky dams become nurseries for fish and other organisms, including aquatic plants and wetland microorganisms that detoxify pollutants, resulting in cleaner water in the pond and downstream. Not only does their work improve water quality, but, with the natural, freshwater reservoirs they create, beavers may also provide the answer to revitalizing drought-stricken areas and help us prevent massive water shortages in the future.

In today's fur market, a beaver pelt is valued in the range of \$11-\$18. This price cannot compare to the incalculable value of a live beaver, serving as a crucial component to ecosystem balance.

## TAKE ACTION:

**T**his compelling follow-up investigation once again makes the truth resoundingly clear; trapping is cruel, barbaric, and dangerous, and has been for centuries. Our footage also shows that trappers will regularly step outside the law as it suits them, knowing that even when trapping is regulated, those laws go largely unenforced.

With this investigation, Born Free USA will work to limit trapping at the federal level by supporting legislation to ban trapping on federal public land, ban federal employees from using traps in the line of duty, and ban the interstate transport of types of traps.

We will also work with the New York Department of Environmental Conservation regarding the alleged illegal trapping activity our investigator documented. We will also push the New York State Legislature to ban traps in state parks and other protected lands as well as to significantly restrict or ban Conibear traps.

Make your voice heard by speaking up in favor of local, state, and federal legislation aimed at limiting or banning the use of traps, and by not buying fur or shopping at stores that sell fur. Support the more than 400 retailers that have committed to a no-fur policy by joining the Fur Free Retailer program. Visit [www.furfreeretailer.com](http://www.furfreeretailer.com).

(OVER)



PHOTO: MICHELLE KWAJAFA



PHOTO: H. ROTGERS



PHOTO: STUDIOWORXX



## RESOURCES:

We have many resources available for learning more and taking action:

- The comprehensive website of this investigation, with video  
>> [www.bornfreeusa.org/victimsofvanity2](http://www.bornfreeusa.org/victimsofvanity2)
- The original 2011 "Victims of Vanity" investigation website  
>> [www.bornfreeusa.org/victimsofvanity](http://www.bornfreeusa.org/victimsofvanity)
- Information on the Refuge from Cruel Trapping Act (RCTA), 114th Congress  
>> [www.bornfreeusa.org/rcta](http://www.bornfreeusa.org/rcta)
- Born Free USA's Trapping Report Card, grading each state based on its animal trapping regulations  
>> [www.bornfreeusa.org/trapreportcard](http://www.bornfreeusa.org/trapreportcard)
- Born Free USA's database listing non-targeted victims of traps  
>> [www.bornfreeusa.org/database](http://www.bornfreeusa.org/database)
- Born Free USA's Trapping Victims Fund to help cover veterinary care for companion animals or wildlife impacted by traps  
>> [www.bornfreeusa.org/trappingfund](http://www.bornfreeusa.org/trappingfund)
- Resources for lawmakers and others interested in changing trapping laws at the state and local levels, including model legislation and ordinances  
>> [www.bornfreeusa.org/legislation](http://www.bornfreeusa.org/legislation)
- The Fur Free Retailer program with a list of fur-free stores  
>> [www.furfreeretailer.com](http://www.furfreeretailer.com)
- Sign up for Born Free USA's online eAlerts and receive newsletters keeping you informed about how to help protect animals from traps and other issues that threaten wildlife  
>> [www.bornfreeusa.org/actionteam](http://www.bornfreeusa.org/actionteam)

ALL PHOTOS: BORN FREE USA UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED

Born Free USA is a national animal advocacy non-profit 501(c)(3) organization whose mission is to end the suffering of wild animals in captivity, rescue individual animals in need, protect wildlife in their natural habitats, and encourage compassionate conservation. We also operate the Born Free USA Primate Sanctuary.

**For more information, visit [www.bornfreeusa.org/victimsofvanity2](http://www.bornfreeusa.org/victimsofvanity2)**

KEEP WILDLIFE IN THE WILD®

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