

## 2023

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

SECTION	PAGE #
From the President	Page 1-3
Gray Fox Research/ Conservation VS.Preservation	Page 4
Why Surveys Are Important	Page 5
Shipping & Possession Tags	Page 6
Cites Tags	Page 7
A Fresh Look At An Old Industry	Page 8

# LTAHA

## LOUISIANA TRAPPERS & ALLIGATORS ASSOCIATION



### FROM THE PRESIDENT

As 2022 comes to a close, many of the goals we set have been met or exceeded while others still allude us. I am extremely proud of the education program, the steady improvements, and the growth we are seeing every year. In 2022, we hosted three instructor workshops for the continuing education of the teachers. The workshops are short and to the point to help ensure that the instructors are working together

and teaching from the same material. We have finished the standard trap boxes, with display stands, which allow instructors to teach the class using the same equipment at every event. The boxes are green, brown, and black. They are high impact gun cases purchased from Harbor Freight. There are 85-pound magnets bolted in the bottom of the cases in a specific pattern, to hold the different size traps from #1 - #5's and 110 - 330. We have one box just for coil springs, one box for long springs and one box for body grips and snares. There are different staking systems in the coil spring box so students can see firsthand the different systems used today. I feel this is a great addition to our program, as it allows the instructor to show the different trap styles without having to bring his or her own equipment. It is compact and well displayed. We displayed one of the boxes at the NTA National Convention in Lima, Ohio this past July. The standard box and the simplicity of the design caught the attention of many fellow associations and the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (DNR).

While speaking of our success, I have to mention our presence at the NTA Convention this year. The LTAHA Secretary, Justin Ebarb and I attended the 2022 National Convention as State Representatives of the Association. We learned a lot of valuable information which was delivered in real time back to the association's Board of Directors. It was disseminated to the membership through text, email, and later by newsletters. Many contacts were made including NTA President, John Daniel. He was invited to attend our fall rendezvous, where he performed an outstanding water road line demo. Tennessee NTA Director, Mrs. Debbie Daniels, also attended with her husband, John. Mike Sievering, President of Fur Bearers Unlimited and NTA Conservation Director, also attended the fall rendezvous. We held a round table discussion that brought forth many new ideas and brought direction for not only our association, also the industry.

My wife and I also attended the Mississippi Trappers Association awards banquet, August 27, at McCain Lodge in Brandon, MS. The Mississippi Association put on a first-class banquet and made for an enjoyable evening, with great food and fellowship. As luck would have it, my wife and I were able to travel to the Texas Trappers Association fall rendezvous a few weeks before our own rendezvous. I had been asked to put on a alligator demo as a LTAHA Rep. My wife and I had a great time, and if nothing else, everyone got a laugh out of my demo. As a side note, no LTAHA funds were used for either of these events.



Our fall rendezvous was what I would call a great success. Everything came together right after it all fell apart. Our food trucks were not under contract and due to weather concerns, they backed out just a few days before the event. With little planning and lots of support from fellow members, we pulled off a fish plate lunch that would rival any restaurant. I would like to give a big shout out to Eric Cottrell who provided fresh caught fish. They were dressed and ready for the grease with just a few days' notice. Because of members like Eric, LTAHA is able to overcome many obstacles and present first-class events. The demo lineup was great and everyone got something out of them.

Our vender list has grown as Okie Trappers Supply set up 10 tables and had any supplies you wanted. Cletis Richards, owner of Apple Roads Lures, set up two tables and had his full line of lure at the event. The rendezvous was conceived after the fall convention was held in Nov. of 2021 after all the covid lockdowns were lifted. The convention is where all the annual business is handled. Board members are elected with the general member meeting held at lunch. The rendezvous had no such business. It was a time for gathering, fellowship, and talking about the upcoming season. We also purchased last minute supplies and talked with fur buyers who were present. After the event was over, we held an instructor workshop which concluded Sunday by noon and everyone headed home happy.



With so many events attended this year, it has been hard to find a weekend for myself. So as the year came to a close, I took vacation from my regular job and planned a trapping trip to the river. The day before I was to set up, as I began to pack the gear in the boat, I decided I need to attend to my affairs at the house instead. So I began a construction project of enclosing my gator meat processor and cleaning my fur shed, skinning area, workshop, and processor top to bottom. I stacked, stored, and cleaned for days. I hauled off two dumpster loads of JUNK. I even trimmed trees, cleaned my yard, and stacked/stored more stuff. I am ready to go back to work, just so I can get a break. In truth, thinking about the time that many of your fellow members (officers, BOD and instructors) have donated this past year, I personally can count 10 weekends that were totally consumed with LTAHA business. This was from Friday evening to Sunday evening with two full week events attended. I/We ask no acknowledgement for the time given as it is our choice, just know there are literally hundreds, if not over a thousand hours, donated to the furtherment of the LTAHA by many people.



One of the larger issues LTAHA is working on at this time is the re-introduction of the red wolf into southwest LA. The red wolf has been considered extirpated from Louisiana since the early 1980s with no sustainable population. The red wolf was not driven out or killed off, but rather, it bred itself into non-existence by breeding with coyotes and domesticated dogs. In recent years, there have been researchers attempting to re-introduce the red wolf in North Carolina and a slow, steady, yet quiet push into Louisiana.

LTAHA first learn of this at the NTA convention meeting, which Justin Ebarb and I attended. The North Carolina delegate, Nelson Pearce, used his time at the podium to forewarn all of us, especially Louisiana, about the issue related to the re-introduction of the red wolf. Mr. Pearce explained how North Carolina trappers had already lost trapping in five counties. Mr. Pearce explained it was not because the red wolves were being harmed, but rather they resemble a coyote. If you feel you have taken a red wolf, US Game and Fish has to come release the animal or dispatch depending on the species. So instead of calling US Game and Fish all the time, they just stopped the taking of coyotes in five counties. You can see the importance of us watching as closely as possible. LTAHA is taking a second chair to the Cattlemen's Assoc. who are very concerned with this re-introduction. LTAHA is notifying our membership about the possibility of persons wanting to purchase specific coyotes, alive or even dead, for research proposes. Make sure anyone attempting to purchase any animal from you is properly licensed as a fur buyer, fur dealer, or has a breeder's permit. Check your purchaser out to ensure they are who they say they are. There have been several inquires about black coyotes, specifically from south Louisiana. If you have concerns or wish to discuss more, please feel free to contact me any time.

I also want to bring to our member's attention another project that I personally have been working on for the past few years. After having many members ask for a change, I have been petitioning Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries to make changes to the Coyote Permit, which allows for the trapping of coyotes outside of the regular trapping season.

"We have to always keep in mind, our education goal is not to make ten thousand trappers, but rather have ten thousand people that will support our industry."  
-Tony Howard-

The changes I have asked for would simply change the wording to allow trappers to use the current Best Management Practices (BMP). This would allow for a much greater range of equipment for coyote than what is currently allowed with the Coyote Permit. I had hoped for the changes to be in effect by the new year, however, as the wheels turn in the process, it is at least in motion for this upcoming year. This small change will help those who currently utilize the Coyote Permit for live market and control work. Using the science behind the BMP's has added in this regulation change, which has been much harder than you would think. I hope by our next newsletter these changes will be in place.

Mike Sievering spoke on behalf of the FBU at the 2022 fall rendezvous, he brought to our attention that other states are bringing trapping back in high schools through 4H, FFA and Shop Classes. This is the direction we feel LTAHA should start looking. Every school district will be different, even schools inside districts may have different approaches to outdoor education. We have to always keep in mind, our education goal is not to make ten thousand trappers, but rather to have ten thousand people that will support our industry. I hope we will move in a positive direction in the very near future, however, we need many more educational instructors than we currently have.

This was the first year that the LDWF and LTAHA education program was invited to the 2022 Enforcement Academy to teach trapping to the cadets. The education program was given the better part of the day to present our program. The event was presented much like our one-day workshops, with the morning spent in the classroom. Jennifer Hogue-Manuel made a slightly modified presentation for the cadets than her normal power point program. The second half of our time was spent showing the cadets ten different sets, that were already in place, with a variety of scenarios from a trapped alligator to a toe caught bear. Every set was a real trap line scenario, with every detail of the set covered, from guide sticks, cross overs, attractors and lures. There were many questions asked by the cadets and they expressed their belief that our presentation was very helpful. The education program is growing faster than we could have ever imagined at the inception of the joint venture. Through countless hours of devoted dedication of few, the program has grown to include many. The program is gaining notoriety in the state, many off duty enforcement agents, and several on duty agents, have attended the one-day and three-day workshops. Again, our goal is not to make trappers, but to make supporters of the industry.

I want to close by introducing our new Education Coordinator, Randall Williamson. Randall brought his younger cousin to one of the first three-day events we held and has hung around ever since. Randall is an accomplished trapper from Slidell, LA. and a life member of the LTAHA. Randall was also elected to the LTAHA Board of Directors in 2022. He became an instructor as soon as it was offered to him, several years ago, and has grown with the association since that first year. Randall has a willingness and drive that is needed in the coordinator position, and I am so proud to see him take the reins. I feel Randall will lead our instructors into the next chapter of the program and enhance our attendance and overall numbers through communication. Please welcome and thank Randall Williamson for accepting the title and position of Education Coordinator. I look forward to working with him for years to come.

Tony Howard- President LTAHA  
170 Thomas Street  
Sarepta, LA 71071  
Mobile: 318-432-7860  
Email: mahoward@centurytel.net



Hello fellow trappers!

For those of you who do not know me, my name is Randall Williamson. Just recently, I was voted in as Education Coordinator of the Louisiana Trappers and Alligator Hunters Association (LTAHA). This was announced on December 12, 2022, by the board of directors for LTAHA and just so you know, I am honored.

I have been an instructor for several years and I look forward to helping schedule instructors for upcoming workshops, ensuring everyone has proper equipment, and keeping communication amongst us all.

-Randall Williamson-Education Coordinator

# Gray Fox Research

Hello all, my name is Nichole Wohlstein, I am attending ULM for biology- emphasis in wildlife and ecology classes. I will be graduating Fall of 2023, and I will be continuing my education into graduate school at ULM for a master's degree in biology. Again, with wildlife as my focus. I really want to study furbearers for my project and have decided on the gray fox. Louisiana is lacking information for the gray fox compared to other furbearers. That being said, I have a lot of options to focus my study on. If the resources are available to me, I would love to do a spatial ecology study on how they use their home ranges, by using GPS telemetry. I want to include a population estimate on how many foxes are in an area per the given resources. I would like to see if their movements differ during different times of the year, weather conditions, disturbance and time of day. Especially, if there are specific resources like a type of plant or tree that attracts a greater abundance of gray fox in an area. Another option for me is to do a diet study by analyzing scat samples. My goal for this project is to gain more information on them, that could be useful to other researchers, trappers, and people that are just curious about

the gray fox in Louisiana. I am hoping to get help from LTAHA to make sure I can do a good job on the research and learn valuable skills and knowledge that would only come from the trapping community.

-Nichole Wohlstein **Conservation vs. Preservation**

One of my favorite topics to talk about is the differences between conservation and preservation. These terms are often confused and used interchangeability in the news and during debates around wildlife management. But there is an important distinction: preservation is the route of taking no action while conservation involves human intervention. For example: preservation is much like nature reserves where nature takes

its own course. It is taken from the word "preserve", but it can also be seen as "pristine". Species are allowed to grow, die, and move at their own pace. With that being said, natural events are allowed to happen such as forest fires, extinction, avalanches, migrations, etc.

The opposite is true for conservation. Conservation is rooted in restoration and maintaining a status quo. In Louisiana, we pride ourselves in coastal conservation through planting marsh grass, protecting and reintroducing oyster beds, and implementing fishing and trawling seasons for the intent to maintain or restore a status quo within the coastal habitats. Conservation requires human intervention to set boundaries and achieve goals related to environmental causes. Take the whooping crane, the preservation of its habitat has been in place for many years, but it took conservation efforts to breed, reintroduce, and maintain the species.

There is a need to understand the importance of human intervention in areas where many would argue for preservation. This is a common debate when looking at "critical" areas such as national parks. Yes, Yellowstone was founded as a nature reserve with preservation ideology due to the rapid loss of bison and the rarity of geothermal activity, but the reintroduction of species and the everyday bustle of tourism makes it a conservation habitat. The facilities, roads, and attractions balanced with the management of wildlife and mitigation of forest fires (think Smokey Bear) make the national parks the peak of conservation efforts.

"Environmentalism" is often an ill-viewed topic, let alone word, in the trapping world. Often accompanied by picketing signs, red paint, and shouting, environmentalists are seen as the opposite of trappers, hunters, and the like, but that does not hold true. There are many people who see the value trappers and others provide through partnership whether it be tag and release, end of season surveys, or trail cam photos. Trappers are the eyes and ears for the wildlife agents, researchers, and scientists who can't be everywhere all at once. We can recognize the changes in populations, we see the migration patterns, and we notice the changes in weather patterns. By assisting and alerting the agencies to what we are experiencing, we make ourselves a resource of bountiful information. Many states rely on the trappers' reports to aid in estimating animal populations, thus, potentially increasing quotas for next seasons.

So yes, as a trapper, you can call yourself a citizen scientist without having to pass any college biology."

Mattea Danielle Smith

Trapper, Avoyelles Parish

B.S. in Geology;

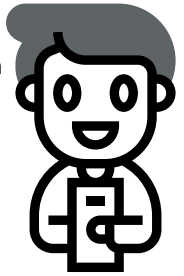
M.S. in Environmental Policies and Management

Louisiana Trappers & Alligators Association

## Why surveys are important

Good harvest data is an essential part of wildlife management. It tells wildlife managers which animals the public is most interested in harvesting, how many, and from which locations in the state. Fluctuations in harvest over time can also indicate issues that managers may need to address for both the trappers and the resource. This can help managers focus conservation dollars appropriately. Traditionally; the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries got their fur harvest data from fur shipments that left the state to go to market. The Department does still collect that data, but also recognize, that most trappers are not harvesting furbearers for the market anymore. Trappers are moving towards nuisance control or for personal use of the meat, fur, or other parts. Because of this shift, there is a lot of data that is currently unaccounted for. The survey will help capture some of the data.

The Department is also collecting some general demographic data that will help the agency form a picture of who the active trapping base is in the state of Louisiana and where they are primarily operating. This can help the Department focus trapper education efforts in underserved areas and give managers an idea of the current motivations of trappers so that we can better manage the industry for the constituents. These types of questions are subject to change each year as the Department forms a better picture of the trapping population and/or is in need of information from the active trappers on specific issues. In this way, trappers can have a say in how their resource is managed.



## 2022 Survey Results

The most common reason for trappers to participate in the activity was for nuisance control (27.2%) followed by people that participate in the Coastwide Nutria Control Program (17.4%). People that participate in nuisance control and also enjoy trapping as a recreational activity and/or sell fur followed at 12.6%. The Parishes with the highest reported trapping activity were Rapides (4.8%), Sabine (4.5%), Terrebonne (3.5%), and Bienville (3.1%). Trapping activity was reported in 63 of Louisiana's 64 parishes.

Approximately 28% of trappers reported to be strictly land trappers or mostly land trappers. Twenty-eight percent reported to trap land and water equally while primarily or only water trappers accounted for 5% or less of respondents. The most commonly used trap was the foothold trap (78%) with the average trapper running a line with 21 traps. Body grip traps were used by 38% of respondents. Thirty-three percent reported using cable restraints with the average use per trapper being 16. Twenty-eight percent reported using cage or corral traps with the average number of traps per trapper being 4.

Nutria had the highest reported harvest (approximately 38,200) followed by raccoons (approximately 25,000), Beaver (approximately 9,300), Opossum (approximately 7,600), Coyote (approximately 6,600), and Feral hogs (approximately 6,100). These numbers are not exact harvest estimates but serve as an index that will help managers track level of harvest over time.

The average age of respondents was 46.7 years of age, with the average trapper having participated in the activity for 13 years. Over half (54%) reported taking a youth trapper with them while running trap-lines. Most (90%) reported that they are not members of the LATHA with 83% having not attended a trapper's education course.

Jennifer Hogue-Manuel

Furbearer Biologist

Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries

200 Dulles Dr.

Lafayette, LA 70506

337-735-8674

[www.wlf.louisiana.gov](http://www.wlf.louisiana.gov)

Industry Programs:

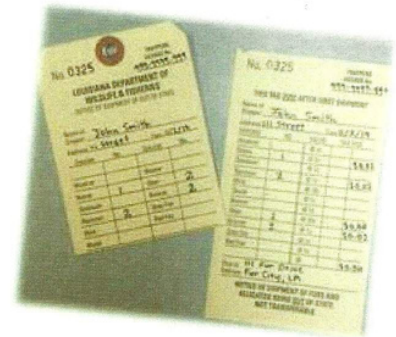
Fur Council: [LouisianaFur.com](http://LouisianaFur.com)

Trapper Course: [ConservationLearning.org](http://ConservationLearning.org)

Coastwide Nutria Control Program: <https://nutria.com/site.php>

## Shipping Louisiana Furs Out of State: Shipping Tags

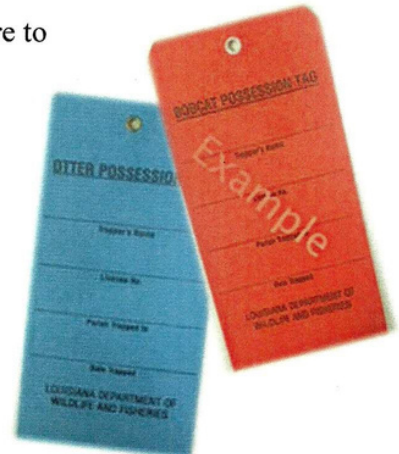
1. When shipping any of the following Louisiana furs/pelts out of state, there must be a shipping tag attached:  
\*Muskrat \*Nutria \*Opossum \*Raccoon \*Mink \*Skunk \*Beaver \*Grey Fox  
\*Red Fox \*Otter \*Bobcat  
Additionally, CITES tags are required for bobcat and otter.
2. Shipping tags can be obtained by requesting them in person, by mail, or by phone.  
Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries  
200 Dulles Dr.  
Lafayette, LA 70506  
Office: 337-735-8672
3. Shipping tags are issued specifically to the requesting trapper and are **NOT** transferable.
4. The top portion of the shipping tag must be attached to the pelt or bag containing pelts.
5. The bottom portion of the shipping tag must be returned to LDWF Lafayette Office.
6. **Severance taxes are no longer required;** however, you must still report exact number of pelts shipped.
7. Return the completed tag to:  
Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries  
200 Dulles Dr.  
Lafayette, LA 70506  
Office: 337-735-8672
8. Please be aware that the process of receiving possession and CITES tags takes approximately 2-3 weeks, depending on USPS. Do not wait until the day before shipping fur to request tags. The only way same day tags are issued is in person by appointment at the Lafayette Office.
9. Any unused/damaged CITES and shipping tags should be returned to LDWF at the end of the season.
10. Any lost CITES and shipping tags should be reported to LDWF.



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## Possession Tags for Bobcat and Otter

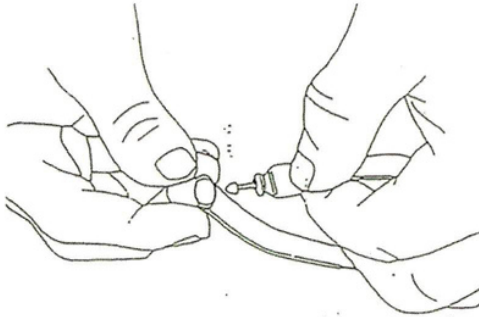
- Possession tags are only required for bobcat and otter and should accompany the pelt and may be attached to the pelt.
- Possession tags may be picked up in person at the Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) Lafayette office or mailed using USPS.
- To receive your tags by way of USPS, please call 337-735-8672. Be sure to state how many otter possession tags are needed and how many bobcat possession tags are needed.
- Once you receive the possession tags, **completely and legibly** fill out every line.
- Return the possession tags to the LDWF office in person or mail to:  
Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries  
200 Dulles Dr.  
Lafayette, LA 70506
- Once LDWF receives the possession tags, CITES tags may be issued.
- Possession tags do not expire and should be requested in advance of trapping season.



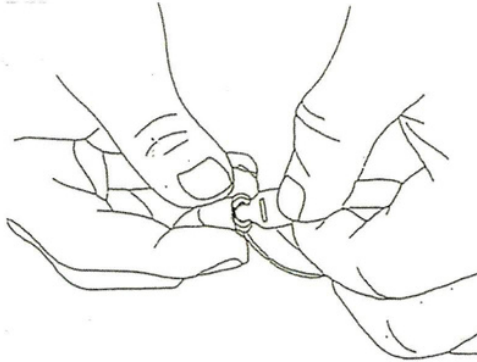
## CITES Tags for Bobcat and Otter

- A CITES tag will be issued for each completed and properly filled out possession tag returned to LDWF.
- CITES tags and shipping tags are required for all **otter** and **bobcat** being shipped out of state
- CITES tags are issued specifically to the requesting trapper and may not be transferred to another person.
- Once an otter or bobcat pelt is ready for shipment, a CITES tag must be properly and securely placed on the pelt.

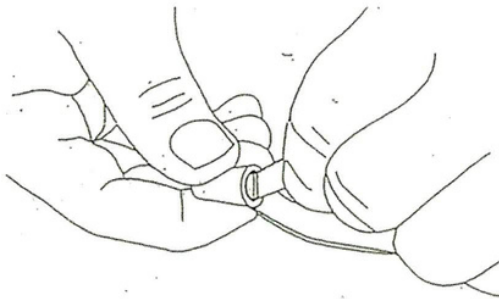
### How to Properly Attach CITES Tags



1. Holding dome in one hand, place seal through latch. Grab the free end just below the spear point.



2. Insert the spear point into the dome. Listen and feel for closing snap.



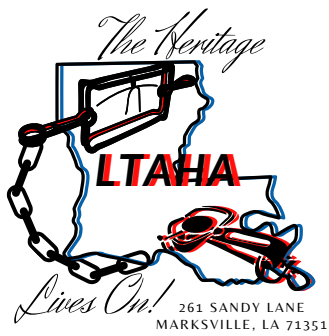
3. Twist and tug on seal to determine secure closure.



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Shipping and tagging information from LouisianaFur.com. For information on Shipping Louisian furs internationally, visit <https://www.louisianafur.com/shippinglouisianafurs.html>

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## A fresh look at an old industry

So, just a thought I want to share. After 10 years of involvement in the trapping world, in both state and national levels, things become apparent like what works, what doesn't work, helpful solutions or ways to approach things. After attending many trapper's training camps, state conventions, sporting expos, and so on, it is obvious that the more successful events have the collaboration from both the association and that of the state's DNR, Wildlife Resource agencies and the likes. Everything from advertisement to use of facilities, help with funding, legislative help and so on, the benefits of having a close working relationship with our DNR's is of utmost importance. I am a proud member of Tennessee Fur Harvesters', and we work to strengthen this relationship every chance we get. The success of our trapper training camps stems from this teamwork. The success of our fur sales that benefit our membership and also the non-member trappers of our state is enhanced through this relationship.

Our two most successful trapper training camps are held at wildlife refuges. At one of these camps, Tennessee Wildlife Resource Agency provides all the kitchen work including funding the meals.

I recently attended a state meeting in Louisiana with the Louisiana Trappers and Alligator Hunters Association that was held at one of their DNR's facilities where everything from kitchen help, bunk house and grounds use, education etc... was a team effort between both. Probably, quite possibly the most successful state trapping association/DNR relationship is that of Alabama Trappers and Predator Control Association. Their DNR funds many workshops throughout each year providing an excellent educational outreach to the community, outdoorsman, and the ever-important voters. At the Nationals this past summer, a fellow state director from North Carolina, Nelson Pearce, used his time at the podium to stress the importance of this relationship and where it benefits his State Association and all trappers of North Carolina.

If you are a state association member, a NTA Director, or a state association board member please encourage this relationship within your state. It is of the utmost importance and the benefits are great.

Also, share your successes. Share your stories of what works and doesn't work as well. Believe it or not, the strength of one state really does affect the strength of another state. So, let's strengthen these bonds to help in our fight to keep trapping alive and well.

Debbie Danials

Tennessee NTA Director.