

BEST PRACTICE GUIDELINES FOR TRAPPING OF MAMMALS IN EUROPE

Martes martes

2013/2014



**Deutscher
Jagdverband e.V.**

Vereinigung der deutschen Landesjagdverbände
für den Schutz von Wild, Jagd und Natur



Trapping is a
legitimate
and **indispensable** activity
for regulating
wildlife populations.

FACE is sharing a series of Best
Practice Guidelines for 5 specific
mammal species.

These Guidelines seek to share a
greater understanding of trapping
activities and promote high
standards of trapping methods.

Martes martes

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IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS & DISCLAIMERS

CHECK NATIONAL LEGISLATION

Before engaging in any trapping or capture of wild animals it is necessary to understand and follow the national legislation or regulations pertaining to that species or methods used. Each trapper must be aware of days of trapping season, special requirements (possession of the trapping exam, permission from landowner, areas where trapping is allowed, number of specimen allowed to trap, etc.). This document provides guidance only.

USE OF CERTIFIED TRAPS UNDER THE AIHTS

Trappers may use different types of traps according to national legislation. Some of the traps presented in this document are certified in accordance with the AIHTS. Others have not been certified as the process of testing is ongoing. Although they have not yet been certified, this is not to say that they have not undergone assessment, and may meet the standards once tested. According to the implementation schedule of the AIHTS, after 2016 it will only be permitted to use certified traps for species listed in Annex I of the agreement.

TRAPPING METHODS

Trapping is diverse activity and each country and region has different methods that are allowed and used to trap. The following document is presenting only limited number of practices that have been highlighted by those with expert knowledge. Learn about the current legislation in your country to check which trapping methods are allowed.

UPDATING OF BEST PRACTICE GUIDELINES

The practice of trapping is continually developing to ensure better selectivity and improved welfare for trapped animals. This document will be updated on regular basis, so check back regularly for latest information.

DISCLAIMER

Whilst all reasonable care in producing these guidelines, FACE disclaims all liability for costs, claims and damages arising from the use of traps and trapping methods described in these guidelines, and disclaims all responsibility for consequential losses arising from their use.

WHY THESE GUIDELINES ?

These guidelines are meant for trappers, authorities, NGO's and other parties interested in trapping of mammals. The information presented in this document refers to specific species and guidelines for trapping them while ensuring a high standard of welfare for the trapped animals and to ensure that any non-target captures are minimal.

Trapping is a legitimate and indispensable activity for regulating wildlife populations. To avoid that there are unjustified restrictions of this activity and to ensure that trapping remains ecologically and socially sustainable, more needs to be done to create greater understanding of trapping activities and promote high standards of trapping methods.

To progress towards this aim FACE developed best practice guidelines for certain mammal species. The Trapping Guidelines are a series of five guidelines covering the following species: *Nyctereutes procyonoides*, *Mustela erminea*, *Vulpes vulpes*, *Martes Martes* and *Ondatra zibethicus*.

BACKGROUND ON REGULATION OF TRAPPING IN THE EU

In the EU, trapping is generally subject to specific legal provisions and rules. These can include the types of trap, the conditions under which these may be used, methods required to avoid capture of non-target species (selectivity), as well as the elimination of avoidable suffering (regular inspections). Several Member States require that trappers must have taken and passed mandatory training courses in hunting and/or trapping. In addition, trappers are often required to obtain a valid trapping and/or hunting license along with landowner permission where they wish to trap.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Before engaging in any trapping or capture of wild animals it necessary to understand and follow the national legislation or regulations pertaining to that species or methods used. Each trapper must be aware of days of trapping season, special requirements (possession of the trapping exam, permission from landowner, areas where trapping is allowed, number of specimen allowed to trap, etc.). This document provides guidance only.

LEGISLATION

In 1987 the International Organisation for Standardization ISO through its Technical Committee TC 191 (where FACE has an observer status) started working to agree acceptable trapping standards from a point of view of animal welfare. Although good progress was made, the process did not manage to establish the welfare thresholds for which it strived. Nevertheless excellent work of ISO-TC 191 resulted in 1999 in an agreement on methods for testing restraining traps, respectively for killing-trap systems used on land and underwater.

Few years after the ISO-TC process started the Council of the European Union adopted in 1991 the “Leghold Trap” Regulation 3254/91 prohibiting the use of leghold traps in the Community and the introduction into the Community of pelts and manufactured goods of certain wild animal species originating in countries which catch them by means of leghold traps or trapping methods which do not meet international humane trapping standards.

In 1995 negotiations began on the Agreement on International Humane Trapping Standards (AIHTS) between the EU, Canada, Russia and the US and concluded successfully in 1998, although it only came into force much later, in July 2008 after the ratification by the Russian Federation. The EU and its Member States have therefore an international obligation to comply with the standards set by AIHTS. According to the standards, Parties to the Agreement will have until 2013 (5 years after entry into force) to test and certify trapping methods, and until 2016 to implement the use of certified traps.

Traps are used worldwide in interactions with wildlife. Trapping is a method for sustainable utilisation of natural resources. It is also used to minimise environmental damage or to assist conservation by helping to control over-abundant or alien invasive species, or for relocation. It is an equally valuable research method, for example to fit individuals with markers or transmitters to follow their movements. Since many mammals are predominantly nocturnal, or are present around buildings or settlements, trapping is often the safest method for restraint (FACE, 2013).

SPECIES INFORMATION SHEET

Scientific name: *Martes martes*

Common names: Pine Marten (English), Martre des pins (French),
Baummarder (German)

DESCRIPTION

Martes martes belongs to the family Mustelidae. The range of this species almost entirely covers Europe (Jędrzejewski & Sidorovich, 2010).

It is protected in part of his range and it occurs in number of protected areas (Kranz et al., 2008), but it is also hunted or trapped for fur in in other parts (Mitchell-Jones AJ., 1999).

CURRENT DISTRIBUTION

The species is indigenous over most of Europe, from Mediterranean biotopes to Fennoscandian taiga, and to western Siberia and Iran (Clevenger 1994, Helldin 1998, De Marinis et al. 2000 in Proulx G. et al 2005). It used to be widespread in Britain, but declined due to habitat loss and persecution, and is now mainly confined to northern Scotland, with small, relict populations surviving in parts of England and Wales (Proulx G. et al 2005). It is absent in parts of Low Countries, most of Iberia and Greece (Mitchell-Jones AJ. Et al, 1999).

RANGE COUNTRIES

Albania; Austria; Belarus; Belgium; Bosnia and Herzegovina; Bulgaria; Croatia; Czech Republic; Denmark; Estonia; Finland; France; Georgia; Germany; Greece; Hungary; Iran, Islamic Republic of; Ireland; Italy; Latvia; Liechtenstein; Lithuania; Luxembourg; Macedonia, the former Yugoslav Republic of; Moldova; Montenegro; Netherlands; Norway; Poland; Portugal; Romania; Russian Federation; Serbia (Serbia); Slovakia; Slovenia; Spain (Balears - Introduced); Sweden; Switzerland; Turkey; Ukraine; United Kingdom (Kranz et al., 2008).

POPULATIONS

In most countries where the species is protected, population trends are either increasing due to habitat improvement and increased legal protection for this species, or are unknown (Proulx G. et al 2005; Stier, 2012).

IDENTIFICATION

APPERANCE

Its body is around 53 cm in length, and its bushy tail can be 25 cm long. Males are slightly larger than females; on average it weights around 1.5 kg. Eyes are rather big, ears moderately wide and slightly rounded on the top. Muzzle is black, grey-black or dark brown. Tail is approximately ten percent of whole body length, it is bushy and in the end flat. The colour of fur is yellowish brown. The back, tail and legs are slightly darker. On the throat there is yellowish orange and mostly round patch. Summer fur is slightly darker. Dental formula is $3/3 + 1/1 + 4/4 + 1/2$ (Leskovic, 2012).

TRACKS

The tracks are pair of footprints, in which it is mostly not possible to see the footprint of toes and the middle pad, because especially in winter their paws are covered with hairs (Leskovic, 2012).

BURROWS

It usually creates its burrow in tree hollows, abandoned nests of birds of prey or squirrel nests. It never digs burrows itself (Leskovic, 2012). Sometimes old piles of wood are used by pine marten as shelters, and even as places of breeding (Jędrzejewski & Sidorovich, 2010). But marten also uses abandoned hollows of green and black woodpecker (Stier, 2012).

DROPPINGS (SCATS)

Droppings of the pine marten are usually bigger than droppings of the polecat and minks. They are 7-10 cm in length and ca 1-1.5 cm in diameter. One can often find undigested remains in droppings: rodent fur, bird feathers, small bones, and, in summer also the remains of fruit (Jędrzejewski & Sidorovich, 2010). It leaves its droppings (scats) on the fallen logs, piles of rocks and tree stumps. It also uses scats to mark its territory (Leskovic, 2012).

SIMILAR SPECIES

Similar in appearance to the beech marten (*Martes foina*). Distinguished by larger ears and smaller patch of cream-yellow fur on throat, the latter being white and extending farther ventrally in *M. foina* (Mitchell-Jones AJ. Et al, 1999).

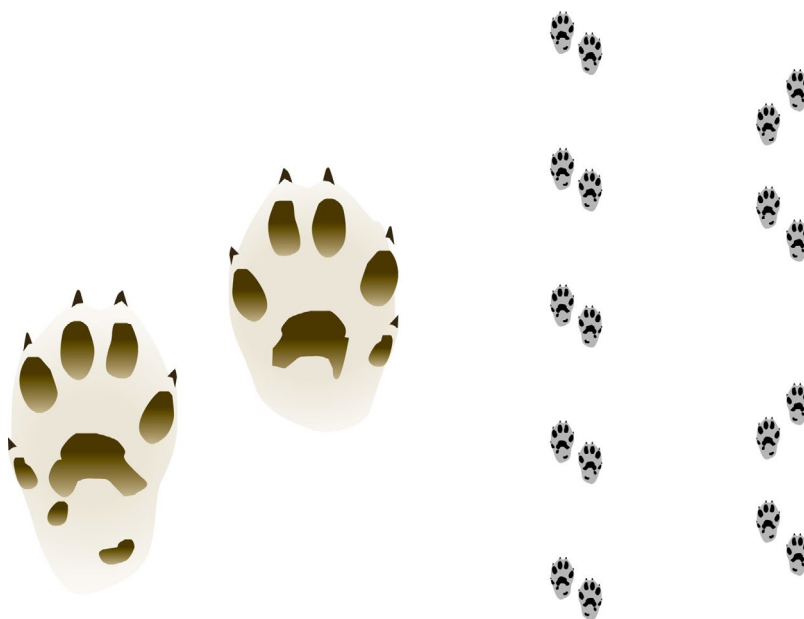


Illustration by Pičulin, LZS 2012

LIFE HISTORY

DIET

The diet consists of forest rodents, mainly the bank vole and yellow-necked mouse. In spring and summer, birds – most often eggs and nestlings – make a considerable contribution to the marten's food. It also feeds on invertebrates, mainly insects. It destroys wasp, hornet and bees' nests, eating both larvae and honey (Jędrzejewski & Sidorovich, 2010).

FORAGING BEHAVIOUR

The feeding strategy adopted by the species seems to be intermediate between that of an opportunist and specialist predator (Rosselini et al., 2008). Composition of its diet varies seasonally (Maciej Posluszny et al., 2007), with diet supplemented with fruit in summer (Jędrzejewski & Sidorovich, 2010). Most common food are rodents, Glis Glis L. and birds. In cases that there is excess of food they make stock of carrion and eggs (Leskovic, 2012). In Scandinavia they take squirrels (Storch et al. 1990, in Rosselini et al., 2008) and hares (Helldin, 1999 in Rosselini et al, 2008), when small mammals are scarce (Rosselini et al., 2008). Also in winter Martens prefer to feed on the remains of wolf and lynx kills rather than on ungulates that had died from disease and/or denutrition (Jędrzejewski et al, 1993). Also in a German study small mammals and birds are identified as most important food source. During those time periods availability of small mammals being bad, martens used alternatively fruits during summer and carcass during winter (Stier, 2012).

REPRODUCTION

Mating season is in July and August. Species have delayed implantation, so the whole pregnancy lasts 230 to 270 days. Kits (2-4) are born in April of May, and weight around 30g. They stay with their mother till January. They are sexually mature when they are 2 years old. Their life expectancy is short, with sometimes living from 8 – 10 years (Leskovic, 2012).

HABITAT

The species is very adaptable and lives in a variety of habitat types including insular wooded areas and shrublands (Clevenger 1993, De Marinis and Masseti 1993 in Proulx G. et al 2005), alpine shrublands with coniferous and broad-leaved stands (Fornasari et al. 2000 in Proulx G. et al 2005), lowland deciduous forests (Marchesi 1989 in Proulx G. et al 2005), mesic pine stands (Fedyk et al. 1984, Jędrzejewski et al. 1993 in Proulx G. et al 2005), and spruce-dominated forests (Pulliainen 1984, Brainerd et al. 1994 in Proulx G. et al 2005).

Although it is hard to describe its habitat relationships, it appears that forested areas continue to be the main strongholds of this species. In areas which are heavily deforested *Martes martes* also use alternative three-dimensional habitats provided by rocky mountains and cliffs. Species populations reach higher densities in mature or old coniferous, deciduous or mixed forests, while they are absent in agricultural lands, urban developments, and in areas without trees (Proulx G. et al 2005). The quality of habitat has some influence on home range sizes and huge home range sizes might be caused by suboptimal habitat conditions. But an enlargement of home range sizes can also be a result of intensified hunting which leads to smaller population density (Stier, 2012).

HUMAN AND WILDLIFE INTERACTIONS

INTERNATIONAL LEGAL & CONSERVATION STATUS

It is listed on Appendix III of the Bern Convention and Annex V of the Habitats Directive, and it occurs in a number of protected areas throughout its range. In The United Kingdom it is listed under the Wildlife and Countryside Act. Hunting controls need to be implemented and enforced across its range (Kranz et al., 2008).

AIHTS – Annex I

PREDATION

Hunted or trapped for fur in some parts of its range (Mitchell-Jones AJ., 1999). It is also threatened by fragmentation of habitat, increase predation, illegal or widespread use toxicants (particularly pesticides and rodenticides) and illegal trapping or shooting by gamekeepers (Strachan et al. 1996 in Proulx G. et al 2005).

Efforts to control other carnivore species sometimes result in pine marten deaths range (Kranz et al., 2008). Another important mortality factor is caused by traffic for example along highways, especially if streets intersect forested areas (Stier, 2012).

DISEASE

Canine distemper and rabies are lethal diseases and act as mortality factors (Stier, 2012).

IMPACTS (ECOSYSTEM, HUMAN HEALTH, ECONOMIC)

Weidinger (2009) observed that Pine marten play an important role in nest predation of woodland open-nesting songbirds in central Europe (37% of 178 predation events).

GENERAL OVERVIEW OF TRAPS

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Within the EU traps must meet international standards, for those species¹ referred to in Agreement on International Humane Trapping Standards (see section 1.3 for timeline of implementation). However, regardless of the species, efforts should be made to reduce pain, distress and suffering of trapped animals as much as technically feasible .

When trapping it is important to avoid catching non-target animals. This is achieved by carefully planning and setting the trap. The most important factor in selective trapping is location. Each species follows certain habits and has preferences for food and habitat. For generalist species identification of tracks and signs is essential. Knowledge of these factors is essential to find best places to set your traps. Prior observations in the trapping area will reveal which locations are the best for specific species. You should also avoid trapping close to trails that are heavily used by people and their pets.

Once you chose the proper location, choosing the proper size and type of trap for the situation and species is also a key component of trapping selectively. Use the proper bait, lure to ensure selectivity, as each animal response to certain food smells (New York State – Department of Environmental protection, 2011).

¹ Species listed in Annex I of AIHTS, present in EU: *Canis lupus*, *Castor canadensis* (FI only), *Castor fiber*, *Lutra lutra*, *Lynx lynx*, *Martes martes*, *Meles meles*, *Mustela ermine*, *Nyctereutes procyonoides*, *Ondata zibethicus*, *Procyon lotor*.

RESTRAINING TRAPS

WOODEN TRAP BOX

The wooden trap box is a very common trapping instrument among trappers and also frequently used in species conservation projects in Germany. It is adequate to many predatory mammal species (*Mustelidae*, *Vulpes vulpes*, *Nyctereutes procyonoides*, *Meles meles*).

Currently the wooden trap box is tested according AIHTS within a conservation project on ground nesting birds in Schleswig-Holstein/ Germany. The AIHTS-project is financed by Deutscher Jagdverband and sampling of data and elaboration will be finished in the first quarter of the year 2015.

HOW TO CHOOSE THE BEST LOCATION TO SET UP THE TRAP

With pine martens habitat use in mind edges of forest, hedges - particular if they are connecting forests and small woods within agricultural landscapes are the most promising places for trapping. These places should be in distance to human settlements, because pine marten avoids human neighbourhoods. During winter time snow tracking is a helpful method to detect places with high activity of the marten and those places are suitable for trapping.

HOW TO ASSEMBLE AND PREPARE THE TRAP

The location where trap is placed should be flat in order to put the wooden trap box on two small logs of wood and a solid positioning of the trap is possible (see section 7). Unobstructed ways, leading to the entrances, promote trapping success.

Outside of hunting season if possible, traps with open entrances should be left in the trapping territory. By this procedure wooden trap boxes seem to be natural components of the environment and this promotes animals to lose their timidness against traps.

SELECTIVITY OF TRAP AND BAIT

Pine marten is a food generalist, while many baits can be used. In pine martens diet composition there are three main components: small mammals, birds and fruits. Especially at the end of winter period the demand for energetic food is high, wherefore particular baits with high sugar content such as fruit, is preferred.

Small portion of bait on the rocker board (centre of the escapement system) is enough. If possible put the trap in such way that natural ventilation will distribute the scent of bait in the surrounding of the trapping place. The described baits may be attractive to other omnivorous species too. For example fruits are also favoured by raccoon and raccoon dog.

If a non-target species is trapped, this is not harmful, because wooden trap box is a restrain trap and trapped individuals are kept alive and can be released.

RECOMMENDATIONS

A wooden trap box gives shelter against weather influences (rain, snow, sun) to trapped animals, which is a important point of view to humane trapping standards. Beyond this aspect wooden trap boxes have a further benefit: they can be used in different habitats without huge required space.

The application of transmitters at the trap are recommended. This method reduces time between catching and handling of the trapped individual, which is important with a view to animal welfare.

Independent of this auxiliary material frequent controls of the trap are necessary to check if trap works properly and there is no risk for trapped animals to injure themselves in the trap.

Trapping during breeding season is not according to animal welfare! Therefore the knowledge about animal biology is a precondition to apply trapping.

IMPORTANT: TRAPS CERTIFIED UNDER THE AIHTS FOR *Martes martes*

Prior to 2014 no traps were certified for *Martes martes* although Canada had certified several for *Martes americana*. To assess the morphological variation between the species a study was conducted by the Russian Research Institute of Game Management and Fur Farming, Kirov, Russia (Skumatov & Minkov). The study concluded that there are no statistically significant differences in the anatomy of *Martes martes*, *Martes zibellina* and *Martes americana*. Also, due to the considerable experience in trapping these species the researchers propose that all the traps that have been certified for one of these marten species, are also suitable for the other two species and should be considered for certification under the AIHTS. The Canadian competent authorities received this proposal and took steps to certify traps originally tested for *Martes americana* for the other 2 species.

Additional testing in Canada has also led to the certification of one Russian trap model (KP120) and two German (kleiner Schwanenhals: 46cm breadth of hoop & Eiabzugseisen: 38cm breadth of hoop). The later being testing being initiated and funded by the German Hunting Association (DJV). For a full list of certified traps see <http://www.fur.ca/certifiedtraps.php>

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS WHEN TRAPPING SPECIES

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The best way to put the bait into the trap is by using a stick, so human scent is minimized.

Transmitters or optical auxiliary means help to recognize whether trapping system had been in action or not without controlling directly and this support avoiding human scent at the trap.

HOW OFTEN DO WE CHECK THE TRAP?

If traps are used without surveillance systems, these traps should be checked once a day early in the morning, because pine marten is mainly nocturnal and before twilight, because other species living in the same habitat might be trapped.

If surveillance systems are applied, these systems have to be checked frequently, if they are fully operational.

CONSIDERATIONS TO IMPROVE WELFARE OF TRAPPED ANIMALS

The first step to avoid stress is the selection of trapping locations. Trap boxes should not be put in places exposed to sunlight, because the interior of trap will grow warm and this is harmful to trapped individuals.

Places close-by to tracks frequently used by humans (walkers, cyclists etc.) are not convenient, while human activity may cause stress for the trapped animal.

Generally wooden trap boxes offer the best shelter against weather influences such as rain or snow and therefore are favourable traps with view to animal welfare.

To minimize stress handling time with trapped animals should be as short as possible. Therefore suitable instruments shown in Section 7 are necessary.

If a non target species is trapped, procedure to move the animal into wire box is not necessary - just leave trap open and depart from the trap.

If target species is in the wire box, this individual can be easily immobilized in the case of a wildlife study. Otherwise a shot with small bore (.22, .38 spec.) through the wire box is possible.

USER SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS

Trapping is not a dangerous activity; however there are few safety issues each trapper should consider.

As activities require spending time outside, warm clothes to avoid hypothermia and boots and rubber gloves when setting traps in water are recommended. For setting the traps, good safety equipment, e.g. gloves, kneeling pads, should be used. In case the trap springs while setting, each trapper must have knowledge how to free himself. If using firearms while trapping, keep them unloaded until required for dispatching animals.

Carry a map and compass. Don't rely only on GPS and mobile phone, as they might not work when needed. Consider also trapping with another person, who can help you in distress.

As trapping season coincides with the hunting season, it is important that clothes you wear are highly visible at all times. Consider wearing hunter orange vest or cap (New York State – Department of Environmental protection, 2011).



WOODEN TRAP BOX



Length:140 cm
Height: 26 cm
Width: 26 cm
Appropriate locations: hedges, small woods, edge of the forest



Two logs of wood (length ca. 30 cm) to put the trap in a small distance to the soil, for minimizing influence of water and extend life time of the trap



Roofing for the trap to minimize weather influences (snow, rain); for example prevent freezing of trapping system





Trapping system triggered by a rocker board in the centre of the ground plate



Using of iron cover flap is beneficial, especially if trap is used without roofing, because it is more durable against rain and snow, which may mellow wooden cover flaps

Opening for controlling



Opening to the rocker board



Wire box to put at one opening of the wooden trap box



Instrument to push trapped animal into wire box (measurements according inside space of box trap)



Wire box enables handling with trapped animal

CONTRIBUTIONS & ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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FACE is the European federation of associations for hunting and conservation.

Established in 1977, it represents in the interests of Europe's 7 million hunters as an international non-profit-making non-governmental organisation (INGO). This makes FACE the largest democratically representative body for hunters in the world and is probably one of the largest European civil society organisations.

FACE is made up of its Members; national hunters' associations from 38 European countries including all EU-27 Member States. FACE also has 3 Associate Members.

FACE upholds the principle of sustainable use, has been a member of IUCN since 1987, and more recently Wetlands International. FACE works with its partners on a range of hunting related issues, from international conservation agreements to local implementations with the aim of sustaining hunting across Europe.

FACE is recognised by the European Commission as the representative body for Europe's hunters. It is consulted by the relevant Commission Directorates-General and Units during the preparation, elaboration and monitoring of EU legislation dealing with hunting, wildlife management, nature conservation, firearms, trapping, wild animal health, game meat hygiene, etc.

PARTNERS

Deutscher Jagdverband (DJV)

The German Hunting Federation (Deutscher Jagdverband, DJV) is a non-profit organisation, an alliance of 15 hunting organisation of the German Federal States (except Bavaria), acting for 250.000 members. Among its objectives are the conservation of diverse and viable wildlife populations and their habitats as well as promoting sustainable use of natural resources. Furthermore, the German Hunting Organisation is representing German hunters and promoting hunting in general on national and international scale.

International Fur Federation

Formed in 1949, the IFF protects the fur trade's interests, promotes innovation and high standards and presents a factual image of the fur industry. The IFF represents 49 national associations and organizations from 38 countries. Members are drawn from the entire fur supply chain: farmers, trappers, auction houses, merchants, brokers, buyers, dressers and dyers, designers, manufacturers, wholesalers, marketing organizations and retailers. The IFF has contributed some €10 million to the implementation of the Agreement on International Humane Trapping Standards (AIHTS) in Canada, the Russian Federation, the European Union and the United States.

The IFF has been a full voting member of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) since 1985 and supports the principles of Sustainable and wise Use.

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USEFUL LINKS

More information is available on wearefur.com

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Image of Pine marten on the cover by Pekka Kustula

All images in Chapter 7: Specifications of traps are by Astrid Sutor (DJV)

FOR AN HONEST RELATIONSHIP
WITH NATURE

Best Practice Trapping



WWW.FACE.EU