

soundoff continued

Response to trappers continued

Jersey, invited any trapper to let her spring a No. 2 Victor Coilspring on his/her hand and leave it there for the entire hearing. The man who volunteered was unable to stand the pain and removed it in less than 5 minutes.

Arguments have also been put forward that trapping regulates or controls the surplus animals, thereby controlling the incidence of disease and so forth. This can be questioned because of the arbitrary nature of trapping, changes in fur fashions that are reflected in the pricing system of pelts, and, because of rebuttals by various authorities. For example, A.G. Loughrey, a former Director-General, Canadian Wildlife Service, Environment Canada, has stated: "Trapping however, is not usually an effective

method of controlling animal populations." D.R. Johnston, Director, Wildlife Branch, Ontario, stated, in 1976, that trapping can actually increase populations: "It is true, and well documented scientifically that more muskrats will be produced from a marsh that is trapped, than will be produced from a marsh that is not trapped." In a report of the U.S. National Academy of Sciences, on the "Control of Rabies", Recommendation No. 10 stated: "Persistent trapping or poisoning campaigns as a means to rabies control should be abolished. There is no evidence that these costly and politically attractive programs reduce either wildlife reservoirs or rabies incidence. The money can be better spent on research, vaccination, compensation to stockmen for losses, education, or public warn-

ing systems."

A further issue is the characterization of trapping as a "recreational" activity by governmental officials (including New Brunswick). If Webster's definition of recreational: "equipped so as to provide diversions or amusements" applies for trappers it would hardly seem to apply to the animals involved. It appears that those who should be responsible for more enlightened trapping policies are putting economic considerations before those of humaneness to animals. But even the economic issues may not be so straightforward as some people assume. Although the main focus of departments of Natural Resources and employment of personnel is directed towards the "Consumptive use of resources" (i.e. "the harvesting of animals"), this

should change with the realization that a major proportion of people wish to enjoy our wildlife without killing them. A recent publication "The Importance of Wildlife to Canadians. Highlights of the 1981 National Survey" (published by the CWS for the 47th Federal-Provincial Wildlife Conference, Minister of Supply and Service Canada, 1983), indicates that about 85% of Canadians surveyed stated that maintaining abundant wildlife and preserving endangered species was important to them. Wildlife-related activities emerged as one of the most prevalent forms of recreation undertaken by Canadians. Participants spent an estimated \$4.2 billion on wildlife-related activities). The percentage of Canadians expressing great or some interest in participating in one or more non-

consumptive wildlife-related activities in 1981 showed a national average of 82.8% (79.3% for N.B.). The percentage of Canadians expressing great or some interest in participating in one or more consumptive wildlife-related activities showed a national average of 26.9% (36.6% for N.B.)

Governmental officials could be advised to consider where their majorities and potential mandates exist and to re-direct some of their policies and manpower accordingly.

In conclusion, I point out that the Criminal Code of Canada states: Everyone commits an offence who willfully causes... unnecessary pain, suffering or injury to an animal or bird." The time has come to apply this law for humane purposes.

B.G. Cumming

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