

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE

NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

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NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

SESSIONAL PAPER NO. 13, 1964 (First Session)

RESTRICTIONS ON THE SNARING OF FUR-BEARING ANIMALS

Council, at its November, 1963 Session, requested the Administration to give consideration to the usefulness of retaining the existing restrictions on the use of snare wire contained in the Game Ordinance.

Snaring has been much used the world over for centuries. It has very distinct advantages that snares are cheap and are light and convenient to carry.

Some of the disadvantages of snares are as follows:

- (a) Trappers frequently leave their snares set when the trapping season is over and animals may be caught after the season is closed and thus be wasted. Probably the chief reason the snares are left set is that they are so cheap that the trapper does not suffer any great loss if he does not pick them up.
- (b) The snares often damage the pelt to the extent that there is a distinct line around it bare of hair where the snare lodged. This may reduce the value of the pelt.

The suggestion has been made that cord snares, for lynx only, be legalized. When this suggestion was put forward it was mentioned that such snares would collapse when warm weather returned in the spring and would thus remove the objectionable feature of snare sets left in the bush after the season closed and the resultant waste of game. However, the lynx season closes on the 28th day of February and considerable fur could be taken between that date and spring in any snares left in the woods. In addition, even when wire snares are used it is common practice to tie the loop in place and if the same procedure was followed with cord snares, many of them would probably still remain open even after the weather warmed up. Therefore, from the point of view of reducing waste of game there does not appear to be a great deal of advantage in using cord snares instead of those made from wire.

The use of snares for taking lynx has been discussed on a number of occasions in recent years by trappers in attendance at Trappers' Council meetings in various settlements. While it is true that the trappers in some settlements, as a group, have expressed a desire to be allowed to use snares for catching lynx, it is equally true that the trappers of other settlements have spoken just as strongly against the use of snares for anything larger than rabbits, or have just not been interested in having the use of snares for lynx legalized. The Fort Smith trappers who are known locally to be sound, experienced, top quality trappers are strongly opposed to the legalizing of any kinds of snares for land sets. The Canadian Wildlife Service are also strongly opposed to the use of snares because they are inhumane and wasteful.

The Administration has also looked at the question of permitting the use of snares on registered traplines on a similar basis as that in effect in the Province of Saskatchewan where snares are issued by the Wardens but must be returned at the end of the trapping season. In that province, where snares are allowed, they are for use only by members of conservation areas and for use within the areas. As a result of that restriction, the use of snares is easily controlled and each trapper is required, in his own interests, to use care and judgement in his use of snares.

In the Northwest Territories, the registered trapline concept is breaking down in the face of economic and social changes. Snares might be permitted and even desirable on individual registered trapping areas, but when large areas are trapped by a number of people, the use of snares should be discouraged. The main difficulty at the present time in allowing the use of land set snares in the Northwest Territories is that we have no means of administering selective snaring of this type in a limited area as they do in the Province of Saskatchewan.

Conclusion

While there are arguments for and against the use of land set snares, the Administration recommends retention of the present restrictions until such time as the new zoning system is established for game management. The use of snares of the proper gauge could then be tried on a small scale on an experimental basis in some of the zones where it would be possible to give proper supervision.

April 30, 1964.