

The relationship between Farmers and Trappers

My name is Richard Dunning, I am a lifelong Delaware resident, farm owner and avid outdoorsman. My passion since my early teens has been hunting and trapping. In the spring of 2018 I was fortunate enough to be elected as the President of the Delaware Trappers Association. This privilege has allowed me to be a voice for Delaware's trappers and work to support the cause of trappers throughout the state.

I come from a family with a long history of farming in Delaware and grew up on a small grain and hog farm. While we do not actively farm the land ourselves anymore, I am still a farm owner. Growing up in the farming community I have seen firsthand the relationship between farmers, hunters and trappers. My intent with this article is to help build a positive relationship between Delaware's agricultural community and the Delaware Trappers Association.

I know many farmer owners who are hunters. I also know many farm owners who lease their lands to hunters as an additional source of revenue. Over the years the number of active trappers in Delaware has decreased. The Delaware Trappers Association is working hard to reverse that trend and bring new members into the organization. We hold events several times a year and assist with offering educational opportunities to aspiring new trappers. This coming season we plan to offer a mentorship program for new trappers.

Delaware has a growing population of predatory furbearers, namely red fox, raccoons and now even coyotes. These predators have a direct impact on many species that are sought after by the hunting community. These animals frequently raid the nests of ducks, geese, turkeys, quail and pheasants. They will take the eggs and kill young birds reducing the population. New born deer can fall prey to fox and coyote attack. An pack of coyotes are capable of killing mature deer. Aside from the taking of wildlife, all of these predatory furbearers regularly take small animals and poultry from farms.

Furbearers such as beaver and muskrats can have a substantial impact on Delaware farmers. Muskrats cause bank damage to ponds and streams. Banks damaged by muskrats can lead to erosion issues and banks that cave in causing a hazard to people and live stock. Beaver can be one of the most devastating animals to a farm owner. Beaver can cause massive amounts of flooding, timber loss and a reduction in tillable acres.

Cooperation between farmers and trappers can have a positive benefit for both parties. A reduction in predatory furbearers can have a dramatic impact on the wildlife available to hunters. Removal of damage causing furbearers such as muskrats and beaver has a financial benefit to farmers.

The Delaware Trappers Association meets on the first Tuesday of every month from September through May in Townsend, Delaware. If you are interested in attending a meeting, learning more about trapping or lending a hand in any way, please contact us. You can email us at DelawareTrappersInc@gmail.com or join our Facebook group, [Delaware Trappers Inc.](#)