

Highlandtown Trapper's Workshop and Field Day
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On October 28 & 29, 2000 Highlandtown Wildlife Area held its first Advanced Trappers Workshop and Field Day. We had 12 very good students attend who were there to learn and that they did.

We started at 9:00 AM on Saturday with Wildlife Officer Scott Blattert (also an excellent trapper). He talked to the students about laws and ethics, and then I talked to them about trap basics, types of traps, how to repair a trap, etc. Vern Snyder spoke to them about snares, and Mark Kohler talked about trap dyeing, waxing, and pan adjustment. After that, we hit the trail. We set several raccoon snares first. Each of us took a few students and showed them the dos and don'ts of using snares and then the students set all the snares. Next we went to the creek where Mark and Vern showed the students several water sets, raccoon cuffs, blind sets for mink, etc. immediately following we went to the lake, where the students got to wade out in the marsh and set traps for muskrats. The students made bodygrip sets and drowning sets with foot hold traps. After that we showed the students how to make dirt hole sets. We finished up the day by letting the two oldest students set snares for beaver. Jeff Janosik, the manager for Highlandtown Wildlife Area, had been asked by the fisheries division to have the beavers removed from the pond.

On Sunday we started about 8:30AM to check and pull our traps. Only one raccoon was caught, this was a little disappointing, but the weather was not in our favor that night. Anyhow, it gave Vern the opportunity to show the students how to dispatch the raccoon and Mark to show them how to bleed out the raccoon, the first step in pelt preparation.

The day got better, at the lake the kids pulled out a total of seven muskrats. The smiles on their face made everything worth while. We left there and went to the beaver pond where Dan Murray and Charlie Reffitt snared two nice beavers. We put the beaver in live traps and carried them out to the parking lot for the rest of the kids to see. It was a great treat for the kids.

Back at the headquarters, Mark showed the students how to skin and flesh the raccoon. We also showed them how to put the hide on a stretcher and how to measure them. We gave a muskrat to each student who didn't have one, and they all got to skin and flesh their own muskrat.

With a total of seven muskrats, one raccoon, and two beaver, we had a great first Highlandtown Workshop and Field Day. With that, I want to thank Jeff Janosik for letting us have the workshop at Highlandtown, Vern Snyder and Mark Kohler, Scott Blattert, Glenn Wilson for helping with all the events. Also I want to thank Kevin and Jayne Gallagher and Mike West for helping to prepare and serve lunch. There were several OSTA members who called to offer their support and help for the event, which was greatly appreciated.