

Three First Time Trappers
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by Jesse V. Turturice

This past trapping season did not start in mid November for my father, my six year-old son and me. It started in March of 2001 when long time friend and turkey hunting partner of my father, Wayne Buchanan invited my father to go along on a short creek bottom beaver line. My father went without hesitation. They hiked into the creek and started making sets as they went along. After the first few sets they went downstream another 45 minutes making sets. On the way back Wayne wanted to look at one set. When they got to it they had a 35-pound beaver.

That was all it took and dad was hooked on trapping beavers. That night he called me to ask if I wanted to start running a line with him. I did some trapping on a small creek near home when I was in high school with very minimal success and haven't set a trap in 15 years and my father had never set a trap in his life. So the next day we started ordering every catalogue we could find, and reading all the material we could get our hands on. Then I found Ken Carver and his media library at the Minnesota Trappers Association. We made a list of all the supplies we would need for the coming season, pooled our money, set out for the Ohio State Trappers Association Convention and spent every last cent. That is when the excitement really set in. We could not wait for November to get here.

I was then reintroduced to an old classmate, Ken Gallagher who is the Ohio State Trappers Association District 12 Director. With his help I enrolled myself my father and my son in the Trappers Workshop at Highlandtown Wildlife Area in October of 2001. My son was bouncing around like a red fox when he found out he was going to learn about and set traps.

While at the workshop we were introduced to and taught by Vern Snyder, game warden Scott Blattert, and Mark Kohler. These men were extremely helpful and provided us with their knowledge about their chosen field, the fur bearing animals of our area, and how to trap them and how to handle the fur. We started early on Saturday with classroom work about everything from trapping laws to the habits of the animals that we were trapping for (to which my son asked, "when are we going to set traps"). Then we had an excellent lunch provided by the wives. After that we went out to make some sets, which is what my son waited for all day long.

We went to a small pond and each of us made some sets for muskrats and raccoon. Then we went to a small stream and made sets for mink, muskrat and raccoon. We also set some field edges with snares. The ride home found my son asking a number of times when we were going back to check traps. It took a while to convince him that we needed to wait until tomorrow morning.

Well you guessed it, the next day he was up before me and ready to go. At the pond most of the traps were empty, (as I would learn over this past season no matter how many traps you expect to be full usually most are empty). Then my son checked the trap that Vern helped him set. The colony trap was set in a small run between ponds. I'll never forget the look on his face and what he said when he pulled that trap out of the water. He looked up at me with wide eyes and shouted, "DAD there's something in there," it was his first muskrat. We picked up another muskrat and a raccoon at the stream. Then we all went back and were shown how to put up the fur. This was a great experience for the three of us and we would like to thank all those who made it possible.

Then the day we had been waiting for, the first day of trapping season. That first day we loaded the truck with our equipment. Then went to the field and proceeded to set every trap we had. Then the sleepless night of anticipation about what critters would find their way into our traps. We woke early Sunday morning to make our first check. We found four raccoons in our sets. One set was one my son had made. He picked the

location, dug the trap bed, drove the stake and bedded the trap. All I did was set the trap. All three of us made sets and all three caught a raccoon. It was a good feeling that there was success to all our work.

In mid December we moved from the cornfields to the water where we picked up a few 'rats, the first of our two mink and a few more raccoon. One of the things I remembered reading was setting goals, so we did. Our goals were thirty raccoon, twenty beaver, ten fox and at least one each of the remaining furbearers in our part of the state. Well by the end of February we reached most of our goals but missed some also. We didn't catch any fox but did come across one that would set our traps off or leave them set and flip them out of the bed. I plan on doing a lot of reading and learning so that maybe we will be able to catch it next year.

During this past season we learned a lot and grew a lot in our understanding of these great and wonderful outdoors that God has provided for us. We, as three generations of outdoorsmen, also grew deeper into an already good relationship. We also learned that no matter what the antis say about our sport we are the true guardians of our wildlife, and are the ones who want to see more stable and healthy populations for all to enjoy. I know we enjoyed being out there and seeing more of the area that I have lived in for most of my life. We enjoyed not only harvesting some of these animals but also seeing where they live.

We would like to thank every one who helped us get started in the sport of trapping and those who help preserve it like the NTA and all of our state organizations. Without them we would not be allowed to carry on this great tradition. We would also like to thank all those who are involved with the Workshops like the one we attended at Highlandtown. These are fantastic for young and new trappers alike. They introduce you to other trappers who are willing to help a young trapper get started and provide some information and instructions needed to get going. Any help we can give to these types of programs will only help make our sport better. Thank you again, and good trapping next season. ### Jesse V. Turturice, J. Scott Turturice, Jacob R. Turturice, 45046 Pine Hollow Rd., Rogers, OH 44455