

SHUT YOUR TRAP!

Good day everyone...it's a beautiful day in Pennsylvania.

Last winter, Bob Lauver of McVeytown in Mifflin County, whose hobby is trapping (and has been for 50 years)--Lauver shipped thousands of pelts to the New York market. He's been trapping since he was 13, and says Lauver, he'll never quit. Of the items he shipped to market, racoon was the hottest in the trade, muskrat, he says is picking up, and gray fox pelts bring in some \$4 each, twice what he ever got before. Lauver chides those who think that the best furs come from up North, in Canada and the Dakotas. "Pennsylvania produces muskrat that rate right up at the top," he says---and it does. And Pennsylvania trappers, most of them enjoying that outdoors experience part-time, enjoy a half-million dollar fur take. That's a fairly good hobby, wouldn't you say? They took out about 4200 Beaver last year--an average of about \$23 each, mostly from the northern countries. Beaver season usually lasts one month, in February and March when the pelt is prime. They get them when the ice is 18 to 20 inches thick, put a trap on an aspen pole below the ice--and beaver love the aspen tree twigs. Mink and muskrat can be taken from November 22 to January 11 this year and there is no closed season on skunk possum or fox. Muskrat seems to be the most popular even at this date. Pennsylvania has a great trapping tradition, although we usually think of furs more in Canadian or Hudson Bay area. But just the names in Pennsylvania;

the Beaver cities, Beaver creeks, Beaver dams, Beaver Falls and Beaver Rivers should spot Pennsylvania's tradition of a great wealth in furs. Pittsburgh owes its early existence to the fur trade and the world's desire for it. No where in the East is there a greater variety, even today, of wildlife available, than in Pennsylvania--no where in the States, matter of fact. The harvest is another challenging form of recreation and of course, provides that important supplement of income to thousands of young and adult trappers. In the past 40 years they've sold some 32 millions in furs. Most trapping fun of course centers in the northern tier mountain counties--and it can be a combined fun-excursion for the entire family. Each trapper you see, is permitted to set 10 traps, but as many in a family who wish to do so may do so. Bob Lauver suggests that kids who like the outdoors should consider trapping as a hobby. How else, he asks, can you have so much fun with a hobby that really pays. Part of that half-million dollar bundle could be yours every year. We don't suggest that you forsake education for the life of a hunter, but the education you'll get in the outdoors--learning about animals and from them, too--that kind of education is inestimable. And fun--and profitable. Get yourself some traps and get going. The woods of Pennsylvania invite you--the animals are plentiful--the season is open in many cases, and is about to come upon us again.

This is Pete Wambach. It's a beautiful day in Pennsylvania.