



## Bear Trapping



### Best Management Practices (BMPs) for Culvert or Cage Traps for Licensed Bear Trappers in Maine

#### Culvert/Cage Design

##### Minimum Dimensions

4ft high x 4ft wide x 8ft long for Cambrian style trap ([design](#) made by Cambrian College), or 3ft diameter opening x 8 ft long for culvert style trap.

##### Shape

Square traps, or modified culvert trap with a flat bottom preferred. Round culvert traps also acceptable.

##### Ventilation

The trap should have adequate ventilation holes throughout the trap to provide air flow, or use expanded metal/mesh design. Ventilation holes should be 1-2 inches in diameter with smoothed edges, along all 4 sides of the trap (specifically, along the length of culvert/cage and at both culvert/cage ends. Light in color to reduce internal temperature.

##### Door Design

Door should nearly equal the interior dimensions of the trap. Soft-close or swing type doors are preferred over guillotine style doors, because there are some human and bear safety concerns with guillotine style doors. If guillotine doors are used, safety catches or pistons should be employed.

## Purpose

Licensed bear trappers should use this guide to implement Best Management Practices for use of culvert or cage style traps when bear trapping in Maine. IFW encourages bear trappers to phase in new traps/modifications meeting these updated BMPs beginning in 2025. Bear trappers must follow all [State regulations](#), including obtaining written landowner permission if applicable. Additional deployment BMPs below.

## Deployment

### LOCATION

Do not set trap in direct sun; do not set near schools, playgrounds, other areas frequented by children; do not set guillotine door-style traps in areas where pets or children may access traps. Obtain written permission prior to setting traps when required ([see FAQs here](#)).

### SIGNAGE AND NOTIFICATIONS

Trap must be clearly labeled with trapper's full name and address. Traps should have signage indicating "Caution Bear Trap- Stay Away". Consider notifying adjacent landowners to presence of trap.

### ANIMAL COMFORT

Consider providing water to hydrate bears and to help cool in hot weather (e.g., water in welded troughs on back wall of trap). Release any non-target bears immediately.

### MAINTENANCE

Traps should be inspected and tested prior to each deployment. Repair damage to trap as needed.



## Trap Tending

Traps must be tended daily (ideally first thing in the morning). In excessive heat, traps should be:

- Checked more frequently (e.g., morning, mid-day, and evening) or,
- Closed during the heat of the day. Traps may be re-opened in the evening for overnight deployment.

If closing the trap for a period of time, lock the trap shut and remove all bait from within the trap while trap is not in operation.

## Dispatch

If not intending to dispatch the captured bear, release it immediately.

A .22 magnum or equivalent caliber is ideal for dispatch. When using a firearm to dispatch, ensure that: it can be done safely without ricochet, you are aiming at the intersection of imaginary lines connecting opposite ears and eyes.

Follow [all Maine transportation and registration rules](#) for black bears.

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