

# **WTA, WWF Successful, New Green Fur Law**

By George Meyer, Executive Director

On August 28, 2009, Act 38, Laws of 2009 became effective, completing major changes to the laws governing the possession and sale of wild fur in Wisconsin. The former fur possession and sale laws were adopted early in the last century and had not been updated since then. Changes in refrigeration, law enforcement violation detection techniques and business practices made the former law antiquated. Under former law, a person was prohibited from possessing the unprocessed fur of any fur-bearing animal, except beaver, from the fifth day of the closed until the next open season for the species. The new law exempts from this "closed season" prohibition the possession of an unprocessed fur of a lawfully killed fur-bearing animal that carries a DNR registration tag or for which there is an open season without any bag or possession limits. This allows trappers or hunters to process their fur over a longer period of time.

Also under the former law, no person could sell, buy, barter or trade any wild deer, bear, elk, squirrel or the carcass thereof at any time or and other wild animal or its carcass, during the closed season for that other wild animal. Squirrel tails and skins had been exempt from the prohibitions of the former law. The new law includes the skull and claws of a squirrel. The new law additionally allows a person to sell, purchase, barter or trade a fur-bearing animal that has a valid DNR registration tag or is a wild animal, or the carcass thereof, for which there is an open season and for which there is no bag or possession limit. The new law further allows the sale, purchase, barter and trade of liquid scent made from the carcass of a lawfully taken wild animal, except from a bear's gall bladder. Also the new law allows the sale, purchase, barter and trade of rabbits, or their parts, if they are lawfully taken by landowners on their own property or as part of the DNR's nuisance wildlife program. These changes give more flexibility to trappers and hunters to bring their finished products to market.

Lastly, under former law, each trap deployed in the wild needed to have a metal tag with the name and address of the trap's owner. The new law requires the trap to have the name and address or customer identification number of the operator of the trap. This will provide additional safety to trappers, their families and property.

The Wisconsin Trappers Association and the Wisconsin Wildlife Federation worked together for many years to accomplish this major updating and improvement of the trapping laws in Wisconsin. This is another excellent example of close cooperation and success of the Wildlife Federation working with its affiliates. Great job everyone!