

### Muskrat Management

The Problem: The Northern muskrat and mink management zone begins two weeks earlier than the Southern and Winnebago zones. The Winnebago Zone ends 15 days later than either the Northern or Southern muskrat and mink zones. A staggered opening results in extra harvest pressure on the Northern Zone that affects exploitation and the quality of the experience, especially for beginning, youth trappers. The late ending date of the Winnebago Zone adds complication and is only slightly used.

These early fall openings are not as critical due to a gradual but noticeable increase in ice-free, fall weather and a sustained global fur market. This sets the stage for the opportunity to simplify regulations and address a growing problem of "opening day" waves of pressure.

As a reasonable compromise and a way to simplify regulations we propose to delay the Northern Zone one week, open the Southern and Winnebago Zones one week earlier, and the closing dates for the Northern and Southern Zones one week later, and the Winnebago Zone one week earlier.

Be it resolved, that the Conservation Congress at its annual meeting in Stevens Point, WI, Portage County, on April 11, 2011 recommends that the Conservation Congress work with the department to take action to correct this situation by introducing a rule change that would combine Northern, Southern, and Winnebago muskrat and mink management zones into one, with an opening date the Saturday nearest October 22, and a closing the Saturday nearest March 7<sup>th</sup>.

MIKE NICHOLSON  
6606 SHADY DR.  
BANCROFT WI.  
54921

*mel jill*

715.341.5708