



Argentinian Wild Nutria Certification

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Acknowledgement

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1 Background and Objective

The Argentinian Wild Nutria Certification is a developing standard for companies trading wild nutria (*Myocastor coypus*) harvested from Argentina. It is created to ensure that trade in Argentinian wild nutria meets the required standards of the Furmark® system.

This protocol was developed by Baltic Academy for the International Fur Federation (IFF). The protocol has been prepared with the advice of an independent technical advisory committee consisting of experts in the management of wild nutria in Argentina.

This protocol contains animal welfare, sustainability and traceability requirements associated with the harvest and trade of wild nutria in Argentina. Besides ensuring the conformance with rules and regulations within the area, this protocol sets out additional requirements to further improve animal welfare, sustainability and traceability.

The terms animal welfare, sustainability and traceability relate to the following:

Animal Welfare relates to the physical and mental state of an animal in relation to the conditions in which it lives and dies¹. Since wild nutria live freely in the wild, the focus of animal welfare is on the application of humane harvest methods for the individual animal.

Sustainability relates to the maintenance of a balance of biodiversity in the environment from which the wild nutria are harvested. Governmental regulatory systems related to harvest seasons, areas and quotas are in place to ensure that the harvest enables the sustainability of the species. In addition, the nutria harvest is used as a tool for habitat conservation through the use of resources by local people, whilst keeping populations at socially acceptable levels.

Traceability relates to the ability to document the origin of a product. Traceability ensures that it is possible for the buyers and relevant stakeholders to gain information on the source and legal acquisition of individual pelts.

1 World Organization for Animal Health (WOAH) (2021). Terrestrial Animal Health Code, Section 7 Animal Welfare.



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2 Wild Nutria in Argentina

2.1 Trapping and hunting

Commercially harvested wild nutria in Argentina mainly derives from community-based harvesters, where the wild nutria are either trapped or hunted. Wild nutria harvesting in Argentina has a long history and represents a significant cultural and economic value in many communities. The commercial harvest is undertaken as part of a government wildlife management program, thereby contributing to the maintenance or restoration of the balance of biodiversity or direct control of nuisance animals.

Commercially harvested pelts are typically bought by licensed traders from licensed collectors, who in turn source from local harvesters.

Trapping seasons are restricted by state-based legislation, which also imposes a quota (specifying a maximum num-

ber of nutria which can be harvested) and specifies a minimum length to avoid the harvesting of young.

Trapping relates to the capture of nutria using traps designed for the purpose. In practice, a harvester will set traps in specific locations to ensure the trapping of the target species only. For both trapping and hunting, proper management is important to ensure that the animal welfare is not compromised, to minimize the risk of harvesting non-target species and to ensure human safety. This includes the selection, application and maintenance of the equipment as well as the skills and behavior of the individuals involved.

2.2 Legislation

Argentina is a federal country, with 23 provinces and the autonomous city of Buenos Aires; all have their own constitutions².

At the national level legislation is in place, namely Resolution 1083 / 2015³, that determines a maximum annual quota for the export of nutria skins. Individual provinces are responsible for monitoring local populations and issuing annual resolutions which authorize and control commercial

harvesting by verifying the total numbers, harvesting seasons and authorized fur sizes. Typically such resolutions are issued in the provinces of Entre Ríos, Buenos Aires, Santa Fe and Santiago del Estero.

Legislation⁴ requires that there is official documentation of all movements of pelts from the collector through to the trader, either using a Guía de tránsito (Transport Certificate) or Certificado de tenencia (Ownership Certificate).

2 <https://api.worldanimalprotection.org/country/argentina>

3 <https://www.argentina.gob.ar/normativa/nacional/resoluci%C3%B3n-1083-2015-257401>

4 <https://argentinambiental.com/legislacion/entre-rios/ley-4841-ley-caza/>

2.3 Sustainability of wild nutria in Argentina

The nutria (*Myocastor coypus*) is an aquatic rodent native to the southern half of South America, where it inhabits banks of rivers, lakes, lagoons, marshes, and swamps. It has been introduced to North America, Europe, Africa, and Asia and is considered a pest in parts of its range.

The sustainability of wildlife populations is monitored and regulated at several levels. Internationally, the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN)⁵ assess the global conservation status of wildlife species. The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species⁶ categorizes nutria globally as Least Concern (last assessed August 2016). At the national level, the categorization made by SAREM (Argentine Society for the Study of Mammals) and the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development establishes that the nutria is also in the category of least concern⁷ and Resolution 316/2021⁸ categorizes it as a non-threatened species at the national level.

The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) is an international agreement in place to ensure that the international trade of wild animals and plants does not threaten their survival⁹. CITES works by subjecting international trade of selected species to certain controls, i.e. all import and export of CITES species must be authorized through a licensing system and needs to be accompanied by documentation ver-

ifying its legitimacy and legality. Species are categorized by CITES according to the degree to which trade pressure threatens the survival of a species. Wild nutria has been determined by the CITES convention not to be threatened by international trade, which means that there are no restrictions applied.

The sustainability of the environment in which the wild nutria is harvested is carefully monitored and considered, under the direction of the Provincial Wildlife Directorate (PWD).

In 2001, the former Wild Fauna Directorate of the National Secretariat of Environment and Sustainable Development, together with researchers from the National University of Buenos Aires and Faculty of Exact and Natural Sciences and the fauna directorates of the main nutria provinces, established the Nutria Project, "Basic ecological studies for the conservation and sustainable management of *Myocastor coypus*"¹⁰. The project included population monitoring in several specially selected pilot areas and generated outputs which include management guidelines, authorized seasons, minimum skin size and maximum provincial quotas. Due to the reduction in the numbers of nutria being harvested in recent years, compared to the total population and the high costs of monitoring, these studies have been discontinued.

5 International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN): <https://www.iucn.org/>

6 IUCN 2022. The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. Version 2021-3. <https://www.iucnredlist.org>

7 Categorización de los mamíferos de Argentina <https://cma.sarem.org.ar/es/especie-nativa/myocastor-coypus>

8 <https://www.argentina.gob.ar/normativa/nacional/resoluci%C3%B3n-316-2021-348601>

9 Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES): <https://cites.org/>

10 Porini, Gustavo; Bo, Roberto F.; Guichon, Maria Laura; Corriale, Maria Jose; Courtalon, Paula; Bolkovic, Maria Luisa (2019). *Myocastor coypus*. In: SAYDS-SAREM (eds.) 2019 categorization of mammals in Argentina according to their risk of extinction. Red List of mammals in Argentina. Digital version: <http://cma.sarem.org.ar>

2.4 Trapping devices

Traps designed for harvesting wild nutria in Argentina are categorized as restraining traps, i.e. traps designed to hold the animal unharmed until the trapper arrives.

There are no legislative requirements on the method of harvesting or the types of trapping devices for wild nutria in Argentina. North American Wild Fur Certification¹¹ includes the harvesting of nutria within its scope, it is therefore considered relevant to use the knowledge from the United States' trap testing program. In this program, individual trapping devices for nutria are tested and evaluated

against specific standards regarding animal welfare (as set out in the Agreement on International Humane Trapping Standards (AIHTS)¹²/Agreed Minute¹³). The International Organization for Standardization (ISO) trap testing methodology forms the basis for the trap testing program^{14,15}. Trapping devices meeting the required standard for animal welfare as well as trap efficiency, selectivity, practicality, and user safety are approved by the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (AFWA) and included in the 'Best Management Practices for Trapping in the United States' (BMPs)^{16,17}.

11 North American Wild Fur Certification: <https://www.furmark.com/certification-programs/north-american-wild-fur>

12 European Commission. 1998. Agreement on international humane trapping standards between the European Community, Canada and the Russian Federation. <https://ec.europa.eu/world/agreements/downloadFile.do?fullText=yes&treatyTransId=1428>

13 European Commission. 1998. Agreed minute and annex: standards for the humane trapping of specified terrestrial and semiaquatic mammals. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX%3A21998A0807%2801%29%3AEN%3AHTML#d1e32-28-1>

14 International Organization for Standardization [ISO]. 1999. TC191. Animal (mammal) traps. Part 4: methods for testing killing-traps systems used on land or underwater. International Standard ISO/DIS 10990-4.

15 International Organization for Standardization [ISO]. 1999. TC191. Animal (mammal) traps. Part 5: methods for testing restraining traps. International Standard ISO/DIS 10990-5.

16 Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (AFWA): <https://www.fishwildlife.org/>

17 White, H.B., Batcheller, G.R., Boggess, E.K., Brown, C.L., Butfiloski, J.W., Decker, T.A., Erb, J.D., Fall, M.W., Hamilton, D.A., Hiller, T.L., Hubert, G.F., Jr., Lovallo, M.J., Olson, J.F. and Roberts, N.M. 2021. Best Management Practices for Trapping Furbearers in the United States. *Wildlife Monographs*, 207, p 3-59. <https://doi.org/10.1002/wmon.1057>

3 Program Rules

3.1 Structure of protocol

The audit and corresponding certification will be carried out at trading body level. It is the responsibility of the trading body to document that wild nutria pelts are harvested and traded in a manner that meets the protocol requirements.

The audit and certification procedures are based on ISO 17021-1¹⁸. An independent accredited certification body shall perform the audit and certification process.



Photo: © Depositphotos

18 ISO/IEC 17021-1:2015. Conformity assessment — Requirements for bodies providing audit and certification of management systems — Part 1: Requirements

3.2 Protocol updates

To take into consideration all new scientific and best practice knowledge, regulatory developments, and stakeholder inputs, the protocol will be formally reviewed and updated at least every two years. New requirements may be included during this process, and existing requirements may be revised or removed. For requirements not yet implemented, the wording as well as the phase-in period may be revised. A technical advisory committee consisting of experts in wild nutria management in Argentina will be included

in this process. Minor amendments may be made between the formal reviews, which will result in the release of revised versions.

For any changes, due notice for the implementation deadline will be given to all participants. The deadline depends on the nature of the update and will be approved by the technical advisory committee.



Photo: © Depositphotos

3.3 Audit and certification process

The audit and certification process is summarized in Figure 1. Questions, complaints or appeals regarding audits and certificates shall be addressed to the certification body.

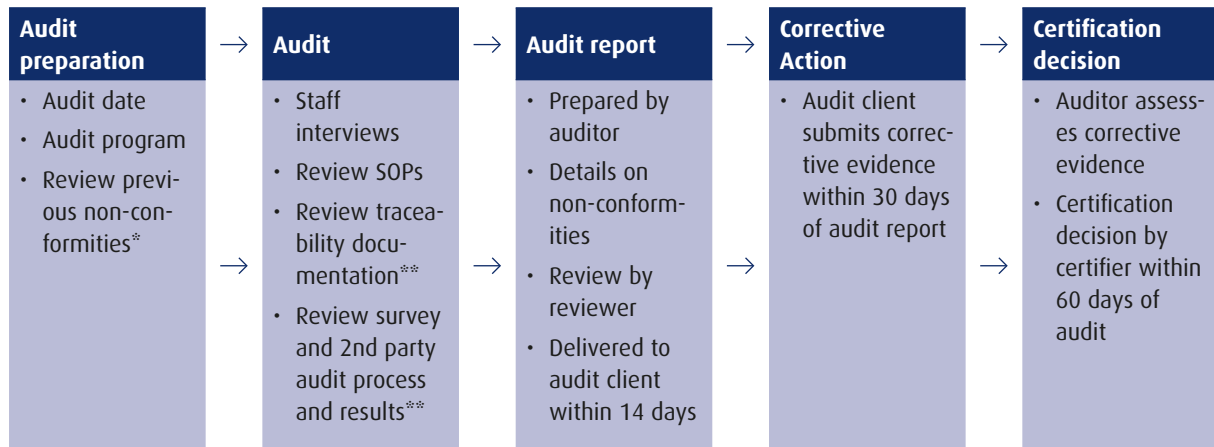


Figure 1 Audit and certification process.

3.3.1 Audit

The purpose of the audit is to confirm that the audit client (i.e. the trading body) meets the protocol requirements. An audit shall be carried out every 12 months. The audit must not be carried out earlier than three months ahead of the current certificate’s expiry date.

Audits are conducted at a mutually convenient date as agreed between the certification body and audit client. Prior to the audit, the audit client will receive an audit program containing the agreed audit time, the name of the auditor, audit content and details of the documentation required for the audit.

The audit may be carried out as a remote or a physical audit. The physical audit should always be the preferred option, however, if traveling or physical audits are not possible, e.g. due to a pandemic situation, a remote audit may be performed.

An audit is expected to last up to 1.5 days. If the audit is carried out virtually, the audit may, for practical reasons, be conducted over several days, but the total time spent is expected to be identical to that of a physical audit. All required documentation shall be made available during the audit. In some cases, the trading body may have to obtain

documentation from external sources. If such documentation cannot be made available during the audit, this shall be disclosed to the auditor and the documentation shall be delivered within seven days.

The audit will start with an opening meeting followed by a review of documentation and discussions with relevant staff members and ending with a closing meeting. The review of documentation shall include standard operating procedures (SOPs), selected documentation based on a sample of the traded pelts, documentation of activities and the survey, knowledge transfer and second-party audit process and results.

A representative of the audit client shall be available to the auditor to facilitate the audit and establish contact with the relevant staff members. The audit client shall ensure that the relevant staff members are available.

A requirement which is unmet is recorded as a non-conformity. During the closing meeting, all non-conformities recorded during the audit will be disclosed and explained. Non-conformities may also be raised after the audit based on the review of documentation made available following the audit or be raised by the reviewer.

* In case of renewal audit.

** Determined by risk assessed sampling plan.

Each non-conformity will be detailed in the audit report. The report will be reviewed by the reviewer and provided to the audit client within 14 days of the audit.

If the audit client does not assist the auditor in completing the audit process as required, the process will end. In this case, a full re-audit will be required.

3.3.2 Non-conformities

Conformance with all protocol requirements is evaluated by the auditor during the audit or based on documentation made available following the audit. It is further evaluated by the reviewer. A requirement which is unmet is recorded as a non-conformity. Non-conformities are considered as either minor or major.

A minor non-conformity represents a minor failure to conform to the requirements that is unlikely to directly affect the quality, procedures, processes or product at this stage. It may have the potential to progress into a major non-conformity if not corrected. For example, this includes a discrepancy between how a procedure is executed and the SOP for the procedure.

A major non-conformity represents a significant failure to conform to the requirements that may directly affect the quality, procedures, processes or product. For example the lack of ability to demonstrate traceability.

Minor non-conformities shall be corrected by the time of a subsequent audit. The re-occurrence of a minor non-conformity at the subsequent audit will lead to it being recorded as a major non-conformity.

Corrective actions to major non-conformities shall be implemented, and suitable documentation of the corrective actions (corrective evidence) provided. The documentation provided shall be appropriate to the type of non-conformity.

Upon receipt of the audit report, the audit client will be allowed up to 30 days to provide corrective evidence to maintain or be granted certification. Where no evidence is provided within the timescale, or the provided evidence is found insufficient, the process will end, and no certificate

will be granted or maintained. In this case, a full re-audit will be required. In case of a non-conformity that cannot be corrected within the specific time period due to events outside of the audit client's control, the certification body may extend the period for providing corrective evidence, given that sufficient documentation for the occurrence of such events is provided by the audit client.

3.3.3 Certificate

The certifier will monitor the effective execution of the audit activities and approve the audit results. The final certification decision shall be made by the certifier based on the findings of the auditor within 60 days of the audit.

Certificates shall be issued within 5 days of the certification decision. The certificate shall be issued for a period of 12 months. The renewal audit and certification process shall be completed before the expiry date of the current certificate. In case the renewal audit and certification process cannot be completed before the expiry date of the current certificate, due to events outside of the audit client's control, the certification body may extend the certificate. Such an extension can only be granted given that sufficient documentation for the occurrence of such events is provided by the audit client.

The certificate shall contain the following information:

- name, address and registration ID of the certified client,
- name, address and registration ID of the certification body,
- scheme name,
- scope of certification,
- protocol title and version,
- issue date,
- expiry date,
- unique identification code,
- authorized signature.

The certified client shall notify the certification body in case of significant changes that may affect the capability of conforming to the protocol requirements. Certificates may be withdrawn in case the ability to conform to the protocol requirements is found to be affected or for justifiable reasons such as non-payment of invoices.

3.4 Data Protection

The requirements include aspects of data sharing between the audit client (i.e. the trading body) and IFF. Both parties shall enter a General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

agreement in order that the use of the submitted data is regulated.



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4 Requirements

This section details the protocol requirements. In all cases, legal requirements take precedence over any requirements of this protocol.

Each requirement relates to one or more of the key areas, animal welfare, sustainability and traceability. For each requirement, it is noted which key areas it (mainly) relates to.

The 'Audit Guide' sections following each requirement provide information on what will be audited and how.

An overview of what is required from the trading body to comply with the requirements can be found in Figure 2.

Document and/or explain internal procedures	Ensure availability of information and documentation	Distribute knowledge among supplying harvesters	Promote specific practices among supplying harvesters	Support specific activities	Seek information among supplying harvesters	Enforce specific requirements among supplying harvesters
4.1	4.1	4.3	4.3	4.2	4.2	4.3
4.2	4.2	4.4	4.4	4.4	4.4	4.4
4.3	4.3	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.5
4.4	4.4	4.6	4.6	4.6	4.7	4.6
4.5	4.5			4.7		4.8
4.6	4.6					
4.7	4.7					
4.8	4.8					

Figure 2 Overview of what is required from the trading body to meet the protocol requirements



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4.1 Traceability

Relevance

Animal Welfare, Sustainability, Traceability

Background

Traceability requires that each pelt has been sourced from known harvesters and that all traded pelts are legally harvested and transported. To ensure traceability, a system must be in place to demonstrate that the information associated with the origin of the pelts is retained.

*Art.36° de la Ley de Caza N° 4841*¹⁹ requires that the transit of skins, hides, or products derived from wild fauna be supported by a certificate confirming origin and legitimate possession, which must accompany the merchandise to its destination.

This certificate provides information on the number of pelts, the individual licensed to hold title to the pelts and confirmation of to whom and from where they are being taken. The certificate is authorized by the responsible person acting on behalf of the Directorate of Natural Resources.

Requirement

2022: The trading body must ensure and document that all pelts are accompanied by a fully completed and authorized *Guía de Tránsito* (Transport Certificate) in the case of interprovincial trade or *Certificado de tenencia* (Ownership Certificate) for trade within a province, detailing the region of origin, the collector and the recipient for all purchased pelts.

Sufficient records must be kept demonstrating that the quantity of pelts sold can be supported by the quantity of pelts purchased.

The trading body must hold a written SOP describing how this is managed. General SOP requirements are described in Section 6.

2026: The trading body must ensure and document that all pelts are accompanied by a fully completed and authorized *Guía de Tránsito* (Transport Certificate) in the case of interprovincial trade or *Certificado de tenencia* (Ownership Certificate) for trade within a province, detailing the region of origin, the collector and the recipient for all purchased pelts.

Records allowing traceability throughout the entire chain must be kept by the trading body. Traceability, as a minimum, must be demonstrated from year of harvest to traded pelt. Records should therefore include year of harvest, with the associated supplier register confirming the region(s) of origin and collector(s).

The trading body must hold a written SOP describing how traceability is managed. General SOP requirements are described in Section 6.

Audit guide

2022: Discuss how the trading body ensures that all pelts (incoming and outgoing) are accompanied by a transport or ownership certificate and review the SOP. Review documentation based on the sample as defined in Section 5. Review records in place to demonstrate that the of pelt sales can be supported by the quantity of purchased pelts (mass balance calculation).

2026: Discuss how the trading body ensures that all pelts (incoming and outgoing) are accompanied by a transport or ownership certificate and review the SOP. Review documentation based on the sample as defined in Section 5. Discuss how the traceability system works. Evaluate the availability of the required traceability information based on the sample as defined in Section 5.

To be implemented

2022/2026

19 <https://argentinambiental.com/legislacion/entre-rios/ley-4841-ley-caza/>

4.2 Supplier Register

Relevance

Traceability

Background

Whilst the certification process concentrates on collectors and trading bodies, the protocol is targeted more to harvest methods. It is important for the credibility of the scheme to collect a register of the harvesters which can act as a tool for collecting and sharing information.

Requirement

The trading body must only accept pelts from licensed collectors who facilitate the keeping of a current register of their supplying harvesters.

The details of harvesters supplying each collector must be shared (in an agreed electronic format) with IFF at least annually.

The trading body must hold a written SOP describing how this is managed. General SOP requirements are described in Section 6.

Annually, the trading body must conduct a second-party audit on all the supplying collectors, including a field trip, to evaluate the quality of the harvester register by reviewing the information associated with 25% of the harvesters supplying each collector.

Audit guide

Discuss how the trading body ensures that only pelts from licensed collectors who keep an up-to-date register of their supplying harvesters are accepted. Discuss how and when the relevant information is shared with IFF. Review SOP and associated documentation.

Discuss how the trading body conducts the second-party audit and review SOP and associated documentation.

To be implemented

2022

Note: For new participants entering the program, this requirement may be audited and evaluated based on the written plans for carrying out the relevant activities in order to allow for implementation of the procedures once they have entered the program.

4.3 Trapping Devices

Relevance

Animal Welfare, Sustainability

Background

The use of trapping devices included in the 'Best Management Practices for Trapping Nutria in the United States' (or similar) ensures that the trapping devices are tested according to transparent and internationally recognized animal welfare standards and conform to specific requirements.

Requirement

To allow for adjustment of the trapping devices currently in use, the requirement for the use of trapping devices included in the 'Best Management Practices for Trapping Nutria in the United States' or trapping devices documented as equivalent to these standards is implemented through a phased approach.

2022: The use of trapping devices included in the 'Best Management Practices for Trapping Nutria in the United States' or trapping devices documented as equivalent to these standards must be promoted by the trading body. The trading body must ensure that all collectors are informed of this at least annually. It is then the collectors' responsibility to ensure this knowledge is transferred to the trappers.

The trading body must hold a written SOP describing how this is carried out, including the procedure in case a collector does not comply with the requirement. General SOP requirements are described in Section 6.

Annually, the trading body must conduct a second-party audit on all the supplying collectors, including a field trip, to evaluate if the communication has reached the intended recipients.

2026: The trading body must ensure that all supplying collectors enforce and document that acceptable trapping devices are used by at least 75% of the supplying trappers.

The trading body must hold a written SOP describing how this is carried out, including the procedure in case a collector does not provide the required information or does not comply with the requirement. General SOP requirements are described in Section 6.

Annually, the trading body must conduct a second-party audit on all the supplying collectors, including a field trip, to evaluate the traps being used by 25% of the trappers supplying each collector.

2030: The trading body must ensure that all supplying collectors enforce and document that acceptable trapping devices are used by at least 95% of the supplying trappers.

The trading body must hold a written SOP describing how this is carried out, including the procedure in case a collector does not provide the required information or does not comply with the requirement. General SOP requirements are described in Section 6.

Annually, the trading body must conduct a second-party audit on all the supplying collectors, including a field trip, to evaluate the traps being used by 25% of the trappers supplying each collector.

Audit guide

2022: Discuss how the use of trapping devices has been promoted by the trading body during the past year and review associated SOP and documentation. Discuss how the trading body conducts the second-party audit and review associated SOP and documentation.

2026/2030: Discuss how the trading body ensures that all supplying collectors enforce and document the use of acceptable trapping devices. Review associated SOP and documentation. Discuss how the trading body conducts the second-party audit and review associated documentation. Confirm the percentage of trappers using acceptable trapping devices.

To be implemented

2022/2026/2030

Note: For new participants entering the program, this requirement may be audited and evaluated based on the written plans for carrying out the relevant activities in order to allow for implementation of the procedures once they have entered the program.

4.4 Trap Management

Relevance

Animal Welfare, Sustainability

Background

Proper management of the trapping devices is necessary to ensure that animal welfare is not compromised. It also minimizes the risk of trapping non-target species. Management in this regard relates to, but is not restricted to, the setting of the traps, frequency of trap checks, method of killing of the animal captured in restraining traps, and the maintenance of equipment.

Requirement

Nutria may be harvested by trapping or by hunting, the method used must be selected to ensure the best animal welfare outcome, based on the prevailing conditions.

The trading body must inform all suppliers that it is expected that all trapping is undertaken according to the following guidelines:

- Be familiar with, keep current with and follow all applicable laws and regulations governing the trapping of nutria, including the use of correct and legal devices.
- Abide by trapping seasons and strictly adhere to legally set quotas.
- Maintain an awareness of safe practices for the animals, the trapper and for others present in the field. Be prepared to deal with emergencies.
- Report illegal trapping activity as soon as possible.
- Know your trapping area and its boundaries.
- Educate yourself on issues related to trapping, fur handling and wildlife management.
- Attain and maintain trapping skills. Be informed of the on-going development of best trapping practices to ensure the best possible animal welfare conditions, trap selectivity and safety.
- Maintain and set trapping devices to ensure proper functioning.
- Check traps as often as possible and as required by laws and regulations within the relevant jurisdiction. Irrespective of law or regulation the absolute minimum is that traps must be checked within 6 hours of sunrise, the morning following placement.
- Set only as many traps as can be effectively managed.
- Know and practice permitted dispatching methods, namely free bullet or manual percussive blow. When using a manual percussive blow, unconsciousness should be achieved with a single sharp blow delivered to central skull bones. Suffocation and blood loss without prior stunning are not permitted.
- Set traps to maximize the likelihood of catching only target species.

The trading body must ensure that all collectors are informed of this at least annually. It is then the collectors' responsibility to ensure this knowledge is transferred to the trappers.

The trading body must hold a written SOP describing how this is carried out, including the procedure in case a collector does not comply with the requirement. General SOP requirements are described in Section 6.

Annually, the trading body must conduct a second-party audit on all the supplying collectors, including a field trip, to evaluate if communication has been successful by reviewing 25% of the harvesters supplying each collector.

Audit guide

Discuss how the guidelines have been promoted by the trading body during the past year and review associated SOP and documentation. Discuss how the trading body conducts the second-party audit and review associated SOP and documentation. .

To be implemented

2022

Note: For new participants entering the program, this requirement may be audited and evaluated based on the written plans for carrying out the relevant activities in order to allow for implementation of the procedures once they have entered the program.

4.5 Hunting Management

Relevance

Animal Welfare, Sustainability

Background

Proper hunting management ensures that animal welfare during the hunt is not compromised and minimizes the risk of harvesting non-target species. Management in this regard relates to, but is not restricted to, the selected equipment, hunter skills and behavior, and the maintenance of equipment.

Requirement

Nutria may be harvested by trapping or by hunting, the method used must be selected to ensure the best animal welfare outcome, based on the prevailing conditions.

The trading body must inform all suppliers that it is expected that all hunting is undertaken according to the following guidelines:

- Be familiar with, keep current with and follow all applicable laws and regulations governing the harvest of nutria, including the use of correct and legal devices.
- Abide by harvesting seasons and strictly adhere to legally set harvest quotas.
- Maintain an awareness of safe practices for the animals, the hunter and for others present in the field. Be prepared to deal with emergencies.
- Report illegal hunting activity as soon as possible.
- Know your hunting area and its boundaries.
- Educate yourself on issues related to hunting, fur handling and wildlife management.
- Attain and maintain hunting skills.
- Choose hunting equipment expected to humanely kill the target animal.
- Sight in your hunting equipment before the hunt and maintain the hunting equipment to ensure proper functioning.
- Only shoot at an animal when it can be clearly seen, positively identified and a humane kill is likely.
- Know the effective range of the hunting equipment.
- Only shoot at an animal which is within the effective range of the hunting equipment.
- Immediately retrieve and examine an animal which has been shot to ensure that it is dead.
- If the animal is not dead, dispatch immediately using a permitted method, i.e. free bullet or manual percussive blow.

The trading body must ensure that all collectors are informed of this at least annually. It is then the collectors' responsibility to ensure this knowledge is transferred to the hunters.

The trading body must hold a written SOP describing how this is carried out, including the procedure in case a collector does not comply with the requirement. General SOP requirements are described in Section 6.

Annually, the trading body must conduct a second-party audit on all the supplying collectors, including a field trip, to evaluate if communication has been successful by reviewing 25% of the harvesters supplying each collector.

Audit guide

Discuss how the guidelines have been promoted by the trading body during the past year and review associated SOP and documentation. Discuss how the trading body conducts the second-party audit and review associated SOP and documentation.

To be implemented

2022

Note: For new participants entering the program, this requirement may be audited and evaluated based on the written plans for carrying out the relevant activities in order to allow for implementation of the procedures once they have entered the program.

4.6 Knowledge Transfer

Relevance

Animal Welfare, Sustainability

Background

There are no formal nutria harvester education programs in place. Knowledge is passed by peer-to-peer learning. Introducing annual knowledge sharing sessions will enable current knowledge of animal welfare, human health and safety and sustainability of wildlife to be passed directly to the harvesters.

Requirement

The trading body must ensure that all collectors participate in a knowledge transfer session at least annually. It is then the collectors' responsibility to ensure this knowledge is transferred to the harvesters.

The knowledge transfer session may include the following subjects: Laws and regulations, use of most humane trapping techniques and trap models, proper fur handling techniques, wildlife identification, wildlife management, best management practices, ethics and safety. The choice of subjects will be agreed with IFF and must be based on analysis of the information collected through the annual survey (requirement 4.7) or recent developments related to the relevant subjects.

Collectors must ensure that newly supplying harvesters receive their first knowledge transfer session before their second supplying season.

The trading body must hold a written SOP describing how this is carried out, including the procedure in case a collector does not provide the required information or does not comply with the requirement. General SOP requirements are described in Section 6.

Annually, the trading body must conduct a second-party audit on all the supplying collectors, including a field trip, to evaluate that knowledge transfer has been successfully completed by reviewing 25% of the harvesters supplying each collector.

Audit guide

Discuss how the trading body ensures that all collectors participate in a knowledge transfer session annually and that the collectors then successfully complete the knowledge transfer to the supplying harvesters. Review associated SOP and documentation.

Discuss how the trading body conducts the second-party audit and review the SOP and associated documentation.

To be implemented

2022

Note: For new participants entering the program, this requirement may be audited and evaluated based on the written plans for carrying out the relevant activities in order to allow for implementation of the procedures once they have entered the program.

4.7 Survey

Relevance

Animal Welfare, Sustainability

Background

Information on nutria trap management is valuable to target the knowledge transfer sessions (requirement 4.6) and monitor the development in key areas related to trap management, thereby informing future protocol updates.

Requirement

The trading body must conduct a yearly survey among the supplying harvesters, either by contacting the supplying harvesters directly or indirectly through intermediaries that supply on behalf of harvesters.

The survey must include as a minimum information on:

- Harvest method
- Trap types (including images)
- Frequency of trap checks
- Method of killing of animal captured in restraining traps
- Average weight of harvested nutria
- Prevalence of harvesting non-target species
- Prevalence of injury or death of nutria whilst trapped

The results of the survey must be shared (in an agreed electronic format) with IFF at least annually.

The trading body must hold a written SOP describing how the information is collected, managed and shared. General SOP requirements are described in Section 6.

Audit guide

Discuss how the trading body conduct the yearly survey among the supplying harvesters. Review the SOP and documentation based on the sample as defined in Section 5.

To be implemented

2022

Note: For new participants entering the program, this requirement may be audited and evaluated based on the written plans for carrying out the relevant activities in order to allow for implementation of the procedures once they have entered the program.

4.8 Second-party Audits

Relevance

Animal Welfare, Sustainability, Traceability

Background

The scheme operates at trading body level, but a majority of requirements are implemented through their collectors. Second-party audits provide the trading body with a method of demonstrating an active approach to implementing the standard.

Requirement

The trading body must conduct second-party audits to demonstrate the level of conformance with sections 4.2 Supplier Register, 4.3 Trapping Devices, 4.4 Trap Management, 4.5 Hunting Management, 4.6 Knowledge Transfer and 4.7 Survey.

Second-party audits must cover all collectors actively supplying the trading body and be conducted at least annually. A documented SOP for conducting second-party audits will be available and will include the need for documented reports and corrective action programs where conformance has not reached the necessary requirement level.

Audit guide

Review the SOP and a sample of second-party audit reports and corrective action programs (where relevant). The review of audit reports will be based on the sample as defined in Section 5.

To be implemented

2022

Note: For new participants entering the program, this requirement may be audited and evaluated based on the written plans for carrying out the relevant activities in order to allow for implementation of the procedures once they have entered the program.



Photo: © Shutterstock

5 Audit guide

Conformance with each requirement is evaluated based on interviews with relevant staff and / or the review of documentation.

Staff involved in the respective procedures must be able to explain how the procedures work, and what their roles and responsibilities are.

The required documentation includes standard operating procedures (SOPs), documentation associated with a sample of the pelts, documentation of activities and a sample of the survey and second-party audit results. The required documentation must be available and valid.

When a requirement is evaluated based on both interview and documentation review, the evidence provided must be consistent.

5.1 Sampling

5.1.1. Sampling for requirement 4.1

From 2022

A sample equal to the square root of all pelts purchased in the past year (with a maximum of 50) is randomly selected for verification of the availability of the required documentation.

From 2026

A sample equal to the square root of all pelts traded (with a maximum of 50) is randomly selected for verification of the availability of the required documentation and to demonstrate traceability.

The trading body must present information on the number of traded pelts as well as either 1) a list of all pelts traded within the past year, 2) a list of the lots traded within the past year (including the size of each lot), or 3) a list of sample lots representing the lots traded within the past year (including the size of each sample lot). When sampling is based on lots/sample lots, the sample should be randomly distributed between the lots/sample lots, with a maximum of up to ten randomly selected pelts per lot/sample lot. If the number of available lots/samples lots is limited, the number of selected pelts per lot/sample lots shall be increased until the required sample size is reached..

5.1.2 Sampling for requirement 4.7

For the evaluation of the results of the survey the trading body shall present a list of the supplying harvesters registered within the past year (as per requirement 4.2). A sample equal to the square root of the supplying harvesters is randomly selected for verification of the survey results.

5.1.3 Sampling for requirement 4.8

For the evaluation of the results of the second-party audits the trading body shall present a list of the supplying collectors registered within the past year (as per requirement 4.2). A sample equal to the square root of the supplying collectors is randomly selected for verification of the second-party audit results.



Photo: © Depositphotos

6 Standard Operating Procedure

Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) are used to document and support the consistency of procedures that are undertaken regularly. They must be reviewed regularly and updated in line with changes to the procedures.

Any SOP must as a minimum include the following elements:

Versioning

Keep track of revisions by keeping records of current SOP version number, effective date and the nature of the changes since the previous version.

Title

Name of procedure.

Purpose and scope

A brief description of the purpose of the procedure and the areas and contexts covered by the SOP. If relevant, include

a description of areas or contexts to which this SOP specifically does NOT apply.

Procedure

A detailed description of the procedure (i.e. what are the steps, from start to finish), including who is responsible (i.e. titles of the roles involved). If relevant, include a description of what records are kept, the training, preparations and equipment required for the procedure as well as a description of how to verify that the procedure was completed correctly.

Internal and external references

When internal or external references are made, sufficient information must be provided to allow the user to find the source document. This includes forms and templates.

7 Terms and Definitions

Animal Welfare

The physical and mental state of an animal in relation to the conditions in which it lives and dies.²⁰

Audit

A systematic procedure carried out to verify conformance with specific requirements.

Auditor

An authorized person carrying out audits on behalf of the certification body.

Audit client

A company which is being audited for certification purposes.

Certifier

An authorized person who approves audit results and makes the final certification decision.

Certified client

A company which has been audited and certified.

Certificate

A document issued by the certification body stating conformance with the protocol requirements.

Certification body

An authorized independent third party carrying out audits and issuing certificates.

Collector

An individual who collects skins from local harvesters to trade in the fur industry.

Harvester

A hunter or trapper who engages in harvest of wildlife.

Harvest license

An official permit to harvest and commercialize wild fur.

Harvest season

A defined period where the wild fur may be legally harvested.

Hunter

An individual who hunts wildlife.

Hunting

The locating and trailing of an animal with the intention to kill the animal using hunting equipment such as firearms or archery equipment.

Non-conformity

A non-conformity is identified when a requirement is not fulfilled.

Pelt

Fur with leather from a furbearer.

Quota

A restriction on the number of animals that may be harvested.

Reviewer

An authorized person reviewing the findings of the audit report.

Second-party audit (2nd party audit)

When a company performs an audit of a supplier to ensure that they are meeting the requirements specified.

Standard operating procedure (SOP)

Instructions detailing how to handle a specific subject used to support the consistency of procedures that are carried out regularly.

Sustainability

The maintenance of a balance of biodiversity.

20 World Organization for Animal Health (WOAH) (2021). Terrestrial Animal Health Code, Section 7 Animal Welfare.

Traceability

The ability to evidence the origin of the pelt through documentation.

Trading body

Companies trading wild fur.

Trapper

An individual who traps animals in the wild.

Trapping

Harvest of animals using traps designed for the purpose.

Wild Fur

Fur from a furbearing animal caught in the wild.

Contributors

This protocol was developed by Baltic Academy for the International Fur Federation.

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Baltic Academy

Baltic Academy is focused on development, consultancy, and education within the areas of animal welfare, sustainability, certification and standards.

Baltic Academy is 100% owned by Baltic Control® Group which is a leading global Testing, Inspection and Certification company operating through a network of offices and trusted representatives across all geographical regions of the world.

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International Fur Federation

The International Fur Federation was established in 1949 and is the only organization to represent the international fur industry and regulate its practices and trade. The federation promotes the business of fur, establishing certification and traceability programs on welfare and the environment. It is also committed to supporting young designers and retailers who intend to go into fur and fashion.

The International Fur Federation represents 56 members associations in over 40 countries around the world. The members encompass all parts of the fur trade including farmers, trappers, dressers, manufacturers, brokers, auction houses, retailers and designers. Each of these members have signed a strict code of conduct committing them to upholding the industry-relevant laws they fall under in their home countries.

www.wearefur.com

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