

## A Fisher, *Martes pennanti*, with Multiple Amputations

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An adult male Fisher (*Martes pennanti*) captured twice, and possibly three times, in a leghold trap suffered amputations of the left hind leg at the knee joint and most of the digits of the right and left front feet.

**Key Words:** Fisher, *Martes pennanti*, furbearer, leghold trap, trapping, amputations, Alberta.

Fishers (*Martes pennanti*) caught in leghold traps sustain severe injuries such as broken bones and amputations (Quick 1953; Coulter 1960). From 1990 to 1993, we recorded self-mutilations and amputations in 118 (15%) out of 762 Fishers harvested in Alberta (Cole and Proulx 1994). During this study, we collected a three-legged male adult Fisher from the northeastern region. The left hind leg had been amputated at the knee level. The lesion was well healed and fibrosed over. On the right front foot, digits 1, 2 and 3 had also been amputated at the metacarpal joint and the terminal phalange of the fourth digit was missing. The injuries had healed over. The animal was captured in a leghold trap during the 1992-1993 trapping season. During this capture, it had chewed off the digit 3 terminal and middle phalanges and the digit 4 terminal phalange of the left front foot.

The amputations observed on the right front foot were similar to the fresh self-mutilations observed on the left front foot. However, because they were healed over, they likely occurred during an earlier capture. We are uncertain about the exact cause of the hind leg amputation. It could be the consequence of a bad fall or fight with another animal. On the other hand, in the northeastern region of Alberta, Number 3 leghold traps are set for Lynx (*Felis lynx*) and Coyote (*Canis latrans*), and Fishers are accidentally captured in these traps (Cole and Proulx 1994). According to Coulter (1960), these traps often break Fisher leg bones and the animals may lose part or most of a leg. This Fisher may have suffered a hind

leg amputation during such a capture. On the basis of the age of the lesions, i.e., only the right front foot and the left hind leg were covered with scar tissue, and the unlikelihood that the animal could have been caught by both these limbs at the same time, we conclude that this Fisher could have been captured at three different instances in a leghold trap.

The present observation demonstrates the repetitive use by an animal of extreme measures to escape a trap in at least two instances, and the recuperative potential of a Fisher subjected to consecutive serious trauma.

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