

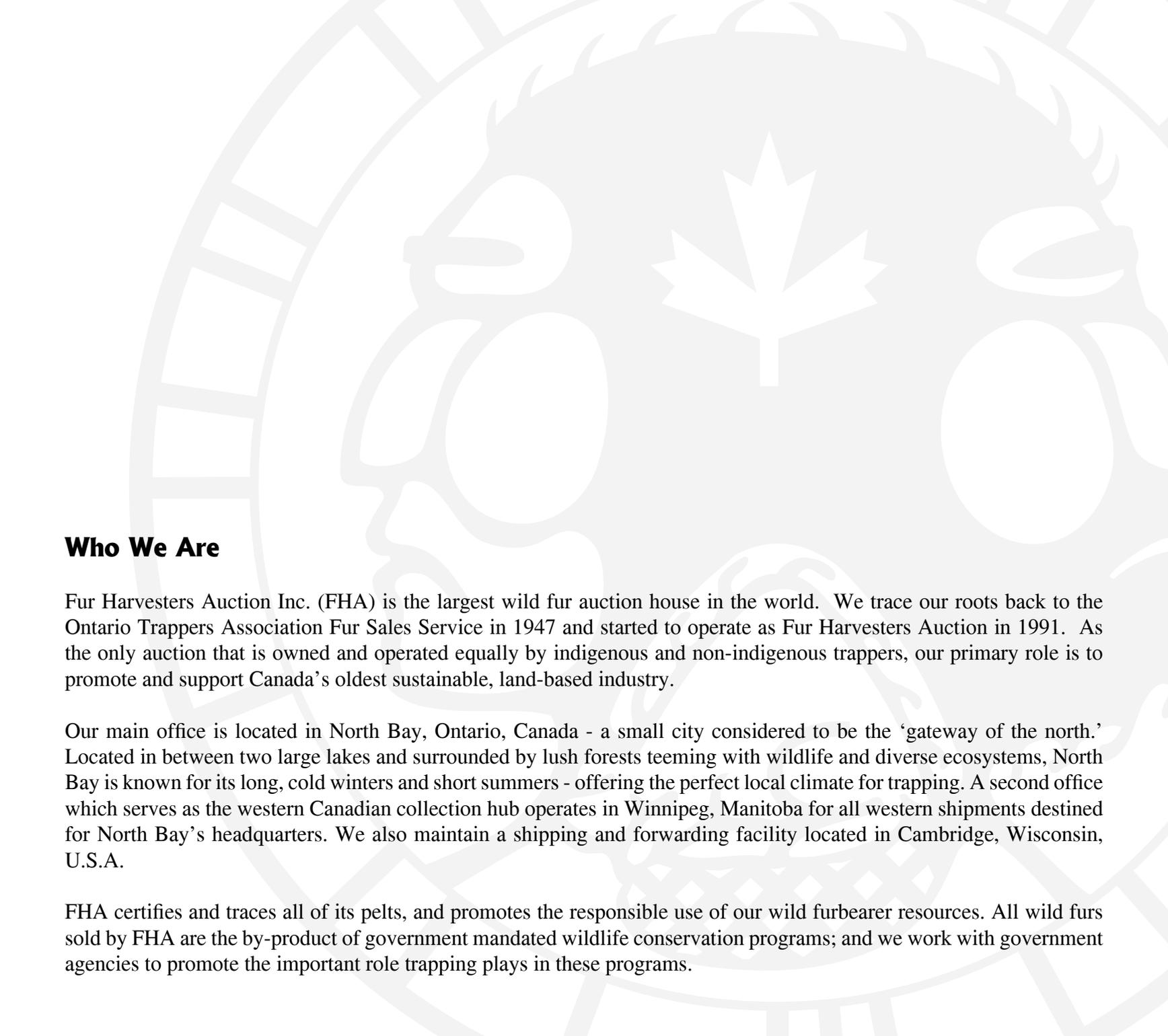


*Fur* *Harvesters*  
AUCTION INC.

**WILD FUR**

**CERTIFIED ~ SUSTAINABLE ~ TRACEABLE**





## Who We Are

Fur Harvesters Auction Inc. (FHA) is the largest wild fur auction house in the world. We trace our roots back to the Ontario Trappers Association Fur Sales Service in 1947 and started to operate as Fur Harvesters Auction in 1991. As the only auction that is owned and operated equally by indigenous and non-indigenous trappers, our primary role is to promote and support Canada's oldest sustainable, land-based industry.

Our main office is located in North Bay, Ontario, Canada - a small city considered to be the 'gateway of the north.' Located in between two large lakes and surrounded by lush forests teeming with wildlife and diverse ecosystems, North Bay is known for its long, cold winters and short summers - offering the perfect local climate for trapping. A second office which serves as the western Canadian collection hub operates in Winnipeg, Manitoba for all western shipments destined for North Bay's headquarters. We also maintain a shipping and forwarding facility located in Cambridge, Wisconsin, U.S.A.

FHA certifies and traces all of its pelts, and promotes the responsible use of our wild furbearer resources. All wild furs sold by FHA are the by-product of government mandated wildlife conservation programs; and we work with government agencies to promote the important role trapping plays in these programs.

## **Supporting Northern Communities**

A part of FHA's mandate is to give back to the northern communities that support and surround us. We therefore provide training to Conservation Officers and others involved in issuing advance payments to trappers from the far north, so that they are adequately able to estimate the value of their fur. FHA also provides instructors to conduct trapper education workshops in Northwest Territories (NWT) and Nunavut to assist trappers and hunters with trapping methodology, pelt preparation and wild fur marketing. We attend multiple trapper meetings throughout Canada to provide similar information.

A close working relationship exists between the auction and government agencies in NWT and Nunavut to market fur from those territories on behalf of their trappers and hunters. Similar working arrangements exist with other aboriginal communities.

FHA also believes in supporting the individuals who support us – in years of excess profits we share these profits with trappers based upon their shipments that year. The profit sharing is in the form of Revenue Participation Certificates (RPC's) which can be left in the company and/or in the form of interest payments on outstanding RPC's.

## **Trapping Equipment**

In addition to the fur auctions, FHA also operates a trapping supplies business to ensure that trappers have ready access to those items they need to harvest wild furbearers. All traps sold comply with the standards set by the Agreement on International Humane Trapping Standards (AIHTS) and we promote their use amongst our trappers.

## **Expert Grading of Wild Fur Pelts**

FHA staff collectively have hundreds of years of experience in grading multiple wild fur species. Grading 23 species of wild furbearers is a skill that is refined through years of practice. We do not use machines to grade because each skin is unique and requires the knowledge of a professional grader to sort and classify the pelt according to quality, size, colour, clarity and other attributes important to our buyers.

Each pelt is touched by human hands several times in the grading process to ensure consistency in the creation of our offering.





## Ethical Sourcing

Ethical sourcing is the process of ensuring the products being sourced are obtained in a responsible and sustainable way; and that environmental and social impacts on workers are taken into consideration during the sourcing process. FHA can offer buyers a firm commitment that all furs are ethically sourced because the checks and balances built into the system are rigorous and numerous. Our commitment to ethically sourced furs can be broken down into two distinct but symbiotic categories: the trappers who harvest the furs; and the environment from which the furs originate.

**Trappers:** For many trappers, the money returned to their community is a significant part of their income to support their rural lifestyles. The economic footprint and benefit of trapping is magnified many times by the fact that it in most cases wild fur sales are contributing a percentage to the incomes of rural and indigenous communities. This income, which can be seasonal, is often the difference-maker between lifestyles in remote areas being economically viable or not, to say nothing of the social and traditional importance of trapping in these areas.

**Environment:** Overall, trapping is environmentally beneficial and exists for species conservation, protecting endangered species from predators and a variety of other reasons that help governments manage and track wildlife populations. Trapping is considered one of the most valuable wildlife conservation tools available.





# Sustainability

## Sustainability & Our History

Sustainability has become a new buzz word in a world that has become increasingly environmentally conscious. AT FHA, sustainability is and has always been the essence of what we do as Canada's oldest land-based industry. That's because as the world's largest and only indigenous and non-indigenous trapper-owned fur auction, we follow the traditions passed onto us by our indigenous communities who believe in living off the land and for the land. A deep respect of nature is embedded within the culture of indigenous communities who feel interconnected and 'one' with nature; they believe they have a moral responsibility to care for and live in harmony with the natural world. They therefore only take and use the natural resources they need to sustain their daily lives.

Modern day trapping combines the traditions of our indigenous communities and modern-day science and technology to achieve the necessary balance of wildlife populations. Government oversight, conservation authorities, wildlife biologists and other scientific experts work together to ensure we respect nature and keep populations balanced. Government wildlife management programs exist for a variety of reasons including:

- Protecting, monitoring and managing endangered species;
- The reintroduction of species to their original habitats;
- Protection of the public from wildlife diseases such as rabies and distemper;
- The prevention of damage to property by wildlife;
- Controlling invasive species.

Even if the fur trade did not exist, furbearer populations would have to be controlled in many regions because of the above mentioned reasons. As a result of the different reasons for trapping, the entire wild fur harvest – 100 per cent- is a by-product of government wildlife management programs. These programs therefore ensure the sustainability of the harvest. Wildlife populations are monitored through the scientific and statistical information collected by trappers, such as: annual capture numbers; animal samples; and other local habitat and animal observations. All of this information is reported to authorities and provide a vital monitoring service to governments in their efforts to: reduce or eradicate wildlife disease outbreaks; set trapping and hunting quotas and seasons at the local and provincial/state levels; determine species re-introduction and culling programs.

## **Certification**

FHA certifies that its wild furs are the highest quality pelts on the market and are harvested by professional, licenced trappers who adhere to all local, provincial/state, federal and international agreements. This certification also serves as a guarantee that each pelt is traceable back to the trapper who harvested it. Our certification program is therefore broken down into three categories:

1. Professionally trained and licenced trappers
2. Oversight by competent authorities
3. Traceability

Each category is discussed in greater detail below.

### **Licenced Professional Trappers**

Trappers that entrust us with the sale of their pelts are professionally trained and licenced in the jurisdictions in which they practice their profession; they've complied with all educational courses, regulations and laws as mandated in their province/state.

The educational programs vary between jurisdictions because of differences in climate, local habitat, species, wildlife populations and local laws/regulations. In general, trappers are taught about the science behind furbearer wildlife management, humane harvest, trapping devices, open and closed seasons and other pertinent information about conservation. Professional courses are also an important so that trappers are trained in the following areas:

- seasonal restrictions, which vary from jurisdiction to jurisdiction;
- scientifically regulated minimum and maximum quotas;
- trapping only specific species that are abundant or over-abundant in their habitats as determined by government agencies or conservation bodies;
- only use mandatory regulated trapping devices and systems;
- trapping in designated areas only.

Trappers act as our eyes and ears on the land. They are the first to sound the alarm if they notice any changes in the environment that require further study. For instance, trappers will be the first to notice any wildlife diseases that may be flourishing and, as stewards of the land, will be the first to notify the proper governmental authority to study the issue.





## **Oversight of Wild Fur Harvest**

FHA's certification also guarantees that all harvest levels are monitored by the relevant governmental authorities to sustain healthy population levels in balance with habitat. To ensure that trappers only trap species that are abundant or over-abundant, the practice is strictly regulated by state, provincial and territorial authorities. Contemporary scientific methods have proven to be effective in keeping wildlife populations in balance. We know this because the statistical collection of population numbers reveal that the most important North American furbearers such as beaver, muskrat, marten, coyote, fox and raccoon are abundant today and, in some cases, more abundant than they have ever been. Wildlife management authorities rely on trappers to help them monitor the environment and general health of wildlife populations. They receive and review harvest reports and are alerted to incidents of disease.

Conservation officers monitor and enforce state/provincial and territorial trapping regulations by visiting trappers, conducting routine field patrols and will randomly inspect trap lines. Adhering to all applicable laws and regulations is mandatory for trappers and if they are found to be in contravention of any laws, they are subjected to penalties including fines and even the loss of trapping privileges. Government agencies also record, monitor, regulate and inspect wild fur harvests and shipments. Canada has more than 1,400 Wildlife Conservation or Enforcement Officers and the U.S. has approximately 8,400.

FHA has a contractual agreement with the Ontario government's Ministry of Natural Resources & Forestry (MNR) which offers an additional layer of assurances to our buyers of strict government oversight. The agreement outlines the following obligations:

- if there are any inconsistencies in the permits or licenses, FHA must report the discrepancies directly to MNR;
- the MNR can request and seize any pelts they deem to be in contravention of any applicable laws and regulations;
- FHA reports to the MNR regularly on all transactions, and to other government agencies depending on the working agreements or the requests received;
- FHA is linked directly to MNR's Fur Management Information System (FURMIS) allowing annual audits of FHA's operations.

FHA also assists MNR and other government agencies with investigations and data requests as received.

## **International Organization for Standardization**

Two international science-based trap standards have been developed to test restraining and killing devices by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO). The ISO is comprised of 162 members, each being the sole representative of their country. These standards outline how traps should be tested, regardless of the reason for trapping. Key parts of the standards include:

- testing methods for performance evaluation of traps in these areas: capture efficiency; animal welfare; selectivity; user safety;
- Sampling sizes for devices tested;
- Trauma scales and classification of injuries;
- Mechanical testing of trapping devices;
- Compound, field testing and pathology protocols

These standards are a critical component of the work that's been done in North America to meet commitments to the principles of the AIHTS and Agreed Minute – two agreements outlined below.



## **Agreement on International Humane Trapping Standards**

The Agreement on International Humane Trapping Standards (AIHTS) is an international agreement between Canada, the European Union and the Russian Federation that ensures the highest possible animal welfare thresholds for traps used to capture wild animal species in those countries. Under the AIHTS, traps must be approved by competent authorities and conform to AIHTS standards.

More than 600 trap designs have been rigorously tested and 239 have been approved under AIHTS in Canada at a world-renowned trap testing facility since the agreement was ratified in 1999. The trap testing facility conducts field tests and uses computer simulation modelling to ensure all traps meet the thresholds as outlined in the agreement.



## **Agreed Minute**

In 1997, the United States and the European Union signed an Agreed Minute on humane standards for trapping of furbearing animals. The Agreed Minute represents an international treaty commitment between the United States and the EU to the principles of the AIHTS.

To comply with this agreement, the U.S. has developed Best Management Practices to scientifically evaluate traps and trapping systems. Evaluations are based on animal welfare, efficiency, selectivity, practicality and safety. Results of this research are provided to the general public, trappers, regulatory authorities and state and federal wildlife agencies.

## **CITES**

In addition to the AIHTS and the Agreed Minute, The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna (CITES) is in place to ensure that wildlife is not endangered by trade between countries. CITES works to conserve wild animals and plants for human benefit and to ensure that the survival of these species is not threatened by international trade

Under CITES, all wild species listed fall into one of four categories determined by the degree to which trade pressures threaten a species' survival. FHA cannot handle or sell fur that is deemed to be threatened with extinction, under the terms of CITES.

FHA is therefore obligated -both legally and morally – to report to authorities any contravention of this agreement. We further ensure the proper legal documentation accompany a shipment of any 'look-a-like' species that could be confused with a species considered 'at-risk' by CITES.

## Traceability

All pelts received by FHA are certified traceable back to the individual trapper who gets paid by FHA once their pelts are bought and paid for by a buyer or broker. FHA is therefore the gatekeeper of the trapper's licensing information and can trace the pelts back to the individual trapper's jurisdiction.

Each trapper is assigned a unique identification number that stays with him/her as long as they are doing business with FHA. Every pelt that arrives at FHA is tagged with an alpha-numeric barcode ticket for tracking purposes. The barcodes contain important information on:

- the trapper;
- the species;
- country and jurisdiction of origin; and
- year harvested.

After grading, all pelts are placed into lots, which are identified by both a stock number and a lot number that identify all pelts in the lot by individual bar code number. In this manner, there are now four unique identifiers for each pelt, which are all linked to one another:

- trapper identification number;
- alpha-numeric bar code;
- stock number;
- lot number.

FHA works with the buyer's freight forwarder to ensure all necessary documentation and permits accompany the pelts. This ensures compliance with all international agreements and export/import laws. By law and regulation, collected raw fur pelts must be documented, regardless of their position in the supply chain.



*For additional information on this document, contact Howard Noseworthy via email: [hnoseworthy@furharvesters.com](mailto:hnoseworthy@furharvesters.com)*





## **Brothers of the Harvest**

Each face represents the traditional image of the Indigenous and Non-Indigenous Fur Harvester. The Beaver is the hardest and most persistent worker in the world. The Beaver has also been traditionally the backbone of the fur industry. The maple leaf reflects the Canadian heritage of this industry. The two circles that surround the inner images represent the creator. He is within you and around you. They are also connected by small lines that represent our own connection with the Creator. The two circles with the connecting lines also represents a skin that is stretched out, an image well known in the fur industry.

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