



Middlebury  
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LABORATORIES OF  
MOLECULAR ANTHROPOLOGY  
AND MICROBIOME RESEARCH

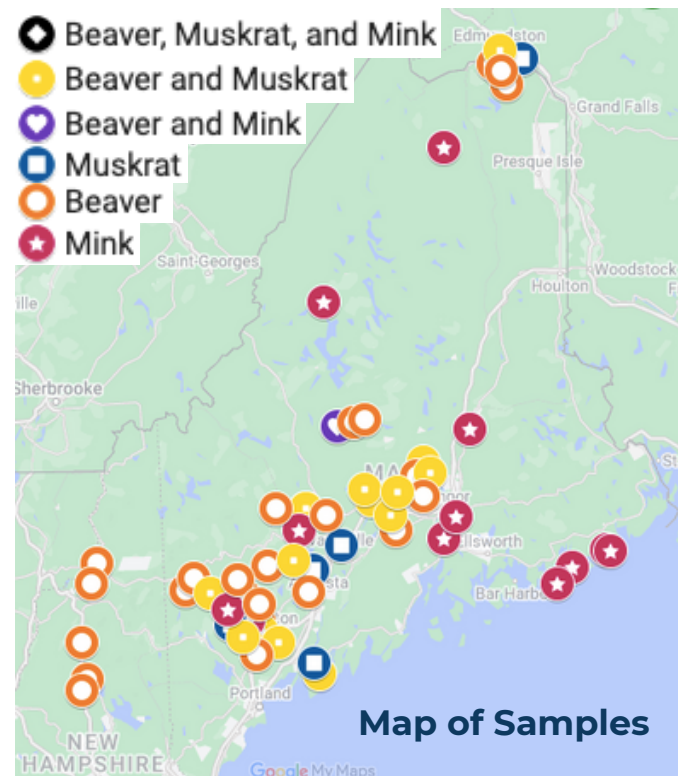
# OF MINKS AND MEN: CULTURAL RESILIENCE AND SHIFTING BASELINES OF THE NORTH AMERICAN FUR TRADE

a National Science Foundation project

Our project seeks to understand the reciprocal impacts humans and furbearing mammals had on each other before, during, and after the North American Fur Trade, specifically for populations in the Gulf of Maine and lower Columbia River. Using anthropological, (paleo)ecological, and genomic techniques, we hope to reveal how differing harvesting patterns across time have influenced population changes of mink, muskrat, and beaver, including changes in body size, diet, sex ratios, and population size and diversity.

## HOW DOES TRAPPING FIT IN?

We have enlisted the help of 33 trappers and resource managers in the Gulf of Maine region to share their experiences engaging with furbearers and to collect tissue samples from harvested animals. The DNA from these samples will be extracted, sequenced, and analyzed at our lab at OU. Through our collaboration with trappers, we are hoping to obtain a robust picture of the behavior, diet, and genetics of present-day populations of furbearers, and we'll use those insights to investigate populations from the past as well.



## UPDATES

First, we'd like to say a big thank you to all the trappers who have given their time, support, energy, and knowledge to our study so far.

We have:

- **Received 304 tissue samples (see map for geographic distribution):**
  - **201 beaver, 85 muskrat, and 18 mink**
- **Sequenced our first batch of 59 samples this spring and are processing 24 more samples this summer.**
- **Made videos of the lab processes the tissue samples undergo once they reach our lab!** Videos are linked to our website (scan the QR code).

## WANT TO PARTICIPATE?

- **Collect samples:** We would like to **increase the number of mink samples across ME, as well as samples from all three species in York, Cumberland, Lincoln, Knox, Waldo, Hancock, and Washington counties.**
  - Email [karissa.s.hughes-1@ou.edu](mailto:karissa.s.hughes-1@ou.edu) or call 405-325-7381
- **Share knowledge:**
  - Any interesting experiences with trapping?
  - Noticed changes in behavior or diet?
  - **Have you heard of the sea mink?**

Scan Me

