



Welcome to the Spring/Summer edition of the North Carolina Furbearer Management Newsletter!

The information in this newsletter has been provided through the cooperative efforts of North Carolina’s licensed trappers and licensed fur dealers. The information they provide helps the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission (NCWRC) monitor furbearer harvest levels and track trends in the furbearer populations.

Information on Fox Trapping in NC

The most common comment we receive on our trapper harvest survey is:

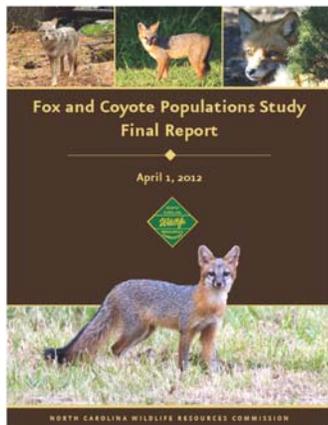
“Why can’t I trap foxes in my county?” or
“Please open up fox trapping in my county.”



Currently, our agency has no authority to allow fox trapping in a county.

The North Carolina General Assembly (NCGA) elected to classify foxes only as game animals rather than game and furbearers as bobcat, opossum and raccoon are designated. This classification means that foxes cannot be taken by trapping during regular furbearer trapping seasons.

Only the General Assembly has the authority to allow fox trapping in a county through passage of local law.

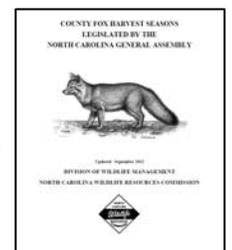


In June 2011, the NCGA passed a bill that directed the WRC to study fox and coyote populations and to recommend management methods and controls designed to ensure statewide conservation of fox populations while managing adverse effects of coyote populations.

The WRC submitted the results of this study in April 2012. The report contains available information on the harvest and status of foxes and coyotes and summarized stakeholder meetings. The report also reviewed the laws regarding foxes and the WRC’s limited authority in regulating take of foxes. Based on the study, the WRC offered recommendations for managing foxes and coyotes in North Carolina.

To download a copy of the report, visit the Species section on our website at www.ncwildlife.org and click on Coyote, Red or Gray fox.

There are 22 local fox trapping seasons in 38 North Carolina counties (see page 4). For information on current fox hunting and trapping seasons in North Carolina go to: <http://www.ncwildlife.org/Trapping/> and download our publication on fox hunting and trapping seasons.



Trapper Education Opportunities

The NC Wildlife Resources Commission (NCWRC) in cooperation with the North Carolina Trappers Association offers free Basic Trapper Education Courses. Courses are often offered throughout the year in several wildlife districts.

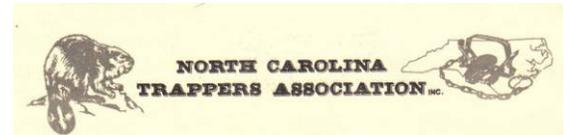


A 3-day Advanced Trapper Educational Course is also offered. The next advanced course is May 17-19, 2013 at the Millstone 4-H camp near Ellerbe, NC.

For more information on trapper education courses contact:

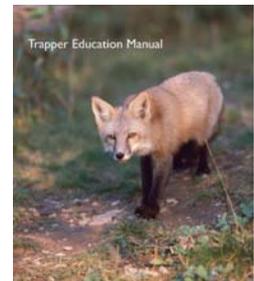
Todd Menke, NCTA Education Coordinator
2663 Tar River Rd.
Creedmoor, NC 27522
E-mail: minkster@netzero.net

Phone: (919) 528-9063



Or visit our website at:
<http://www.ncwildlife.org/Trapping/LearnResources.aspx>
and click on "Trapper Education"

You can also download a Trapper Educational Manual on the website!



The Wildlife Damage Control Agent (WDCA) Program

The WDCA program allows trained individuals to issue wildlife depredation permits to landowners with wildlife damage problems.

Depredation permits are needed to trap, transport or lethally control wildlife outside the regulated trapping season. Certified WDCAs are authorized to issue permits for controlling certain wildlife species that are causing property damage.

Training:

In order to become a WDCA, an individual must complete a certification course covering laws, rules, health considerations, and humane handling techniques. In addition, the individual must pass a written examination. Agents are subject to background checks prior to certification.

Agents must maintain a current knowledge of laws, rules and techniques of wildlife damage control and must renew their agent status every three years. Renewal involves another examination to demonstrate that the agent has maintained adequate knowledge of all rules and regulations

Course sites and times vary depending on the demand. Contact NCWRC at 919-707-0060 for upcoming training/testing sites and times.



Photo Credit: AAAnimal Control

Frequently Asked Questions

- ❖ Can coyotes be trapped only where there is a local fox trapping season?
 - Coyotes can be trapped during the furbearer trapping season (see page 4) **and** during any local fox trapping season.
 - If your county does not have a local fox trapping season, you can still trap coyotes during the furbearer trapping season (see page 4 for dates).

- ❖ Can I sell or keep live furbearers, such as bobcats and raccoons?
 - No. The only wild animals that can be sold live are foxes and coyotes captured during the trapping season. You can only sell them to a licensed fox hunting preserve.



Monitoring Furbearer Populations

In order for the NCWRC to monitor the furbearer harvest, we have created a confidential voluntary trapper harvest mail survey. Using information from the surveys, coupled with reports from licensed fur dealers, the NCWRC can monitor trends in trapper harvest and effort, which often mirrors trends in the furbearer population. The data gained from these surveys also helps us make management decisions and address questions we receive from sportsmen, the media and the general public.

How you can help!

If you receive a furbearer harvest survey in the mail, please take the time to fill it out as accurately as possible and return it promptly.



Please return the survey!

Landowner Assistance List

These surveys also provide you with the opportunity to sign up to be on the landowner assistance list, which connects landowners needing help with trappers during the trapping season.

Furbearer Annual Report

This summer, the NCWRC will publish the 1st Annual Furbearer Report. This report will summarize all the data we have on each furbearer species, including data from you, when you fill out the survey!

This report will be available at under the “Learn/Resources” section at <http://www.ncwildlife.org/Trapping/>

River Otter Research: How you can help!

During the 1990's, licensed trappers assisted the NCWRC in successfully restoring river otters to western North Carolina. However, no studies have been conducted to measure certain population parameters of the restored mountain population and the established populations in the coast and piedmont.

Today, the NCWRC and North Carolina State University (NCSU) are conducting a study of reproductive parameters and age structure in the otter populations across North Carolina.



To date, trappers have donated 436 otter carcasses for this study! Thanks!

Table 1. Data collected from river otters harvested by trappers from 2009 through 2012.

	Season			Total
	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	
Number of Otters Sampled	74	176	186	436
Females Sampled	20	64	69	153
Males Sampled	54	112	117	283
Average Weight* (lbs.)	19.6	17.1	12.3	14.2
Avg. Nose→Rump length (inches)	26.5	27.3	25.8	26.02
Avg. Nose→Tail length (inches)	43	43.6	42.1	42.3
Average Age (yrs.)	2	2	2	2
Modal (most common) Age	1	0	1	1
Maximum Age (yrs.)	11	12	12	12
Percent Caught in December	9	5	6	6
Percent Caught in January	34	39	36	35
Percent Caught in February	57	44	54	44.5

*Note: Weights are of skinned carcasses; full weights will be approximately 3-4 lbs. heavier

We are continuing this study throughout the 2012-13 trapping season. Therefore, we are asking for your help in providing otter carcasses so that we can collect the necessary biological samples (e.g., reproductive tract and teeth) for this important research to continue.

To find out how to assist, please contact NCSU student, Charles Sanders, at:

E-mail address: cwsander@ncsu.edu

Phone: (919) 896-9519



Voluntary Trapper Harvest Mail Survey Results

The response rate for the 2011-2012 mail survey was 54%, of which 37% of respondents reported that they did not trap during the trapping season (Table 1).

Table 1. Data from the trapper harvest mail survey, 2002-03 through 2011-12.

Survey Year	# of licensed trappers	Response Rate	% respondents who did not trap
2003-04	1,286	54%	23%
2004-05	1,547	50%	23%
2005-06	1,744	58%	19%
2006-07	1,867	63%	27%
2007-08	2,027	61%	33%
2008-09	2,233	59%	32%
2009-10	2,120	60%	44%
2010-11	2,186	57%	36%
2011-12	2,638	54%	37%

The 2011-12 furbearer harvest level was higher than that seen during the prior trapping season, primarily due to increased pelt prices. Except bobcat, muskrat and weasel, all other furbearer species experienced increased in harvest, most notably raccoons. The table on the following page presents data obtained from the past six trapping seasons.

North Carolina Muskrat Study

Due to concerns about regional muskrat populations, several southeastern, northeastern and Canadian furbearer biologists have started monitoring muskrat populations in cooperation with licensed trappers. Efforts involve monitoring the age and sex ratio of harvested muskrats, as this may indicate population declines.

Starting in 2011, North Carolina joined regional efforts by attending fur sales and working with North Carolina fur dealers. We will need multiple years of data before we can start to detect trends in the muskrat population. Please stayed tuned for results!

March 2012 (199 pelts examined)

	Ratio	
Adult	3.64 male to female	(40/11)
Juvenile	1.30 male to female	(70/54)
Juvenile vs. Adult	2.40 juveniles to adults	(125/52)
Juvenile vs. Ad. Female	11.36 juv. to ad. female	(125/11)



Table 2. Reported trapper harvest from the survey responses and average pelt prices derived from fur dealers and fur auction reports.

Species	2006-2007		2007-2008		2008-2009		2009-10		2010-11		2011-12	
	Harvest	Prices										
 Beaver	11,458	\$11.00	9,919	\$16.25	8,370	\$8.80	7,469	\$8.39	9,389	\$13.45	9,979	\$18.17
 Mink	328	\$8.21	331	\$9.30	193	\$5.87	193	\$8.95	248	\$15.82	263	\$18.29
 Muskrat	7,412	\$3.77	3,543	\$3.15	2,724	\$2.45	2,079	\$4.42	4,229	\$9.87	4,166	\$7.73
 Nutria	3,720	N/A	2,436	\$2.13	2,173	\$0.61	1,510	N/A	1,224	\$1.50	1,516	N/A
 Otter	1,751	\$33.13	1,457	\$23.25	1,341	\$26.21	1,322	\$34.48	1,905	\$78.34	2,383	\$56.71
 Bobcat	791	\$23.43	1,045	\$28.12	993	\$19.01	803	\$22.14	993	\$50.90	927	\$55.99
 Coyote	847	\$11.00	1,434	\$18.12	1,747	\$8.94	2,091	\$7.45	2,843	\$11.37	3,458	\$13.77
 Gray Fox	3,020	\$25.83	5,560	\$26.46	4,212	\$16.00	3,313	\$13.53	3,995	\$15.70	4,622	\$24.37
 Red Fox	695	\$13.00	1,180	\$14.83	838	\$9.60	769	\$12.96	872	\$21.06	1,078	\$37.20
 Opossum	4,317	\$1.69	6,393	\$2.55	4,481	\$1.53	3,841	\$0.98	5,216	\$0.61	6,080	\$0.75
 Raccoon	5,967	\$6.56	6,712	\$10.75	7,307	\$5.73	5,442	\$6.23	7,568	\$6.90	9,612	\$6.70
 Skunk	186	N/A	641	N/A	354	\$2.77	324	\$1.11	411	\$1.04	500	\$1.26
 Weasel	33	N/A	0	\$6.12	0	N/A	1	\$1.50	25	N/A	2	N/A
TOTAL	40,525		40,651		34,733		29,157		38,918		44,586	

2011-2012 reported harvest from respondents to the voluntary trapper mail survey.

	Furbearer Management Region		
	Mountain	Piedmont	Coastal Plains
Beaver	735	2,864	6,711
Mink	99	43	126
Muskrat	893	983	2,521
Nutria	0	51	1,439
Otter	146	622	1,755
Bobcat	233	173	570
Coyote	825	1,329	1,288
Gray Fox	160	2,027	2,440
Red Fox	127	426	521
Opossum	653	1,882	3,513
Raccoon	1,165	2,864	5,525
Weasel	1	0	1
Skunk	93	283	112

Total number of North Carolina trapping licenses sold in each county for 2011-2012 trapping season.

