

# North Carolina Furbearer Management Newsletter



## Preliminary Results from 2017-2018 Furbearer Trapping Season

Information on average pelt prices is estimated by using information provided by North Carolina Fur Dealers, fur auctions, and NAFA auction results.

Species	Average Pelt Price 16-17	Average Pelt Price 17-18	% Price Change from prior year	2016-17 Harvest	2017-18 Harvest <sup>1</sup>
Beaver	\$8.59	\$9.29	8%	9,660	13,287
Mink	\$7.95	\$5.24	-34%	166	183
Muskrat	\$3.76	\$2.92	-22%	3,129	4,326
Nutria	N/A	N/A	N/A	719	2,273
Otter	\$29.26	\$20.78	-29%	1,450	1,744
Bobcat	\$34.12	\$31.71	-7%	1,393	1,132
Coyote	\$10.98	\$13.44	22%	6,337	9,354
Gray Fox	\$14.01	\$9.87	-30%	3,780	3,593
Red Fox	\$12.04	\$6.35	-47%	1,929	2,238
Opossum	\$0.99	\$1.00	1%	8,759	9,082
Raccoon	\$3.68	\$3.18	-14%	11,195	12,142
Skunk	\$2.89	\$5.21	80%	835	663
Weasel	N/A	N/A	N/A	0	2

<sup>1</sup>Preliminary estimate. Final 2017-18 harvest statistics will be in the 2019 Spring Furbearer Newsletter.

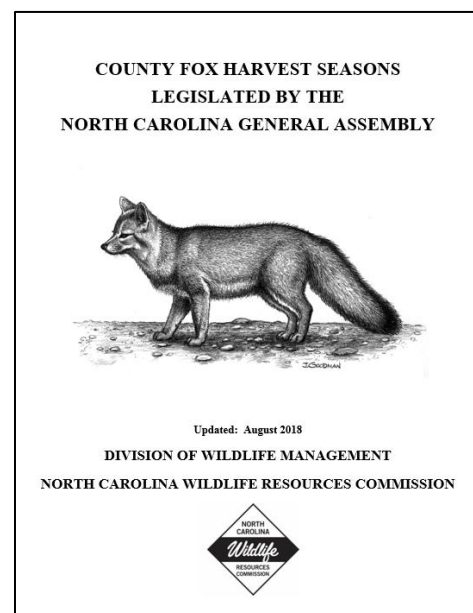
## New counties opened to fox trapping seasons

During the 2018 NC General Assembly Legislative Short Session, **9 more counties were opened up to fox trapping**, with exemptions from fox tagging requirements.

There are now 51 counties with fox trapping seasons in North Carolina. Outside these 51 counties, you cannot trap foxes during the regulated trapping season and any fox captured must be released in those 49 counties without a season.

For more information on fox hunting and trapping seasons, please go to: [www.ncwildlife.org/foxseasons](http://www.ncwildlife.org/foxseasons)

Hard copies of the county fox season booklet will be distributed at the NC Wildlife Resources Commission table during the NC Trappers Association Convention (see page 3).



## Tagging Requirements



Hunters and trappers have up to 30 days after the close of the season to tag bobcat, foxes and otters. However, there are 20 counties in which trappers and hunters are exempt from fox tagging requirements.

No tags will be shipped from the Wildlife Resources Commission 23 consecutive days after the close of the season.

The last day to have tags mailed to you is **March 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2019!**

To order your tags, call 888-248-6834.

## Trapper Educational Opportunities

The North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission and the North Carolina Trappers Association, offers free Trapper Education Courses. Courses are often offered throughout the year in several wildlife districts. In addition to learning trapping regulations, and the basics of trapping techniques, fur handling, and safety, this course qualifies for reciprocity with other states that have mandatory trapper education in order to purchase a trapping license.

There is **one more trapper education course being offered this year:**

When: October 27<sup>th</sup>, 2018, 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Where: Marion Fish Hatchery, 645 Fish Hatchery Road, Marion, NC 28752

Instructors: Dwayne Robinson and David Allen

To sign up, go to [www.ncwildlife.org/trappered](http://www.ncwildlife.org/trappered) and click "Basic Trapper Education Courses" tab. There you will find a link to sign up.



## Advanced Coyote Trapping Workshop

The North Carolina Trappers Association is offering one more Advanced Hands-On Coyote Trapping Workshop in 2018.

You will learn about:

- Coyote biology
- Traps/anchors/pan covers
- Dirthole variations
- Understanding signs/habitats
- Laws and regulations
- The when and why of:
  - Flat/post sets
  - Blind/multiple sets
  - Lures/baits/urines
  - Peat moss/cover hulls



**When:** Saturday, October 20<sup>th</sup>, 2018, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

**Where:** Franklin County Farm, Allen's Lane, Youngsville, NC 27596

**Instructors:** Todd Menke and Jimmy Pierce



This workshop qualifies for WDCA Recertification!

To learn more and to sign up, go to [nctrapper.org](http://nctrapper.org) and click on "Education" or contact Todd Menke [minkster1971@gmail.com](mailto:minkster1971@gmail.com) or 919-885-6187

## See us at the NC Trappers Association Convention or the Mountain Rendezvous!

Come visit the NCWRC at various events to get information on furbearer species, regulations, fox laws, research, our furbearer cooperator projects, and much, much more!



The Furbearer team will be at the **2018 NC Trappers Convention**

**When:** September 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup>, Building opens at 7:00 a.m.

**Where:** Smithfield Livestock Auction Arena, 526 County Home Rd., Smithfield NC 27577

For more information: [www.nctrapper.org](http://www.nctrapper.org) and click on "Events"

This is one of the largest state trapper's conventions in the southeast and is open to the public! In addition to our educational table, there will be trapping demonstrations, fur skinning demonstrations, trapping supply vendors, games for kids, and trap setting contests for youths and adults!

**2018 Mountain Rendezvous:** Smithfield too far? For those in western North Carolina, the **Mountain Rendezvous** is a family event for trappers and their family. There will be trapping demonstrations, vendors, and the NCWRC will have a table with information!

**When:** October 13<sup>th</sup>, 2018, 8am to 5pm

**Where:** Elliott Family Farm, 356 London Rd., Lawndale, NC 28090

For more information, contact David Allen, 704-689-5264, e-mail: [chiseltooth08@yahoo.com](mailto:chiseltooth08@yahoo.com)



# Skulls and Carcasses Wanted

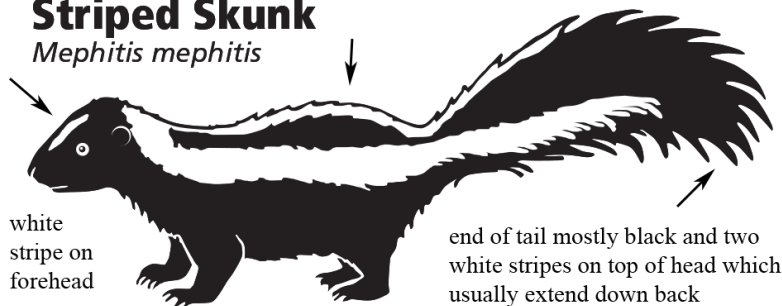
The N.C. Wild life Resources Commission Furbearer Team  
Is interested in collecting the following:

**Bobcat Skulls or Jaw**  
**Otter Skulls or Jaw**  
**Spotted Skunk Carcasses**

## Eastern Spotted Skunk *Spilogale putorius*



## Striped Skunk *Mephitis mephitis*



To submit jaws and carcasses, please label each skull with:

1. your name,
2. county
3. Date trapped,
4. Species,
5. and sex of animal

**And call the contact below for pick-up.**

**Casey Dukes**  
**Surveys and Research Biologist**  
**919-609-7226**  
**casey.dukes@ncwildlife.org**

As in recent years, we'll collect **bobcat and otter skulls or jaws** to pull teeth and look at the age structure of the harvest.

Additionally, we're hoping to obtain **carcasses of spotted skunks** to collect locations and tissue samples to increase our knowledge of this elusive furbearer species.

Projects such as these are important, as they help us monitor populations and improve our knowledge of NC furbearers. We feel this information will us maintain trapping for future generations.

In return for your cooperation, you will receive a furbearer cooperator patch and age information from the animals you submitted.

Thank you in advance!



### Bobcat Sex and Age Ratio Data

Starting with the 2014-15 trapping season, the Commission started collecting bobcat skulls from licensed trappers. Our sampling objective is 10-15% of the trapper harvest for 5 consecutive years. Due to low pelt prices and the voluntary nature of the program, we have not yet achieved collecting 10% of the harvest. Since the 2013-14 season, we have collected 172 skulls; during the 2017-18 season, we collected 34 skulls.



Age class of sampled bobcat from licensed trappers from 2013-14 season through 2016-17 season.

Age Class	Bobcat			Total Sampled
	M	F	U	
0	5	6	8	19
1	16	14	10	40
2	15	9	11	35
3	4	6	9	19
4	5	3	2	10
5	4	2	2	8
6	1	1	2	4
7	1	0	0	1
8	0	2	0	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>138</b>
<b>Sex ratio</b>	<b>37%</b>	<b>31%</b>	<b>32%</b>	



### River Otter Sex and Age Ratio Data

The purpose of this study is to gather data on the age structure and sex ratio of harvested otters. During the 2017-18 trapping season, we collected 136 otter skulls. Once teeth were removed from the skulls for aging, we gave the skulls to the NC Museum of Natural Science, who requested the skulls and genetic material for archival purposes and for future research.

Age class of sampled river otters from licensed trappers from 2013-14 season through 2016-17 season.

Age Class	River Otter			Total Sampled
	M	F	U	
0	5	7	2	14
1	37	9	12	58
2	2	3	2	7
3	6	5	3	14
4	1	1	0	2
5	2	1	0	3
6	3	0	0	3
7	0	0	0	0
8	1	0	0	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>102</b>
<b>Sex Ratio</b>	<b>56%</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>19%</b>	

## Selling your Furs

To find where you can sell your fur, we have a "[Selling Fur](#)" section on our website. It has information on local fur dealers, fur pick-up schedules & locations, and fur auctions. This information is updated monthly from November 2018 through February 2019. Go to [ncwildlife.org/sellingfur](http://ncwildlife.org/sellingfur)



NAFA has pick-up sites, including the Marshall Fur sale in March. These furs are bagged and ready for shipment.



Trappers waiting to sell their fur to Groenewold Fur & Wool Co., which has pick-up sites throughout North Carolina every March.



NC fur buyer, Kevin Myers, inspects otter pelts.

## Public Hearings Scheduled!

The Commission has been charged with managing North Carolina's wildlife resources since 1947. Setting forth rules is one means by which we manage those resources and we rely on the public's cooperation and assistance in this endeavor. Thus, we urge you to participate in these public hearings.

Proposed regulations are posted on our website, [www.ncwildlife.org](http://www.ncwildlife.org), in January. If you can't make the public hearing, you can submit comments on the website or e-mail your comments on proposed regulations to: [regulations@ncwildlife.org](mailto:regulations@ncwildlife.org)

Date	District	City	Location
January 8, 2019	4	Dublin	Bladen Community College
January 9, 2019	5	Graham	Old Alamance County Courthouse
January 10, 2019	6	Albemarle	Stanly County Agri-Civic Center
January 15, 2019	9	Clyde	Haywood Community College
January 16, 2019	8	Morganton	Western Piedmont Community College
January 17, 2019	7	Elkin	Elkin High School
January 22, 2019	1	Edenton	Chowan County Public Safety Center
January 23, 2019	2	New Bern	Craven Community College
January 24, 2019	3	Rocky Mount	Nash Community College

## Trapping Best Management Practices

Trapping Best Management Practices (BMPs) are carefully researched **recommendations** designed to ensure animals are **humanely captured**. Developed as part of the **largest trap research effort** ever conducted, BMPs feature the **latest scientific information** about trapping techniques and equipment, along with practical advice from *experienced trappers* and wildlife biologists.

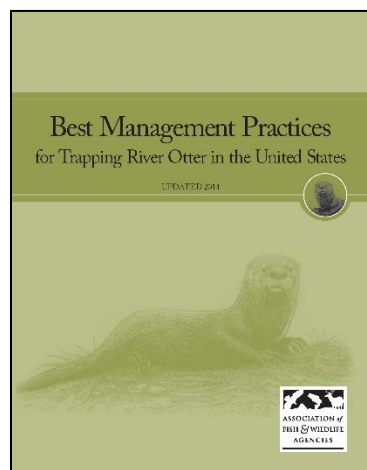


BMPs are intended to inform people about traps and trapping systems considered to be state-of-the-art in animal welfare, efficiency, selectivity, and practicality.

The BMP publications serve as a guide to inform trappers about trap-types they should consider using for capturing a specific furbearer, including bobcats, coyotes, beaver and raccoons!

**All furbearers** in North Carolina now have their own BMP document, which can be found at: [ncwildlife.org/bmp](http://ncwildlife.org/bmp)

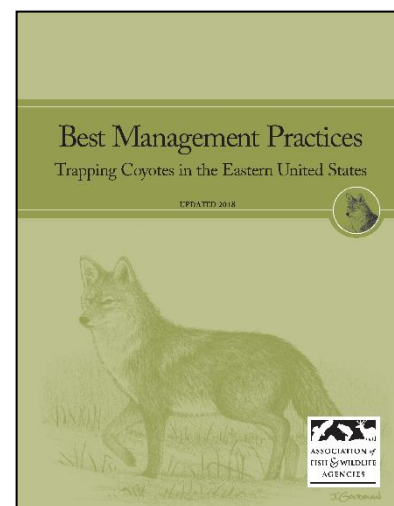
Trapping BMPs exist for 22 species of furbearers:  
[www.fishwildlife.org/afwa-informs/research](http://www.fishwildlife.org/afwa-informs/research)



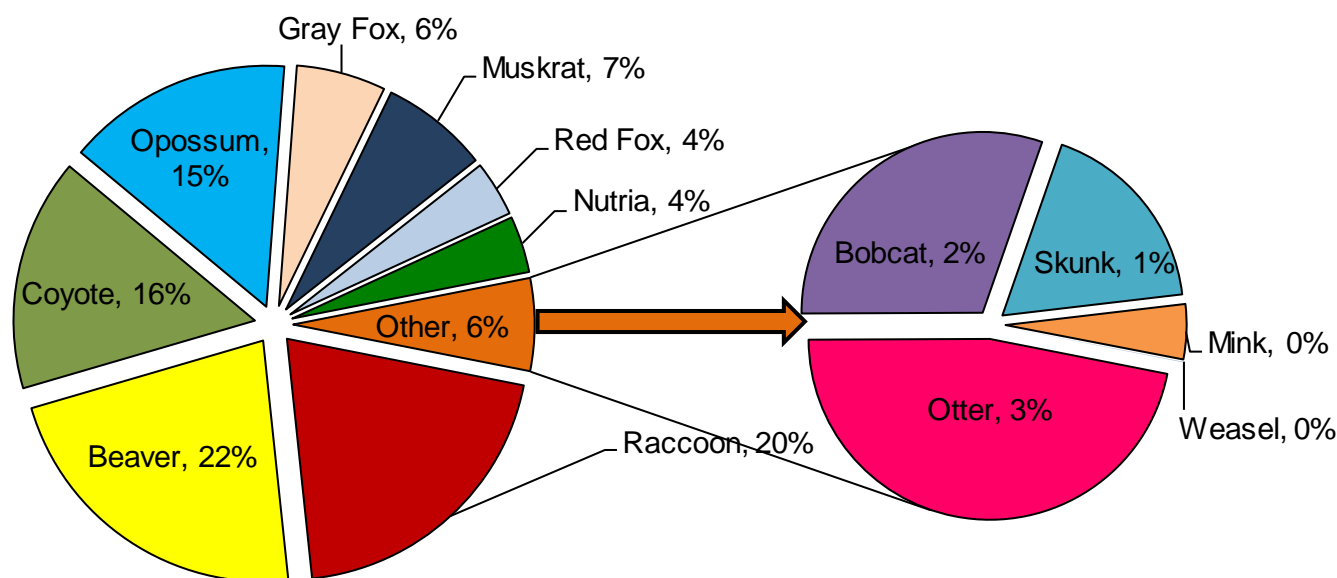
### Did you know?

- Trapping BMPs are recommendations, not laws. Each state fish and wildlife agency decides how BMPs are used in their trapper education programs.
- Data collected and used to develop BMPs are consistent with internationally-accepted scientific standards for the evaluation of trapping techniques and the welfare of animals captured in traps.

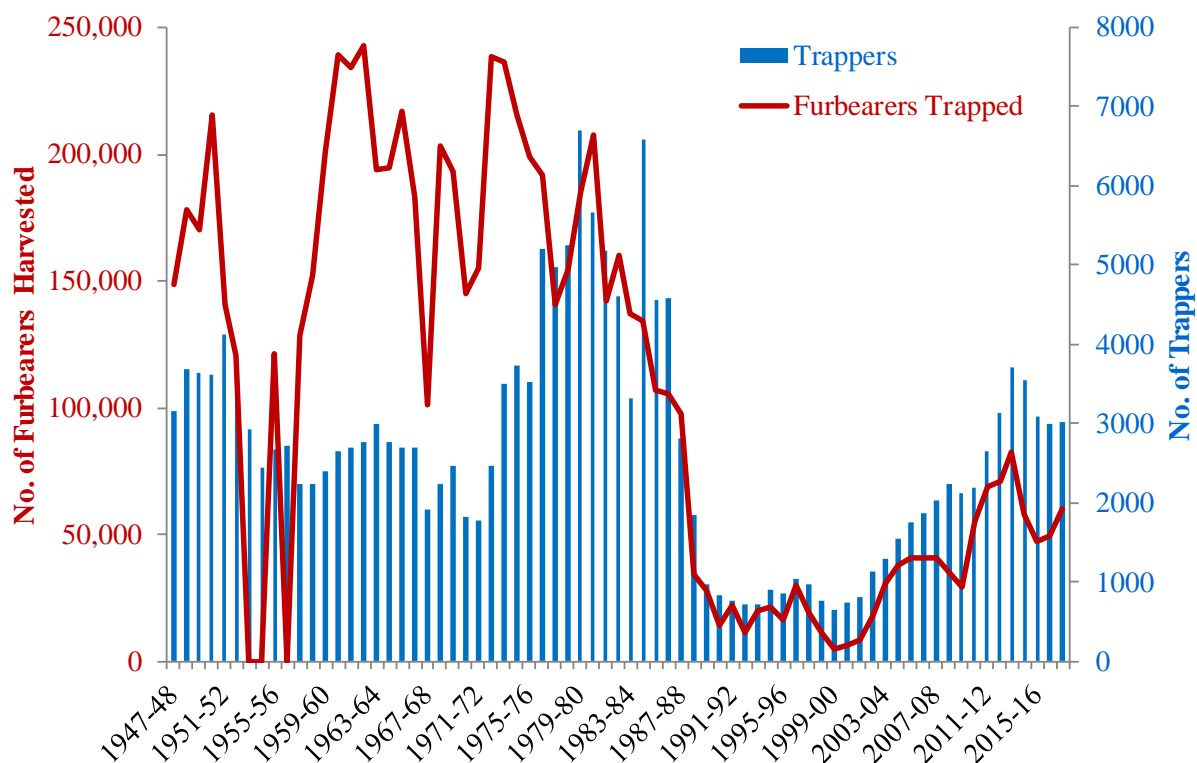
Trapping BMPs, combined with Trapper Education Programs, are intended to maintain the integrity of furbearer management programs throughout the nation and to sustain trapping methods now and in the future.



## Composition of the 2017-18 Furbearer Harvest



## Number of Licensed Trappers and Number of Harvested Furbearers



During the 2017-18 season, there were 3,006 licensed trappers, a 1% increase in license sales compared to the 2016-17 season. An estimated 60,019 furbearers were harvested, a 22% increase from the previous season. This was largely driven by increases in coyote, beaver, muskrat, and nutria harvest. Nutria harvest was largely incidental to beaver harvest.



## Muskrat Sex and Age Ratio

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. During the 2017-18 season, we sampled 1,407 muskrats, a decline from the 2016-17 season. We also collected muskrat samples from muskrat carcasses donated by trappers. Once we have funding, we will send these carcasses to a lab to test for toxins and diseases. Stay tuned!!

Ratio (n=1,407)	
Adult	0.80 male to female
Juvenile	2.27 male to female
Juvenile vs. Adult	1.15 juveniles to adults
Juvenile vs. Ad. Female	2.08 juv. to ad. female

Category	Ratios							
	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Adult Male/Female	1.5	3.64	1.11	1.91	1.34	1.11	1.22	0.80
Juvenile Male/Female	0.96	1.3	1.38	1.93	1.14	1.58	1.11	2.27
Juvenile/Adult	2.12	2.4	1.48	2.66	1.04	2.10	1.80	1.15
Juvenile/Adult Female	5.3	11.36	3.16	7.73	2.43	4.61	4.01	2.08
Sample size (n)	82	199	928	133	2,627	319	2,505	1,407

### Your Furbearer Team!

We are here to serve the wildlife resource and you! Please don't hesitate to contact us with questions, comments, or to participate in our cooperator programs!

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