

North Carolina Furbearer Management Newsletter



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.

Trapper Education Opportunities

Basic Trapper Education: The NCWRC, in cooperation with the North Carolina Trappers Association (NCTA), offers **free half-day** Basic Trapper Education Courses. Courses are offered throughout the year in several wildlife districts and are taught by volunteer instructors, therefore courses are based on instructor availability.



To find out if there is a course offered in your area, please visit www.ncwildlife.org/trapped

Check this website monthly, as new courses are added throughout the year, with most scheduled during the late spring and throughout summer.

Advanced Beaver Trapping Workshop: The North Carolina Trappers Association will be offering a hands-on beaver trapping workshop on November 16, 2019 on Alcoa Game Land. You will learn about:

- Beaver biology/behavior
- Traps/anchors/pan tension
- Trap set varieties
- Lures and baits
- Castor mound variations
- Weather and wind
- Understanding signs/habitats
- Crossover sets
- Snaring/cable restraints
- Beaver laws and regulations

This beaver trapping workshop qualifies as a recertification option for Wildlife Damage Control Agents!!

For more information, go to nctrapper.org and hover over the "Education" link in the top row, then select "Advance classes"

Or contact Todd Menke, NCTA Education Coordinator

E-mail: minkster1971@gmail.com

Phone: (919) 885-6187



2018 Trapper Instructor of the Year!

During the North Carolina Trappers Association Annual Convention in Smithfield, NC, the **NC Wildlife Resources Commission Furbearer Team** presented **Dwayne Robinson** with the “**Trapper Instructor of the Year**” award.

Dwayne organizes and conducts trapper educational courses in the Commission’s Wildlife District 8. Thanks in part to his efforts, there is not only an increased interest in trapping in the Mountain region, but these trappers are more skilled, responsible, and ethical. Thanks Dwayne!



Thank you to our 2018 Trapper Education Instructors!

The Basic Trapper Education Classes offered by the NCWRC, in cooperation with the NC Trappers Association, would not be possible without our volunteer force of Trapper Education Instructors.

We would like to recognize and thank those trapper education instructors that organized and taught a class during 2018.

Without the willingness and dedication of our volunteer instructors, we would not be able to offer these important trapping courses that help teach responsible, ethical and effective trapping. *Thank you instructors!*

2018 Trapper Education Instructors:

- David Allen
- David Denton
- Dan Hunt
- Todd Menke
- Jimmy Pierce
- Susan Pierce
- Dwayne Robinson



Trapper education instructors conduct the outside trapping demonstrations (e.g., raccoon, beaver, muskrat, otter, bobcat, fox, and/or coyote trapping) for the class.

We need you!! We would like to recruit more trapper education instructors, so if you are interested please contact us for information: casey.dukes@ncwildlife.org

The Wildlife Damage Control Agent (WDCA) Program

The WDCA program allows trained and certified individuals to issue wildlife depredation permits to landowners that experience property damage caused by wildlife.

Depredation permits are needed to trap and 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.



Photo Credit: AAAnimal Control

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.

The 2-day course is for the certification and re-certification of Wildlife Damage Control Agents (WDCA). There are now other options for re-certification (see below).

Course Location

Both courses listed below will be held at Bass Lake in Holly Springs, NC. Lodging is not included in the registration fee.

Contact us at 919-707-0061 to sign up!

Class Registration Deadline	Registration Fee	WDCA Class Date
May 15, 2019	\$175	May 29-30, 2019 (Wednesday-Thursday)
September 1, 2019	\$175	September 11-12, 2019 (Wednesday-Thursday)

WDCA Recertification Options

The NCWRC offers certified WDCAs alternative options to becoming recertified. See options below and check our website: ncwildlife.org/wdca and click "Classes and Certification" for more information.

NCWRC requires a minimum of 8 NWCOA Continuing Education Units (CEU) to count for recertification.

To qualify for recertification, you must complete one of the training options listed below during the 12 months prior to the expiration of your certification:

- National Wildlife Control Training Program (NWCTP)-NC Specific Online Recertification
- NCTA [Advance Hands-On Beaver Trapping](#) Workshop (8 CEUs; see page 1)
- NCTA [Advance Hands-On Wildlife Damage Management](#) Workshop (8 CEUs)
 - Hosted by McNeely Pest Control, Winston-Salem, NC
 - August 24th, 2019
 - For more information, e-mail Todd Menke at minkster1971@gmail.com
- NCWRC's 2-Day [WDCA Certification Training Course](#)

“Why can’t I trap foxes in my county?”

The answer is that our agency has **no** authority to allow fox trapping in a county.

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

In 2018, several more counties were opened to fox trapping.

There are now 51 counties with fox trapping seasons in North Carolina.

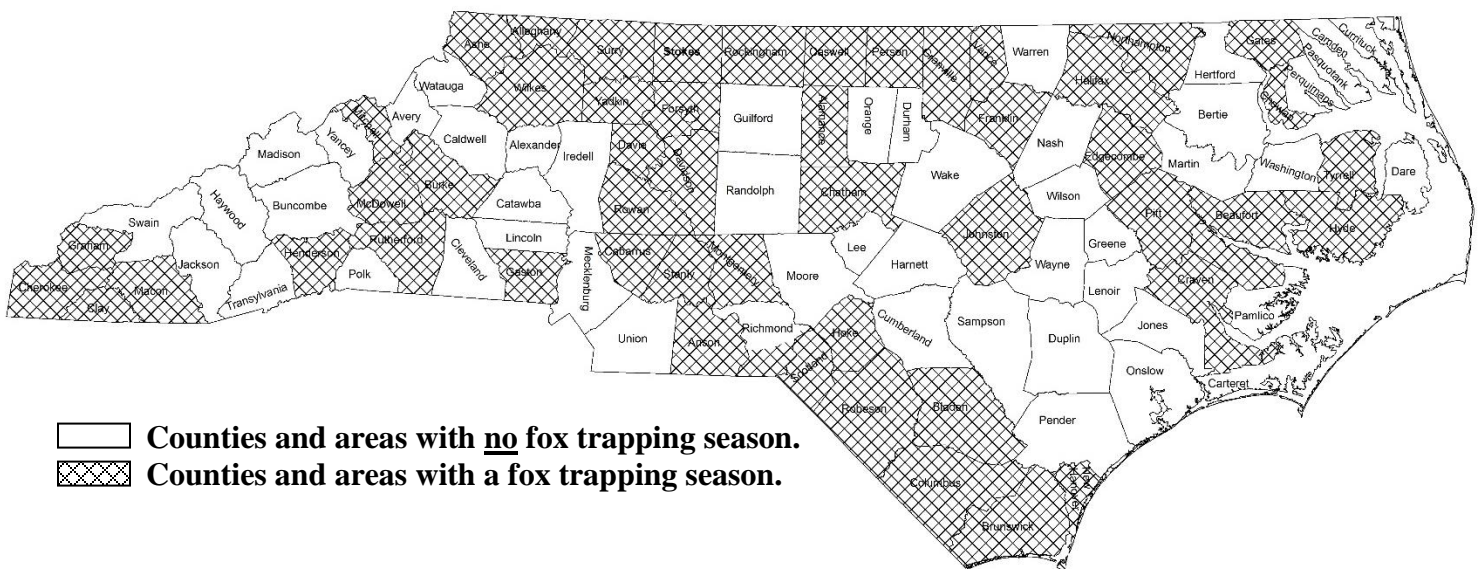


Please note that not all county fox trapping seasons are the same. There are 23 different fox trapping seasons within these 51 counties.

Outside these 51 counties, you cannot trap foxes and any fox captured must be released in the 49 counties without a season.

For information on current fox hunting and trapping seasons in North Carolina go to: <http://www.ncwildlife.org/foxseasons> and download our publication on fox hunting and trapping seasons.

Counties with Fox Trapping Seasons as of September 2018



Reminder about Tagging Changes

In February 2017, a regulation change was approved by the NCWRC that removed the regulation that prohibited any person from affixing an unused fur tag purchased in one season on a bobcat, otter or fox taken in a subsequent season.

Now, if you purchased too many fur tags, you can use those tags in the subsequent seasons. Fur tags will no longer have the year printed on the tag.



A person can tag bobcat, fox and otter up to 30 days after the close of the applicable season. No tags will be shipped from our agency to a person after 23 consecutive days from the close of the applicable season. After 23 days, you will have to pick up your tags at the NCWRC Headquarters in Raleigh, NC. To order your tags, call 888-248-6834.

Trapping Season Date Changes for the 2019-2020 season

In February 2019, a regulation change was approved by the NCWRC that extended the trapping season in Wildlife Districts 1 and 2 (those counties in and east of Hertford, Bertie, Martin, Pitt, Greene, Lenoir, Duplin, Pender and New Hanover counties) to start on Nov. 1 instead of Dec. 1.

This consolidated the two regional trapping seasons into one statewide trapping season and added an additional month of trapping for 24 counties. There is now one statewide uniform trapping season that starts on November 1 and closes at the end of February.

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!

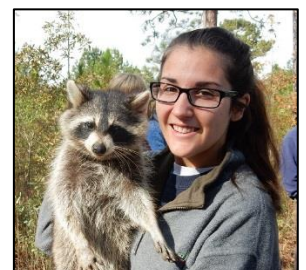


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Rabies Statistics

During 2018, positive rabies results were obtained from 141 raccoons, 56 skunks, 55 foxes, 2 bobcats, 3 coyote, 1 black bear, and 1 deer. The total number of terrestrial rabies cases (n=259) was a 23% increase from the number of cases detected during 2017 (n=211). The number of positive terrestrial rabies cases since 2005 remains below levels seen in the mid-1990's and mid-2000's (Figure 1). All but 3 western North Carolina counties have had positive terrestrial rabies cases at the end of the reporting period (Figure 2). Skunks and raccoons are the primary species of wildlife in which rabies is observed in North Carolina, excluding bats (Figure 3). During 2018, 62 out of 100 counties documented a positive terrestrial wildlife rabies case. Catawba and Iredell counties had the highest number of positive terrestrial rabies (n=14), followed by Wake County (n=13).

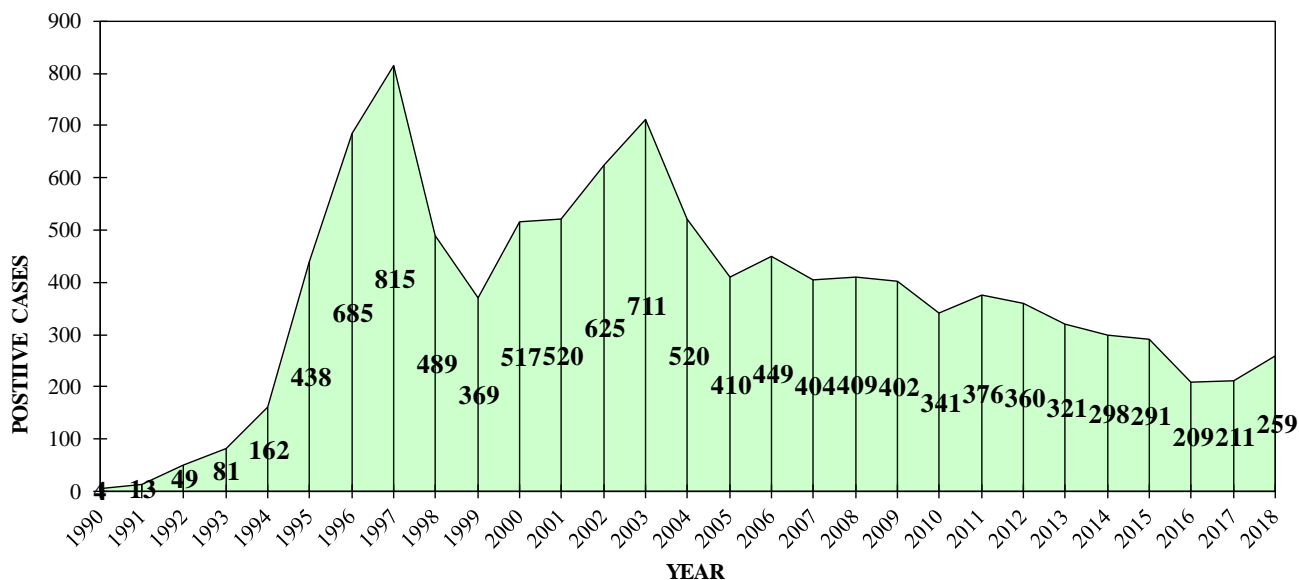


Figure 1. Positive terrestrial wildlife rabies cases from 1990 through 2018.

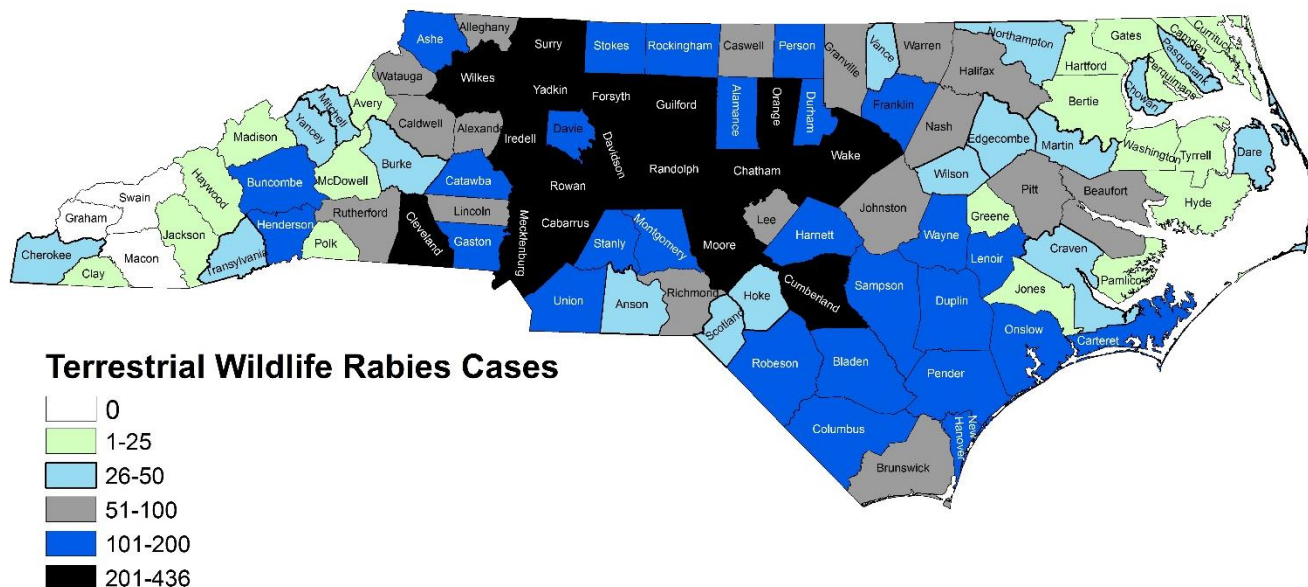


Figure 2. Number of positive rabies cases in terrestrial wildlife by county from 1990-2018. No positive terrestrial wildlife rabies cases in Graham, Macon and Swain counties.

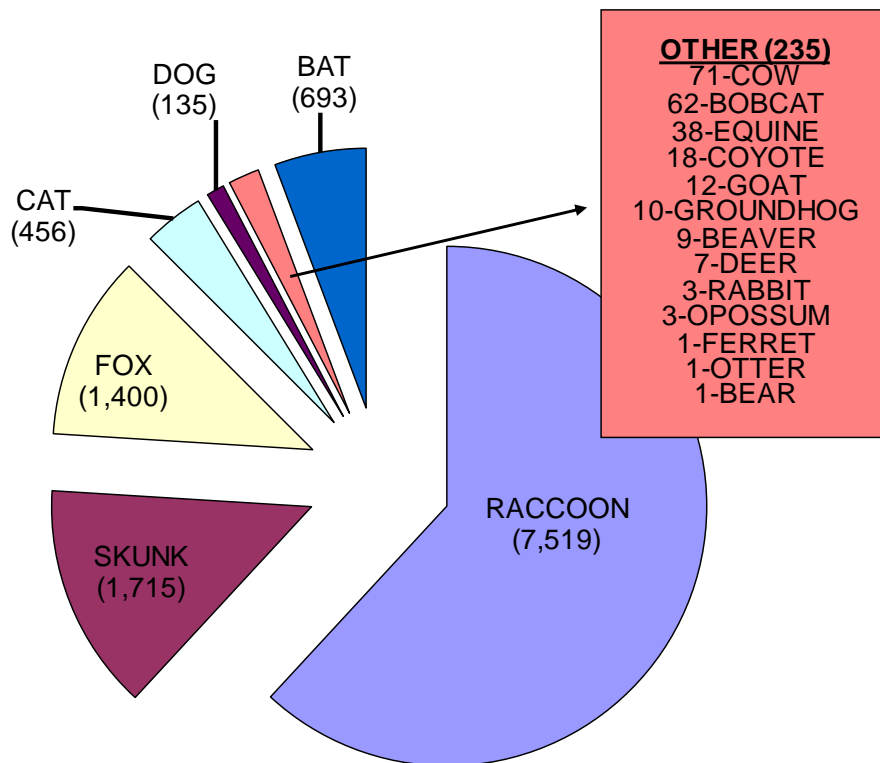


Figure 3. Number of positive rabies cases by species from 1990-2018.

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.



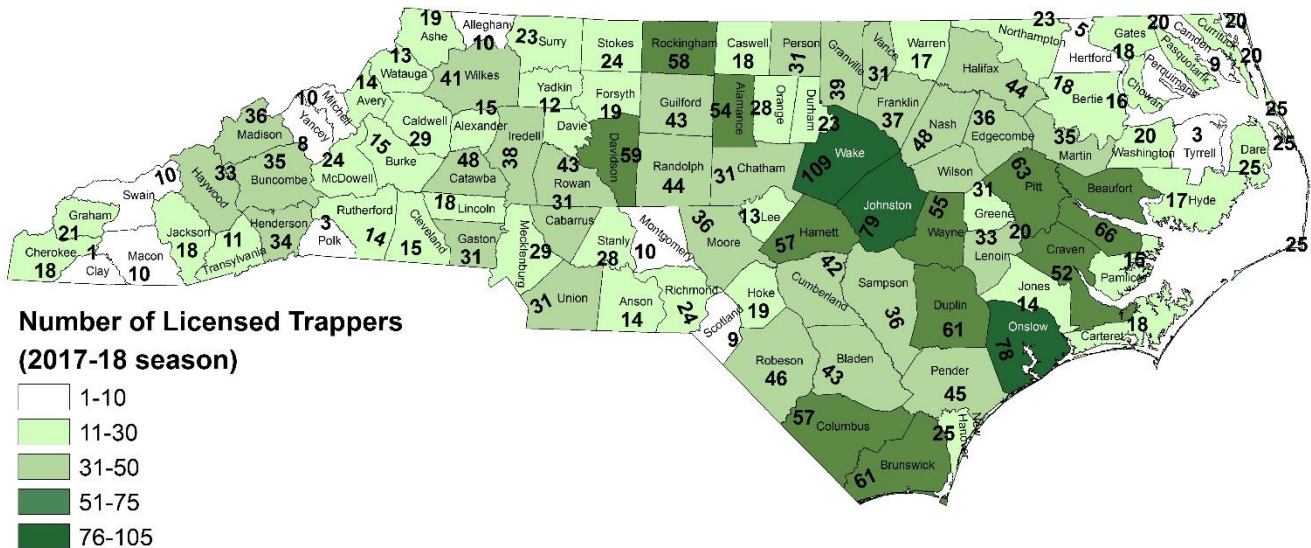
Please
return the
survey!

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.

2017-2018 Trapping License Sales

The map below shows the number of residents, by county, who purchased a trapping license for the 2017-2018 trapping season. The highest number of licensed trappers resided in Wake County (109 trappers), followed by Johnston (79 trappers) and Onslow (78 trappers) counties. The lowest number of licensed trappers resided in Clay County (1 trapper), followed by Tyrrell and Polk counties (3 trappers).

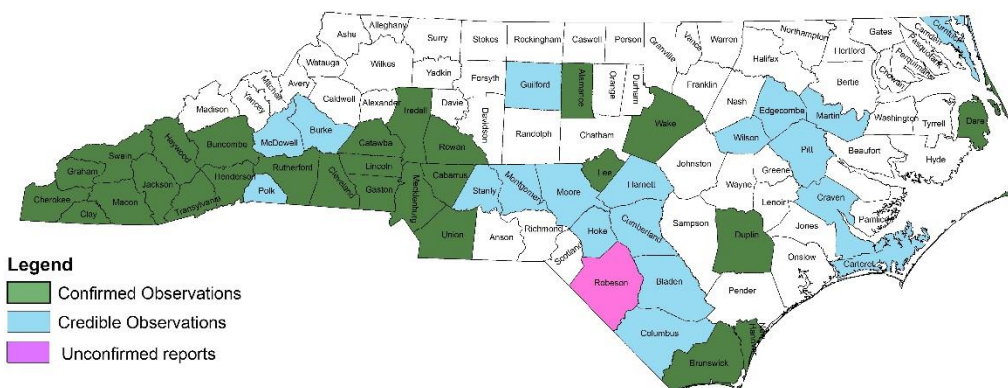


Creature Feature

In North Carolina, Nine-banded Armadillos are expanding their range, but they are still relatively uncommon. It is classified as nongame, with no closed hunting season or bag limit. It can be trapped during the regulated trapping season.



Their habitat needs are primarily dependent on precipitation levels and winter temperatures. Dry conditions are unsuitable, as invertebrates are their primary food source and depend on moist soils. Because they make burrows, armadillos prefer clay or sandy soils. They do not have fur or much body fat, so they are not adapted well to surviving long periods of freezing temperatures. As winter temperatures become milder in many eastern states, expect the armadillo to expand its range northward.



For more information on this species, including status and applicable regulations, visit ncwildlife.org/armadillo.

If you see an armadillo, please report it to 866-318-2401.

Voluntary Trapper Harvest Mail Survey Results

The response rate for the 2017-2018 mail survey was 49%, which was similar to the 2016-2017 survey year. During the 2017-18 trapping season, 51% of licensed trappers actively trapped during the season (Table 1). Reversing a 3-year trend, the number of licensed trappers increased 1% from the previous 2016-2017 trapping season (Table 1).

During the 2017-18 season, 51% of furbearers were harvested in the Coastal Plain Furbearer Management region, followed by the Piedmont and Mountain regions (Table 2). But a majority of coyotes and foxes are trapped in the Piedmont region (Table 2). The 2017-18 furbearer harvest level was 18% higher than that seen during the prior trapping season, driven by increases in beaver, muskrat, nutria, otter, coyote, and raccoon harvest (Table 3). Overall, pelt prices declined 17% from the 2016-17 season; prices are based on information from fur dealers and fur auctions. Bobcat pelts had the highest value, followed by otter pelts, but those values are approximately 50% to 70% lower than the peak that occurred during the 2012-13 trapping season. Skunk pelts have held their value for the past four trapping seasons (~\$3-\$5; Table 3). During the 2017-18 trapping season, raccoon and beaver were the most commonly trapped furbearers, followed by coyotes and opossums (Figure 4).

Table 1. Data from the trapper harvest mail survey, 2002-03 through 2017-18.

Survey Year	# of licensed trappers	Response Rate to Survey	% of Licensed Trappers that were active
2003-04	1,286	54%	51%
2004-05	1,547	50%	46%
2005-06	1,744	58%	44%
2006-07	1,867	63%	41%
2007-08	2,027	61%	40%
2008-09	2,233	59%	39%
2009-10	2,120	60%	48%
2010-11	2,186	57%	52%
2011-12	2,638	54%	52%
2012-13	3,125	54%	49%
2013-14	3,695	51%	52%
2014-15	3,547	48%	46%
2015-16	3,076	49%	43%
2016-17	2,983	48%	54%
2017-18	3,006	49%	51%

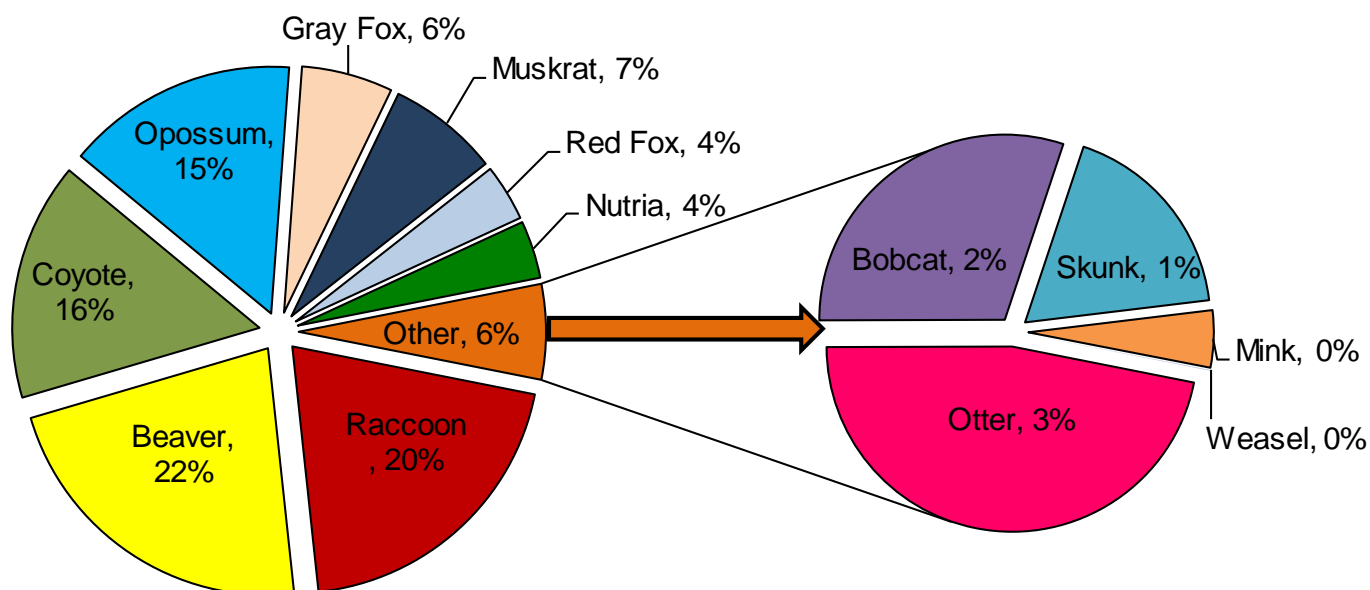















Figure 4. The wildlife species composition of the 2017-18 trapper harvest based on estimates from the voluntary trapper harvest survey.

Table 2. Estimated trapper harvest by furbearer management region from the 2017-18 trapping season, based on voluntary trapper harvest surveys.

Species	Coastal Plain	Piedmont	Mountain
Beaver	8,329	3,594	663
Bobcat	626	257	167
Coyote	3,630	4,052	1,209
All Fox	1,508	3,733	363
Gray Fox	990	2,331	139
Mink	68	46	64
Muskrat	1,451	1,104	548
Nutria	2,094	46	0
Raccoon	5,447	4,606	1,426
Red Fox	518	1,402	223
River Otter	1,080	485	98
Skunk	86	422	145
Virginia Opossum	4,004	3,251	1,325
Weasels	0	0	2
Total	28,323	21,596	5,709
% of regional harvest	51%	39%	10%

Table 3. Estimated trapper harvest from the 2014-15 trapping season through the 2017-18 trapping season, based on voluntary trapper harvest surveys.

2014-15			2015-16		2016-17		2017-18	
Species	Harvest	Prices	Harvest	Prices	Harvest	Prices	Harvest	Price
 Beaver	10,382	\$9.82	9,344	\$8.71	9,660	\$8.59	12,899	\$9.29
 Mink	237	\$8.06	161	\$6.45	166	\$7.95	181	\$5.24
 Muskrat	7,392	\$4.48	2,841	\$2.41	3,129	\$3.76	4,235	\$2.92
 Nutria	2,166	N/A	1,461	N/A	719	N/A	2,199	N/A
 Otter	2,102	\$35.07	1,254	\$19.08	1,450	\$29.26	1,702	\$20.78
 Bobcat	1,435	\$41.39	1,014	\$28.51	1,393	\$34.12	1,096	\$31.71
 Coyote	7,611	\$8.27	7,645	\$17.08	6,337	\$10.98	9,077	\$13.44
 Gray Fox	5,001	\$15.74	4,177	\$11.31	3,780	\$14.01	3,478	\$9.87
 Red Fox	1,658	\$15.70	2,041	\$9.14	1,929	\$12.04	2,165	\$6.35
 Opossum	6,423	\$1.49	7,149	\$0.15	8,759	\$0.99	8,829	\$1.00
 Raccoon	12,583	\$3.86	9,365	\$3.32	11,195	\$3.68	11,766	\$3.18
 Skunk	709	\$3.80	487	\$3.25	835	\$2.89	653	\$5.21
 Weasel	2	\$0.25	2	\$1.17	0	N/A	2	N/A
TOTAL	57,701		46,941		49,352		58,282	

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.

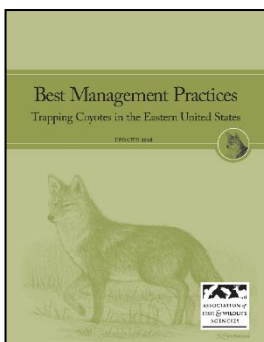
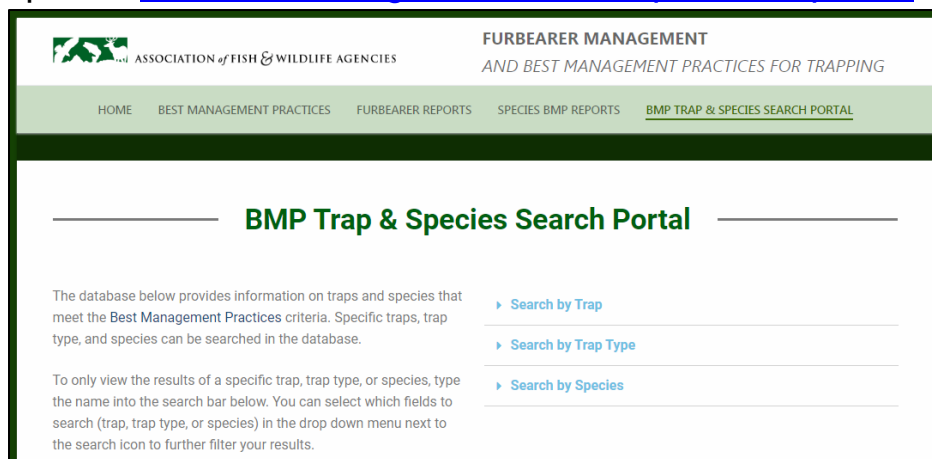


BMPs are intended to inform people about traps and trapping systems considered to be state-of-the-art in animal welfare, efficiency, selectivity, and practicality.

The trapping BMPs 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! BMP-approved traps have been tested to be effective, selective, efficient, practical and humane.

To learn more about Furbearer Management and trapping BMPs:
furbearermanagement.com

You can find out what traps are approved BMP traps at a new search portal: furbearermanagement.com/bmp-search-portal/



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.

Skulls and Carcasses Wanted



The N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission Furbearer Team is interested in collecting the following:

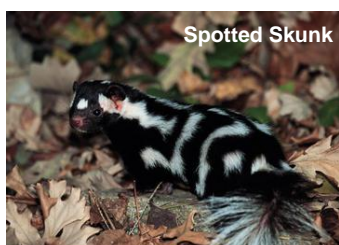
Bobcat Skulls or jawbones
Otter Skulls or jawbones
Spotted Skunk Carcasses

As in recent years, we'll collect bobcat and otter teeth to monitor the age structure of the harvest age structure. We will come to you to pick up the skulls or jawbones from you!

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

You will receive a furbearer cooperator patch and the ages of the furbearers you submit!

The main way to tell the difference between a Spotted Skunk and a Striped Skunk is that the head of the Striped Skunk possesses a white inverted triangular patch above the nose (see arrow in picture below).



Projects such as these are important, as they help us monitor populations and improve our knowledge of N.C. furbearers. We feel this information will help us maintain trapping for future generations! Thank you in advance!

Contacts for this project are:

Ashley Hobbs
(919) 698-4655

ashley.hobbs@ncwildlife.org

Casey Dukes
919-609-7226

casey.dukes@ncwildlife.org

North Carolina Hunter Harvest Survey

In addition to the survey we conduct of licensed trappers, the NCWRC conducts a mail survey of licensed hunters to estimate the numbers of hunters for specific game species, hunter effort and hunter harvest. As you can see in figure 5, hunters harvested more coyotes than trappers, but this was due to the high number of licensed hunters in North Carolina. Most of the coyotes harvested by hunters is incidental to deer hunting. Trappers are more efficient and effective at harvesting coyotes in comparison to hunters; during the 2017-18 season, for every 1.4 coyotes harvested by hunters, trappers harvested 10.3 coyotes (Figure 6). Figures 7 and 8 show the raccoon and bobcat harvest by both hunters and trappers. Figure 9 shows the harvest of foxes by hunters.

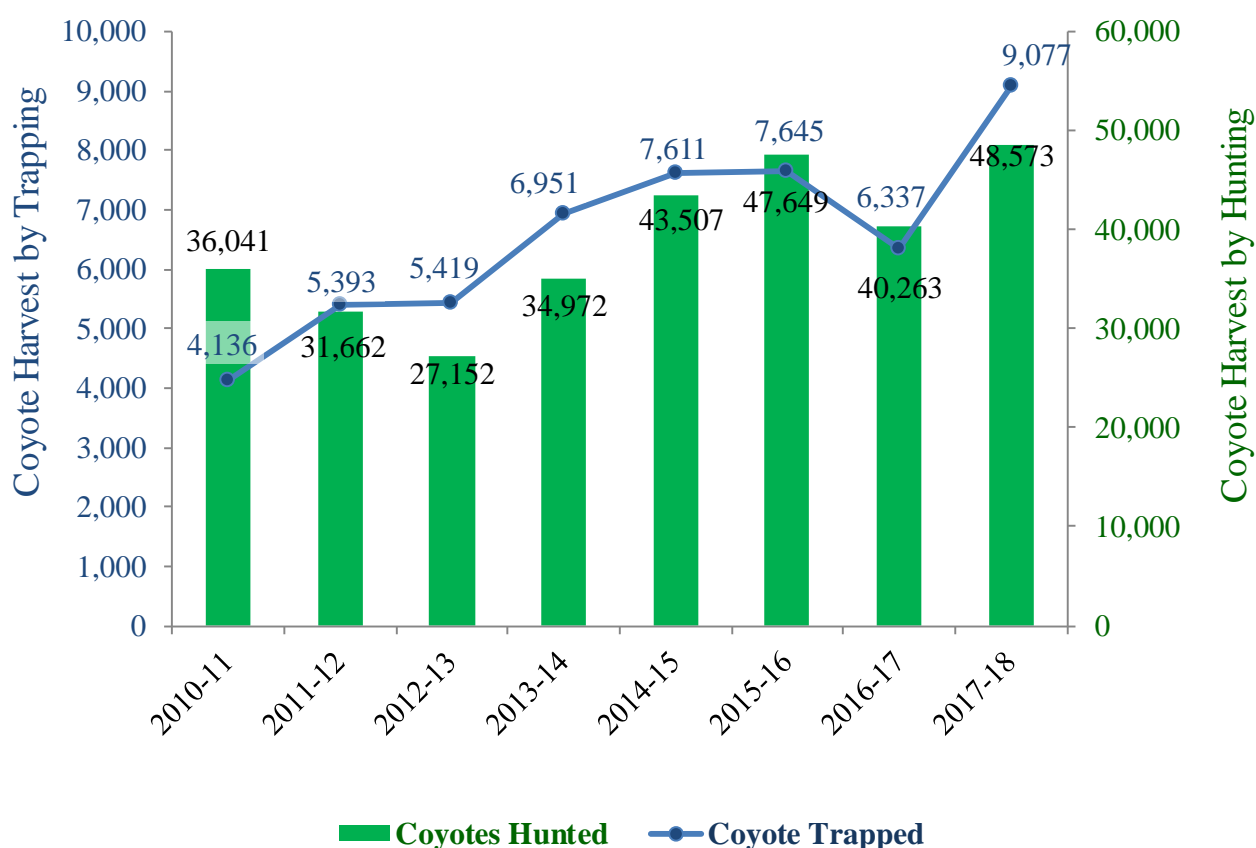


Figure 5. Estimated harvest of coyotes by hunters (green bars) and trappers (blue line).

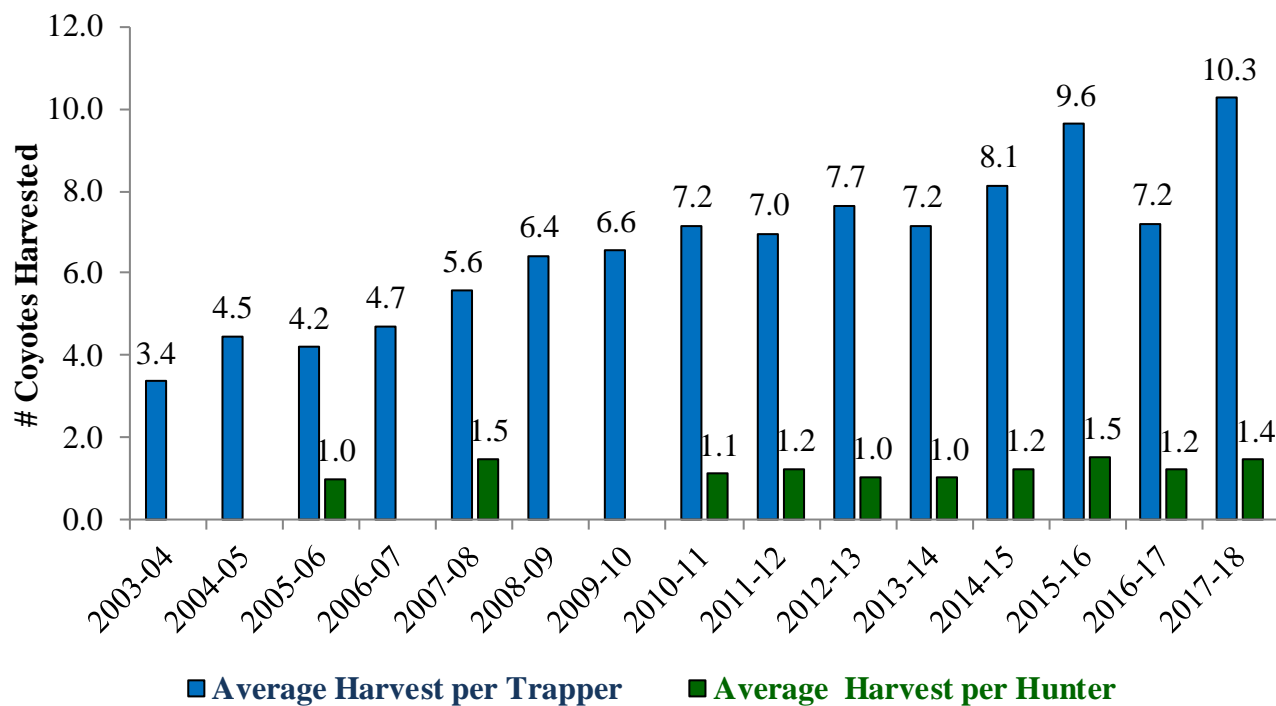


Figure 6. Average number of coyotes harvested by hunters (green bar) and by trappers (blue bar) from the 2003-04 season through the 2017-18 season.

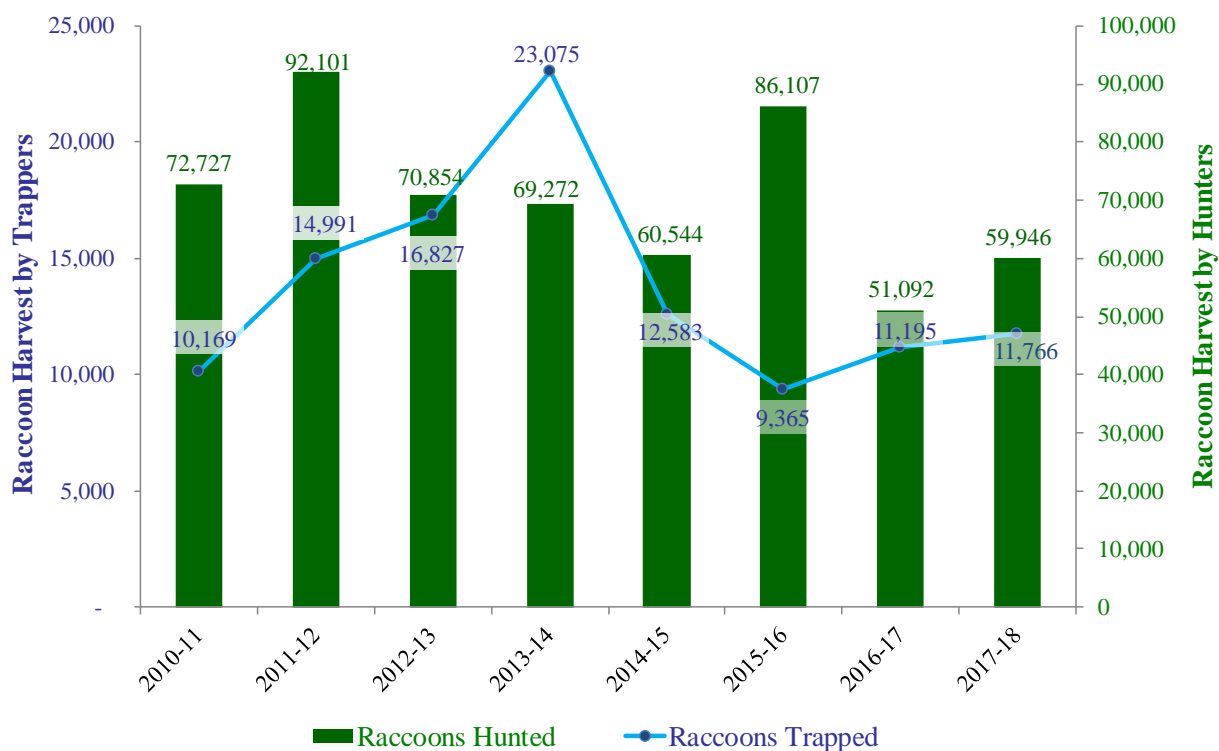


Figure 7. Estimated harvest of raccoons by hunters (green bars) and trappers (blue line) from the 2010-11 season through the 2017-18 season.

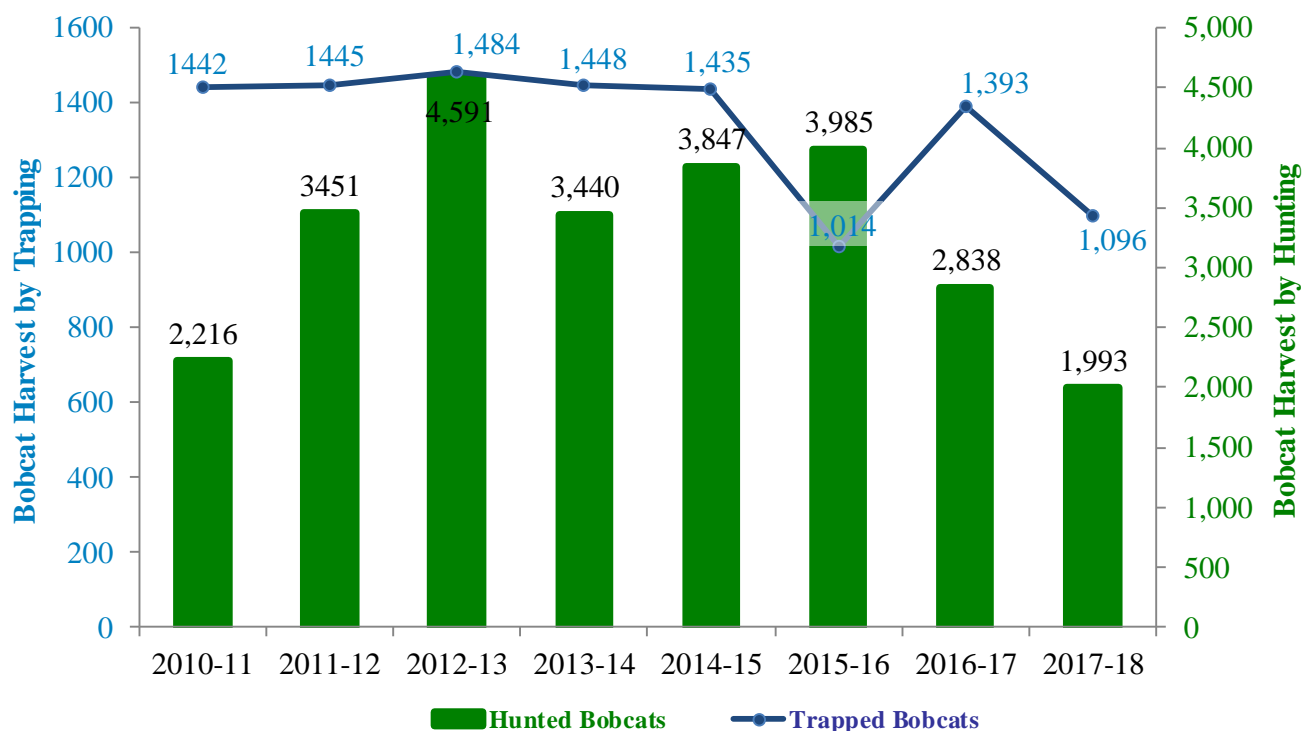


Figure 8. Estimated harvest of bobcats by hunters (green bars) and trappers (blue line) from the 2010-11 season through the 2017-18 season.

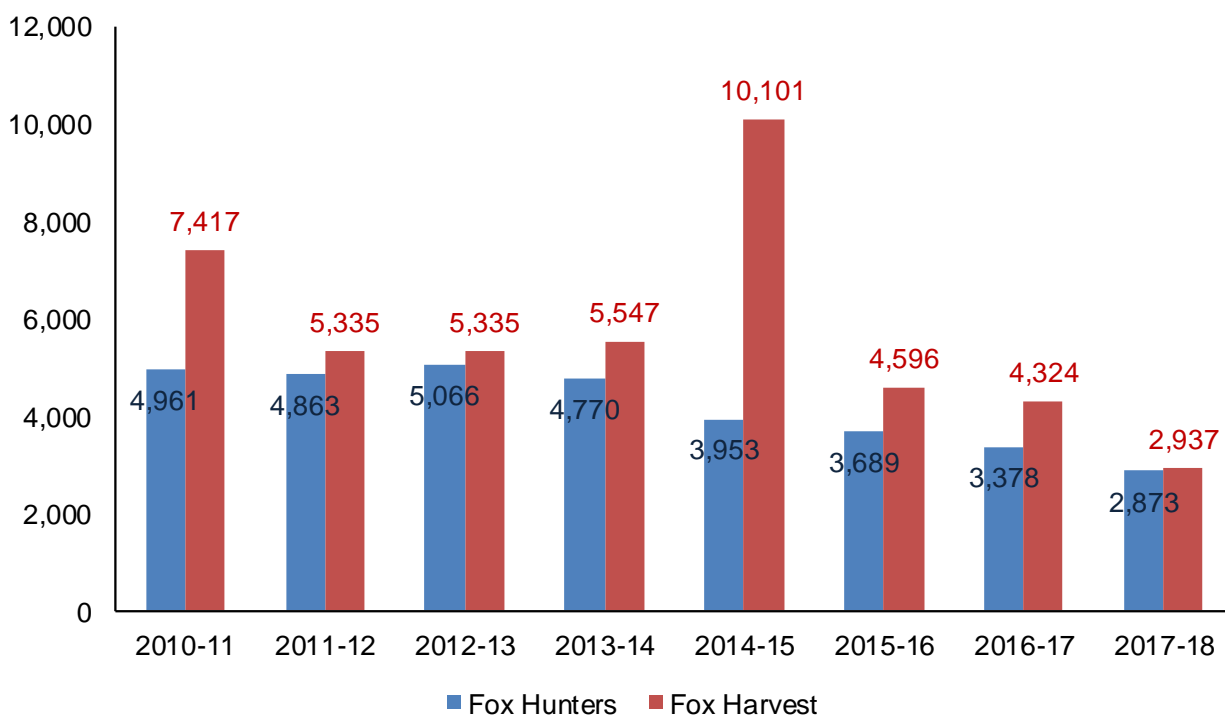


Figure 9. Estimated harvest of foxes (red bars) by hunters (blue bars) from the 2010-11 season through the 2017-18 season.