

Volume 6, Issue 1

Spring/Summer 2012

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.

Trapping information available on-line!

In an effort to better inform trappers, the NCWRC has a section on their website dedicated to trapping. The address is: <http://www.ncwildlife.org/Trapping.aspx>
On this web page you will find information on:

- Trapping Regulations and local laws on Foxes
- Trapper Education Opportunities
- Where you can sell your fur
- Surveys and Reports
- Furbearer Management and Furbearer Species Information
- Trapping Best Management Practices (BMPs)

Trapper Education Opportunities

The NC Wildlife Resources Commission (NCWRC) has started to offer free Trapper Education Courses. NCWRC plans to offer courses throughout the year in several wildlife districts.

For more information on future trapper education courses contact:

David Denton
Phone: (252) 482-7105
E-mail: d1huntersafety@inteliport.com



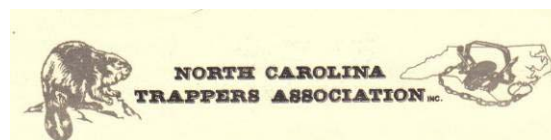
Or visit our website at: <http://www.ncwildlife.org/Trapping/LearnResources.aspx>
and click on "Trapper Education"

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

The North Carolina Trappers Association (NCTA) offers advanced trapper educational opportunities for both new and experienced trappers.

For more information contact:

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



Phone: (919) 528-9063

Frequently Asked Questions

❖ Why can't I trap foxes in my 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.
- The General Assembly has the authority to allow fox trapping in a county through local law.



❖ When will fox tagging requirements be removed?

- State law requires that foxes be tagged.
- If the General Assembly granted authority over foxes to the Wildlife Resources Commission, we could then remove tagging requirements.

❖ Can coyotes be trapped only where there is a local fox trapping season?

- Coyotes can be trapped during the furbearer trapping season (see page 3) 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.

❖ Can I sell live furbearers, such as bobcats and raccoons?

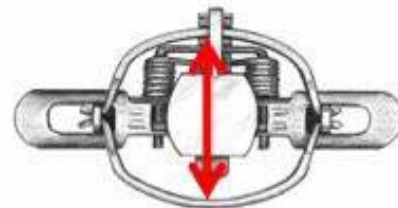
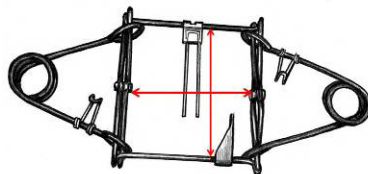
- No. The only wild animals that can be sold live are foxes and coyotes captured during the trapping season. You can only sell them to a licensed fox hunting preserve.



Jaw Spread and Trap Chain Measurement Guide

- 1) There are statewide restrictions on the size of trap that can be set on land and in the water. These restrictions are based on the jaw spread of the trap. To determine if your trap is of legal size, please use the measurement guide below:

Jaw spread is measured from the inside jaw to the opposite inside jaw of the trap (see pictures below).



- 2) If your trap chain does not have a shock-absorbing device (40 lbs. to 75 lbs. of pull), the trap chain cannot be longer than 8 inches.

To determine trap chain length:

Measure the trap chain/cable from the anchor point (ground level) to the base of the trap.

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.

Table 1. Data collected from river otters harvested by trappers from 2009 through 2011.

	2009-10	2010-11	Total
Otters Sampled	74	178	252
Females	20	65	85
Males	54	113	167
Average Weight* (lbs)	19.6	17.1	16.0
Avg. Nose→Rump length (inches)	26.5	27.3	26.2
Avg. Nose→Tail length (inches)	43	43.6	42.5
Average Age	2	2	2
Most common Age	1	0	1
Maximum Age	11	12	12
Percent Caught in December	9%	5%	6%
Percent Caught in January	34%	39%	35%
Percent Caught in February	57%	44%	46%

*Note: weights are of skinned carcasses, full weights will be slightly higher

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

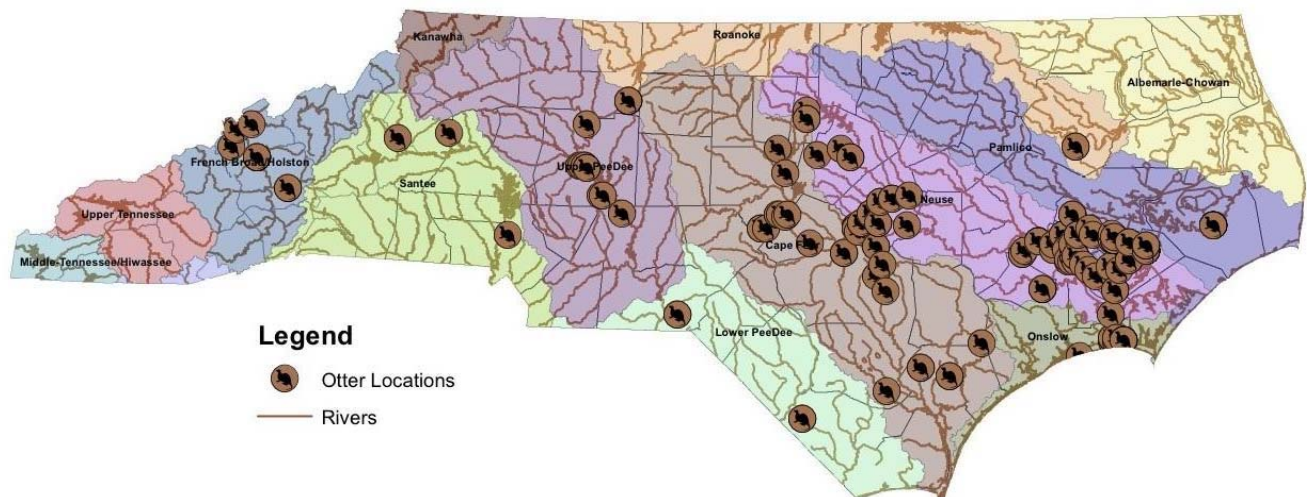


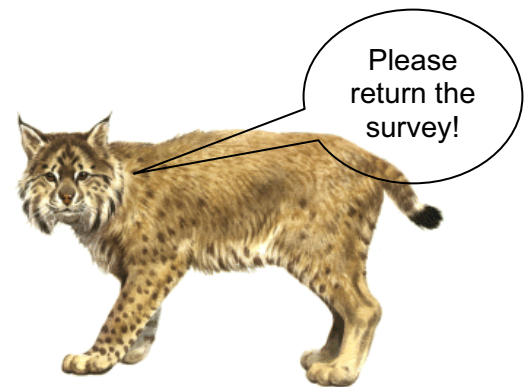
Figure 1. Otter capture locations from 2009 through 2011.

Monitoring Furbearer Populations

In order for the NCWRC to monitor the furbearer harvest, we have created an anonymous 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.



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.

Thank you for your participation!

Voluntary Trapper Harvest Mail Survey Results














The response rate for the 2010-2011 mail survey was 57%, of which 36% 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 2009-10.

Survey Year	# of licensed trappers	Response Rate	% respondents who did not trap
2002-03	1,138	39%	34%
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%

The 2010-11 furbearer harvest level was higher than that seen during the prior trapping season, primarily due to increased trapping activity and increased pelt prices. Except nutria, all furbearer species experienced increased in harvest, most notably muskrats. The table on the following page presents data obtained from the past six trapping seasons

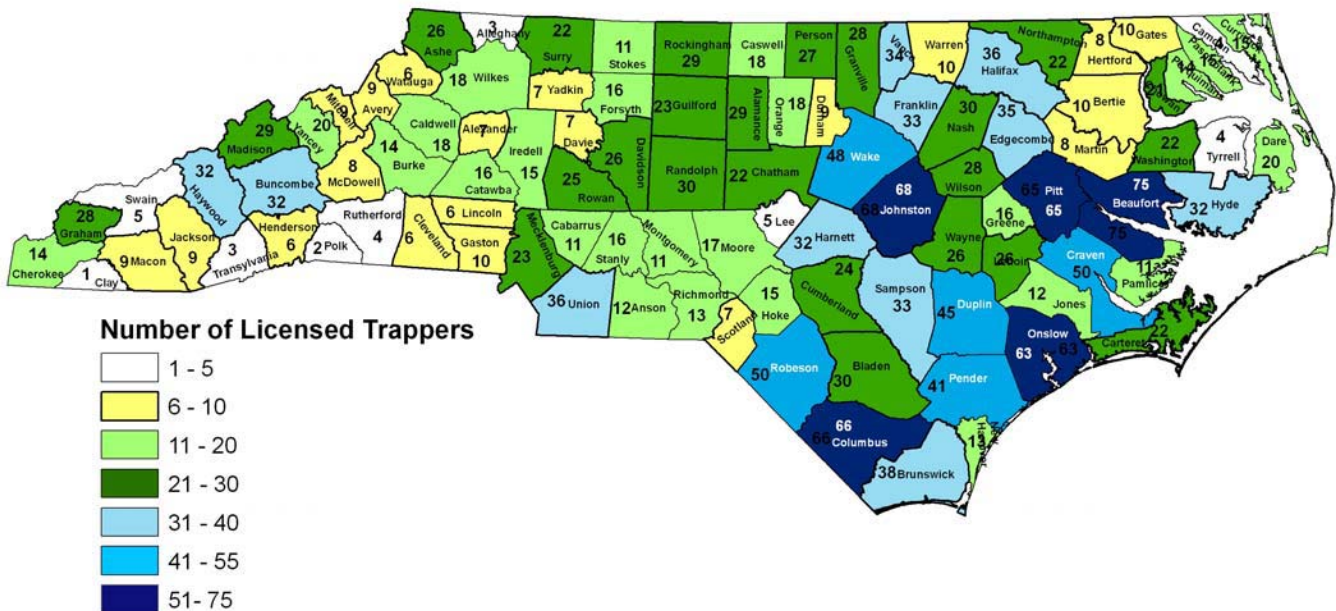
Table 2. Reported trapper harvest from the survey responses and average pelt prices derived from fur dealers and fur auction reports.

Species	2005-2006		2006-2007		2007-2008		2008-2009		2009-10		2010-11	
	Harvest	Prices	Harvest	Prices	Harvest	Prices	Harvest	Prices	Harvest	Prices	Harvest	Prices
 Beaver	13,097	\$7.00	11,458	\$11.00	9,919	\$16.25	8,370	\$8.80	7,335	\$8.39	9,389	\$13.45
 Mink	432	\$8.93	328	\$8.21	331	\$9.30	193	\$5.87	162	\$8.95	248	\$15.82
 Muskrat	6,440	\$2.45	7,412	\$3.77	3,543	\$3.15	2,724	\$2.45	1,960	\$4.42	4,229	\$9.87
 Nutria	3,115	\$1.25	3,720	N/A	2,436	\$2.13	2,173	\$0.61	1,510	N/A	1,224	\$1.50
 Otter	3,675	\$92.39	1,751	\$33.13	1,457	\$23.25	1,341	\$26.21	1,214	\$34.48	1,905	\$78.34
 Bobcat	690	\$20.14	791	\$23.43	1,045	\$28.12	993	\$19.01	775	\$22.14	993	\$50.90
 Coyote	567	\$12.25	847	\$11.00	1,434	\$18.12	1,747	\$8.94	2,092	\$7.45	2,843	\$11.37
 Gray Fox	2,392	\$10.00	3,020	\$25.83	5,560	\$26.46	4,212	\$16.00	3,194	\$13.53	3,995	\$15.70
 Red Fox	613	\$13.67	695	\$13.00	1,180	\$14.83	838	\$9.60	731	\$12.96	872	\$21.06
 Opossum	4,101	\$1.00	4,317	\$1.69	6,393	\$2.55	4,481	\$1.53	3,841	\$0.98	5,216	\$0.61
 Raccoon	5,281	\$5.00	5,967	\$6.56	6,712	\$10.75	7,307	\$5.73	5,011	\$6.23	7,568	\$6.90
 Skunk	172	\$2.00	186	N/A	641	N/A	354	\$2.77	324	\$1.11	411	\$1.04
 Weasel	33	\$1.00	33	N/A	0	\$6.12	0	N/A	1	\$1.50	25	N/A
TOTAL	40,608		40,525		40,651		34,733		28,148		38,918	

2010-2011 reported harvest from respondents to the voluntary trapper mail survey.

	Furbearer Management Region		
	Mountain	Piedmont	Coastal Plains
Beaver	651	2,879	5,740
Mink	70	57	119
Muskrat	796	1,017	2,400
Nutria	0	76	1,142
Otter	103	520	1,280
Bobcat	150	181	655
Coyote	603	1,108	1,100
Gray Fox	106	1,566	2,270
Red Fox	90	374	396
Opossum	422	1,351	3,425
Raccoon	1,131	2,498	3,897
Weasel	2	21	2
Skunk	119	235	53

Total number of North Carolina trapping licenses sold in each county for 2010-2011 trapping season.



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 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.

WDCA's are allowed to investigate the complaint, issue a depredation permit, and trap or remove the offending wildlife immediately.

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: AAAAnimal Control

Websites of interest

North Carolina Wildlife Resources
Commission

<http://www.ncwildlife.org/>

North Carolina Trappers Association

<http://www.nctrappers.com/>

Conserve Wildlife

<http://www.conservewildlife.org/>

Internet Center for Wildlife Damage
Management

<http://icwdm.org/>

Phone numbers of interest

Big Game Harvest Reporting

(800) I-GOT-ONE

(800) 446-8663

Violations Reporting

(800) 662-7137

Regulation Information

(919) 707-0030

License Information

(919) 707-0391

License Purchases by credit card

(888) 2HUNTFISH

(888) 248-6834

Wildlife Management Division

(919) 707-0050

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