



Welcome to the first edition of the North Carolina Furbearer Management Newsletter!

Inside this newsletter you will find information on furbearer management, furbearer harvest statistics and changes to regulations that take effect this upcoming 2007-08 furbearer harvest season.

Some of the information in this letter 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 monitor furbearer harvest levels and track trends in the population.

Regulations changes for the 2007-08 furbearer harvest season

- Areas in which raccoons can be trapped were expanded to include 18 new counties in western North Carolina. It is still unlawful to trap raccoons in and west of Madison, Buncombe, Henderson and Polk counties, which encompasses District 9.
- Specifications were created for shock-absorbing devices. These devices must be attached to trap chains that are 8 inches or longer from trap to the anchor of a steel-jaw or leghold trap on dry land. The shock-absorbing device should have at least 40 lbs. and not more than 75 lbs. of pull. A shock-absorbing device is not required if a drag is used instead of a solid anchor.

Additional "local fox laws" passed by the North Carolina General Assembly

During the most recent North Carolina General Assembly (NCGA) legislative session, three "local laws" were passed that allowed foxes to be taken by traps in 5 additional counties:

- Ashe
- Cumberland
- Harnett
- Johnston
- Moore

For more details on the activities allowed under these recently passed local laws, as well as a complete list of counties that have current statues that allow for the harvest of foxes by the NCGA, please see go to the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission website at: http://www.ncwildlife.org/pg02_Regs/fox_seasons.pdf

You can also request this document by contacting the NC Wildlife Resources Commission.

Proposed changes to trapping regulations for 2008-2009

Listed below are proposed changes to trapping and furbearer regulations. If these proposed changes are passed, they would take effect for the 2008-2009 trapping season.

➤ Proposed changes to 15A NCAC 10B .0302 (Open Seasons):

1. Consolidate the four regional trapping seasons into one statewide season, November 1 to the last day of February.
 - Changing this rule would simplify trapping regulations.
 - Creating a statewide trapping season would provide increased trapping opportunities; each region in North Carolina would have additional days added to their existing season.
 - The start date of the proposed statewide trapping season would be consistent with the start date of the beaver trapping season.
 - The proposed statewide trapping season would provide expanded opportunities to trap coyotes.
 - Furbearer populations are abundant throughout North Carolina; therefore there are no biological concerns that the new season would negatively impact furbearer populations.
2. Remove the restriction on trapping and taking otters in areas north of US 64/264 on Roanoke Island.
 - Removing this restriction would simplify trapping regulations.
 - There is no biological justification for restricting the taking of otters in this area.
 - The otter population would not be negatively impacted by removing this restriction.
3. Remove the restriction on setting steel traps on upland terrain for muskrat and mink in portions of District 7, District 8 and District 9.
 - Removing this rule would improve on regulation simplicity.

➤ Proposed change to 15A NCAC .0303 (Bag Limits)

1. Remove possession and season bag limits for trapping raccoons.
 - Except for river otter in recently opened areas in western NC, no other furbearer has season bag limits.
 - Season bag limits are unnecessary because harvest is self-regulating since trapping success is dependent on species abundance and behavior and the ability of the trapper.
 - Season bag limits are difficult, if not impossible, to enforce.
 - Removing the season bag limits will simplify trapping regulations.

➤ Proposed change to 15A NCAC 10B .0404 (Trappers and Hunters)

1. Clarify that trappers need to obtain tags for fox, bobcat and otter before leaving North Carolina.
 - The current text is unclear and has caused some enforcement problems. Adding the words "North Carolina" removes any doubt as to the intention of the Rule.

➤ Proposed change to 15A NCAC 10B. 0205 (Raccoon and Opossum)

1. Remove the possession and season bag limit on the taking of raccoons by weapon. The daily bag limit would be 3 raccoons.
 - Season bag limits are unnecessary because harvest is self-regulating since hunting success is dependent on species abundance and behavior and the ability of the hunter.
 - Season bag limits are difficult, if not impossible, to enforce.
 - The best way to manage raccoon populations is through season lengths and enforceable daily limits.

Public Hearing Dates and Locations

HEARING TIME: 7:00 p.m.

To identify your district, please see next page for map of North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission Districts and Regions.

Date	District	Town	Location
January 3, 2008 (Thursday)	--	Raleigh	Centennial Campus Center for Wildlife Education
January 7, 2008 (Monday)	4	Elizabethtown	Courthouse
January 9, 2008 (Wednesday)	5	Graham	Courthouse
January 10, 2008 (Thursday)	6	Norwood	South Stanly High School
January 15, 2008 (Tuesday)	8	Morganton	Municipal Auditorium
January 16, 2008 (Wednesday)	9	Sylva	Southwestern Community College
January 17, 2008 (Thursday)	7	Boonville	Starmount High School
January 22, 2008 (Tuesday)	1	Edenton	Swain Auditorium
January 23, 2008 (Wednesday)	2	New Bern	Courthouse
January 24, 2008 (Thursday)	3	Louisburg	Annex Building, District Courthouse

North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission District Boundaries



North Carolina Trapping Seasons

*Beaver trapping is open statewide Nov. 1 – Mar. 31

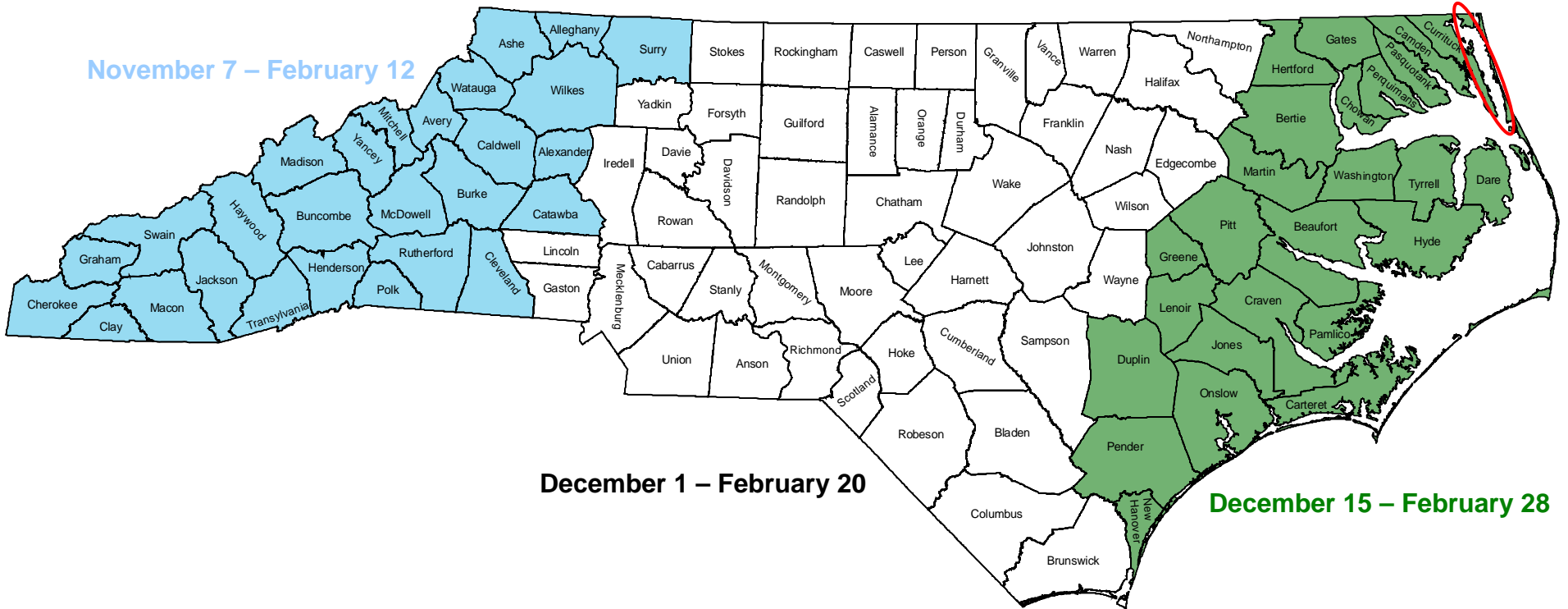
December 15 – March 12*

*In marshes adjoining Currituck Sound

November 7 – February 12

December 1 – February 20

December 15 – February 28



Season Results from 2006-2007 Furbearer Harvest Season

Information on the harvest of furbearer species taken during the 2006-07 season comes from the voluntary mail survey of licensed trappers and information provided by licensed fur dealers.

2006-2007 Furbearer Harvest, Average Pelt Prices and Value				
Species	Harvest 2006-07	% change in harvest from 2005-06 season	Average Pelt Price	Value of 2006-07 season
Beaver	11,458	-13%	\$11.00	\$126,038
Mink	328	-24%	\$8.21	\$2,693
Muskrat	7,412	+15%	\$3.77	\$27,943
Nutria	3,720	+19%	N/A	N/A
Otter	1,751	-52%	\$33.13	\$58,011
Bobcat	791	+15%	\$23.43	\$18,533
Coyote	847	+49%	\$11.00	\$9,317
Gray Fox	3,020	+26%	\$25.83	\$78,007
Red Fox	695	+13%	\$13.00	\$9,035
Opossum	4,317	+5%	\$1.69	\$7,296
Raccoon	5,967	+13%	\$6.56	\$39,144
Skunk	186	+8%	N/A	N/A
Weasel	33	0%	N/A	N/A
TOTALS	40,525	0%	--	\$376,016

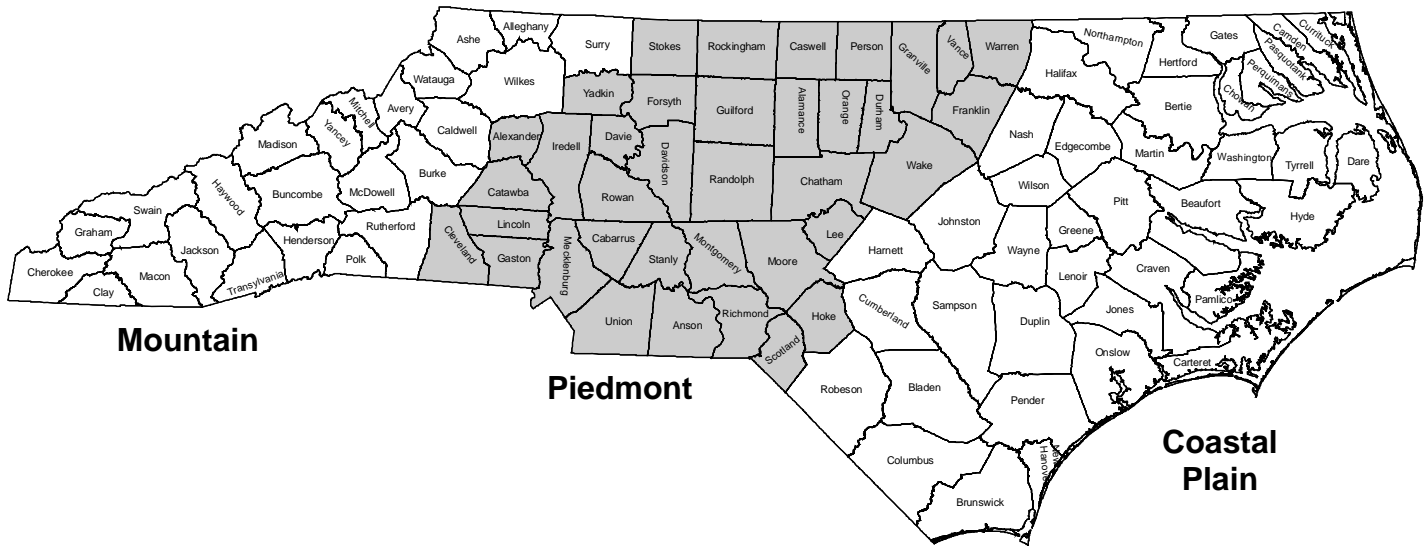
Fur prices: All North Carolina licensed fur dealers were contacted to solicit average pelt prices paid to fur harvesters. River otter pelt prices declined 64% from the prior year, while gray fox pelt prices increased 158%. Beaver, bobcat, muskrat, opossum and raccoon all experienced slight increases in pelt value, while coyote, red fox, and mink experienced slight decreases in value. There was a 22% decline in the total number of pelts reported sold to licensed fur dealers in comparison to the 2005-06 furbearer harvest season.

Fur harvest: The decline in otter pelt value was reflected in the harvest; there was a decline in the number of otters reportedly harvested in the trapper mail survey and in the number of otters sold to fur dealers. This decreased effort to harvest otters resulted in a slight decrease in the number of beaver harvested. Total furbearer harvest numbers from 2002 through 2007, based on information from voluntary trapper mail survey and licensed fur dealer transaction reports, can be seen on page 5.

Voluntary trapper mail survey: Since the 2002-2003 trapping season, a voluntary trapper mail harvest survey has been sent to all licensed trappers to obtain estimates of total statewide furbearer harvest by species. The reported harvest by trappers has ranged 2.6 to 3.8 times higher than the number of furbearers purchased by licensed fur dealers. These surveys ask for harvest, the number of days trapped and the number of

traps set per day; this information is then used to calculate annual catch-per-unit effort for each species. The response rate for the 2006-2007 mail survey was 58%, of which 27% of respondents did not trap. The total reported harvest by furbearer management zone is shown below.

Map of Furbearer Management Regions



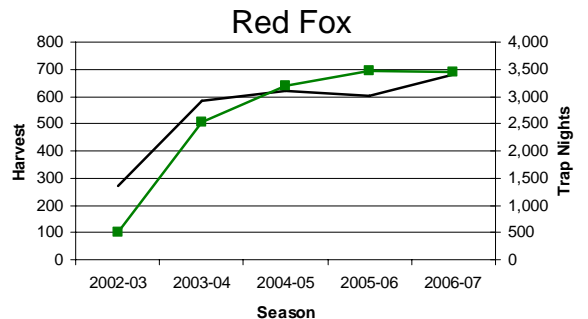
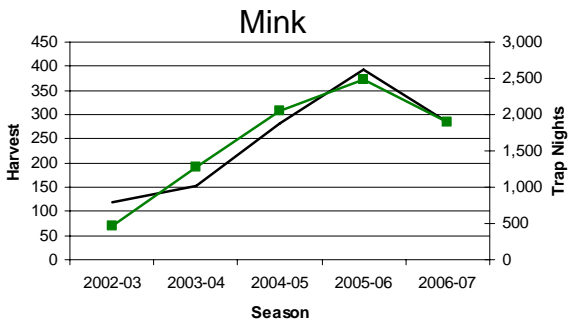
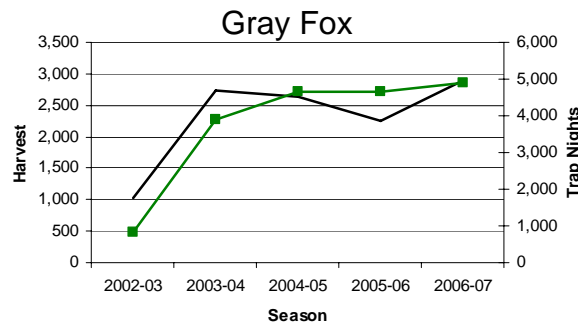
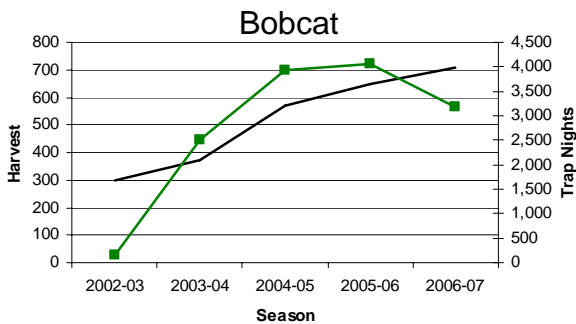
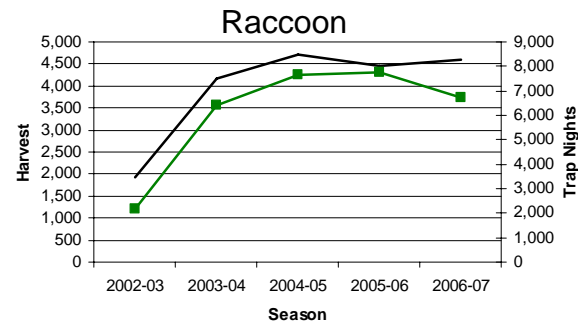
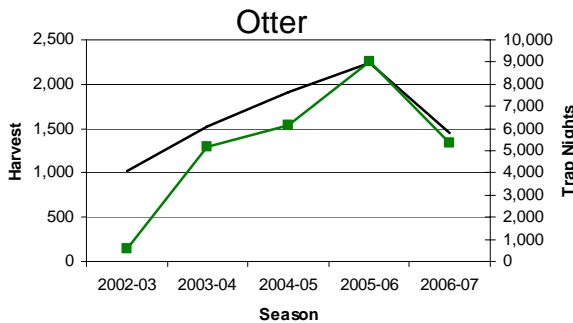
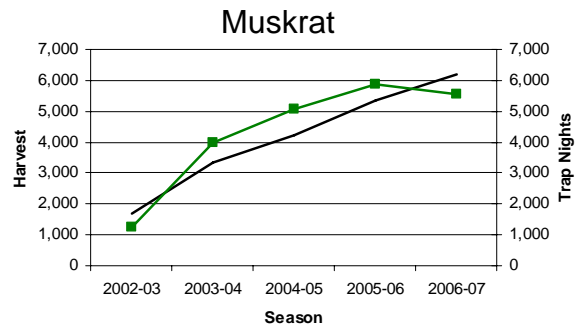
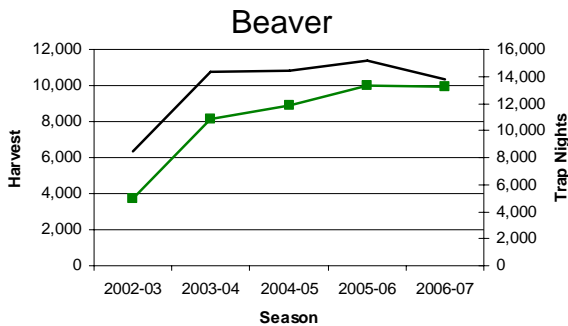
2006-2007 Total Reported Harvest from Respondents to the Voluntary Trapper Mail Survey.

	Furbearer Management Region		
	Mountain	Piedmont	Coastal Plain
Beaver	297	3,043	6,980
Mink	80	12	160
Muskrat	575	1,511	4,108
Nutria	0	83	3,624
Otter	54	359	1,047
Bobcat	71	105	533
Coyote	174	333	329
Gray Fox	56	1,319	1,523
Red Fox	27	364	293
Opossum	131	887	3,268
Raccoon	170	1,328	3,101
Weasel	0	4	5
Skunk	17	149	17
# Trappers	90	374	537

Harvest Seasons										
	2002-2003		2003-2004		2004-2005		2005-2006		2006-2007	
	Harvest	Prices	Harvest	Prices	Harvest	Prices	Harvest	Prices	Harvest	Prices
 Beaver	7,209	\$6.50	11,531	\$8.75	11,968	\$8.13	13,097	\$7.00	11,458	\$11.00
 Mink	133	\$6.95	181	\$7.37	327	\$7.09	432	\$8.93	328	\$8.21
 Muskrat	2,198	\$2.52	3,972	\$2.36	5,722	\$2.34	6,440	\$2.45	7,412	\$3.77
 Nutria	914	\$1.00	1,090	\$2.17	1,867	\$2.25	3,115	\$1.25	3,720	N/A
 Otter	1,974	\$73.13	2,235	\$85.40	3,104	\$83.75	3,675	\$92.39	1,751	\$33.13
 Bobcat	349	\$13.00	440	\$24.60	678	\$18.50	690	\$20.14	791	\$23.43
 Coyote	133	N/A	325	N/A	593	N/A	567	\$12.25	847	\$11.00
 Gray Fox	1,078	\$6.00	2,831	\$13.30	2,770	\$10.00	2,392	\$10.00	3,020	\$25.83
 Red Fox	287	\$12.50	587	\$16.20	631	\$13.00	613	\$13.67	695	\$13.00
 Opossum	1,440	\$1.75	2,371	\$1.00	3,457	\$1.00	4,101	\$1.00	4,317	\$1.69
 Raccoon	2,777	\$5.76	5,103	\$5.65	6,156	\$5.96	5,281	\$5.00	5,967	\$6.56
 Skunk	58	\$1.50	N/A	\$1.00	226	\$1.00	172	\$2.00	186	N/A
 Weasel	5	\$1.00	11	\$1.00	13	\$1.00	33	\$1.00	33	N/A
TOTAL	18,555		30,677		37,512		40,608		40,525	

Trapper Effort

As mentioned earlier, we are able to monitor trapper effort (# traps x # trap nights) from information provided by licensed trappers through the voluntary mail survey. Below are results for selected species.



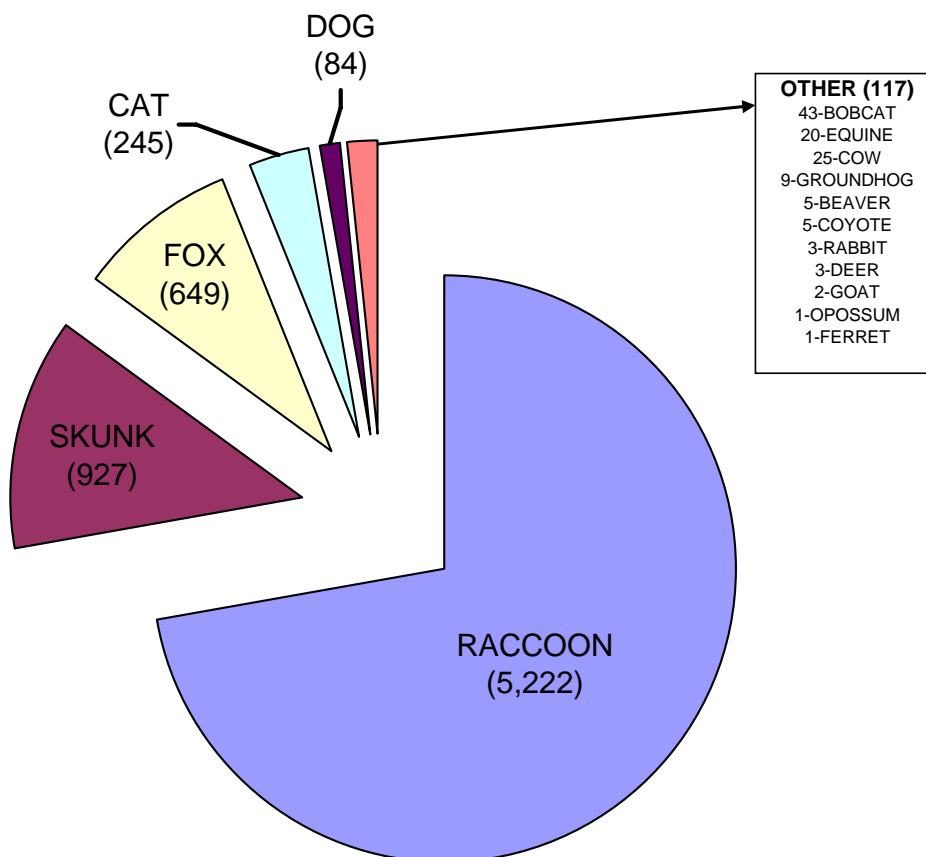
Rabies information

North Carolina continues to experience outbreaks of rabies in terrestrial wildlife populations. During 2006, positive results were obtained from 298 raccoons, 91 skunks, 50 foxes, 5 bobcats, 3 groundhogs, and 2 coyote from 73 North Carolina counties during the reporting period. The total number of rabies cases, not including bats or domestic animals, increased from 410 cases detected in 2005 to 449 cases detected during 2006.

Rabies cases do not always show up uniformly across the state from year to year; often, in any given year, several counties will report a greater number of rabies cases than other counties. This gives the impression that rabies is only in certain regions of the state. There are several reasons for these yearly “hotspots”: 1) The cycling of rabies in the wild animal population. 2) The number of animals submitted by each county. 3) The selective submission of animals more likely to be infected. 4) The human population of the county; more densely populated areas are more likely to encounter a sick-acting animal.

All but 3 western North Carolina counties have had positive terrestrial rabies cases at the end of 2006. Skunks and raccoons are the primary species of wildlife in which rabies is observed in North Carolina, excluding bats.

SPECIES COMPOSITION OF NORTH CAROLINA RABIES CASES,
EXCLUDING BATS
1990-2006



Websites of interest

North Carolina Wildlife Resources
Commission
<http://www.ncwildlife.org/>

North Carolina Trappers Association
<http://www.nctrappers.com/>

National Trappers Association
<http://www.nationaltrappers.com/>

Association of Fish and Wildlife
Agencies Furbearer Resources
<http://www.fishwildlife.org/furbearer.html>

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

Furbearers Unlimited
<http://www.furbearers.org/>

Fur Takers of America
<http://www.furtakersofamerica.com/>

Internet Center for Wildlife Damage
Management
<http://icwdm.org/>

N.C. Department of Health and Human
Services Rabies Information
<http://www.epi.state.nc.us/epi/vet.html>

Southeast Cooperative Wildlife Disease
Study
<http://www.scwds.org/>

Phone numbers of interest

Big Game Harvest Reporting
(800) I-GOT-ONE
(800) 446-8663

Violations Reporting
(800) 662-7137
(919) 707-0040 (in Raleigh area)
(800)662-7137 (TTY machine for people
with hearing disabilities)

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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