

# 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



The North Carolina Trappers Association (NCTA), in cooperation with the NCWRC, offers a free 1-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.

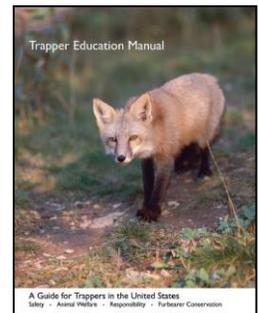


To find out if there is a course offered in your area, please visit [www.ncwildlife.org/trapped](http://www.ncwildlife.org/trapped)

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

For more information on trapper education courses contact:  
Todd Menke, NCTA Education Coordinator  
E-mail: [minkster1971@gmail.com](mailto:minkster1971@gmail.com)  
Phone: (919) 885-6187

\*\*You can also download a [Trapper Educational Manual](http://www.ncwildlife.org/trapped) at:  
[www.ncwildlife.org/trapped](http://www.ncwildlife.org/trapped)



## Advanced Beaver Trapping Workshop

The North Carolina Trappers Association will be offering hands-on beaver trapping workshops this fall! You will learn about:

- Beaver biology/behavior
- Traps/anchors/pan tension
- Castor mound variations
- Crossover sets
- Snares and cable restraints
- Blind/multiple sets
- Lures and baits
- Weather and wind
- Understanding signs/habitats
- Beaver laws and regulations

For more information, go to [nctrapper.org](http://nctrapper.org) and hover over the "Education" link in the top row, then select "Advance Beaver Trapping Workshops"

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



## 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 course is for the certification and re-certification of Wildlife Damage Control Agents (WDCA). The course is filled on a first come, first serve basis.

### **Course Location**

The course 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	Cost	WDCA Class Date
June 1, 2017	\$175	June 14-15, 2017 (Wednesday-Thursday)
September 1, 2017	\$175	September 13-14, 2017 (Wednesday-Thursday)

### New WDCA Recertification Options!!

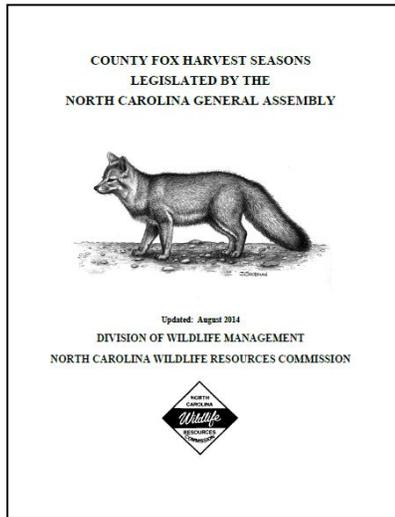
The NCWRC now offers certified WDCAs alternative options to becoming recertified! See options below and check our website: [ncwildlife.org/wdca](http://ncwildlife.org/wdca) and click "Classes and Certification" for more information.

*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 Operators Association (NWCOA, [nwcoa.com](http://nwcoa.com)) Training Courses (only need one of the following):
  1. Basic Operator Training Course (16 CEUs)
  2. Species-Specific - Bats Standards Compliant (8 CEU's)
  3. Species-Specific - Bird Barrier Certification (8 CEU's)
  4. NWCOA & NPMA Wildlife Expo (up to 10 CEU's)
- NCTA Advance Hands-On Beaver Trapping Workshop (8 CEU's; see page 1)
- Fur Takers of America (FTA) Trappers College (6 nights, 7 days)
- National Wildlife Control Training Program (NWCTP)-NC Specific Online Recertification (*Coming Soon*)
- 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 2015, 3 more counties were opened up to fox trapping. There are 41 counties with fox trapping seasons in North Carolina.

Outside these 41 counties, you cannot trap foxes during the regulated trapping season and any fox captured must be released in the 59 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.

## Regulation change regarding tagging requirements for the 2017-18 Season



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.

Prior to this change in the regulation, a person had to dispose of any extra fur tags they purchased at the end of the season and purchase new tags the following season.

The amended rule will take effect on July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2017 and will become effective for the upcoming 2017-2018 trapping season.

In the future, if you purchase too many fur tags, you can now use those tags in the subsequent seasons.

Starting with the 2017-18 season, fur tags will no longer have the year printed on the tag.

Please keep in mind, this regulation change takes effect July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2017. For the most recent 2016-17 trapping season, you will have to dispose of any leftover tags.

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

## 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.



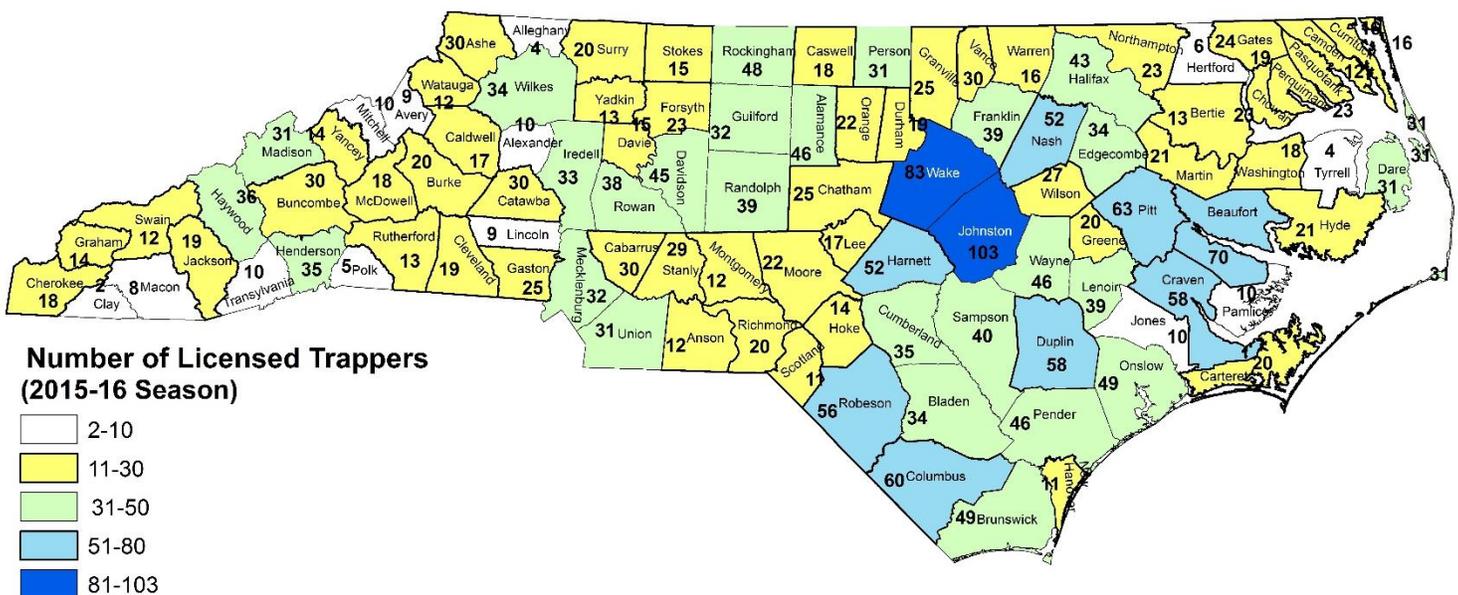
Please return the survey!

### 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.

## 2015-2016 Trapping License Sales

The map below shows the number of residents, by county, who purchased a trapping license for the 2015-2016 trapping season. The highest number of licensed trappers resided in Johnston County (103 trappers), followed by Wake (83 trappers) and Beaufort (70 trappers) counties. The lowest number of licensed trappers resided in Clay County (2 trappers), followed by Alleghany and Tyrrell counties (4 trappers).



## Rabies Statistics

During 2016, positive rabies results were obtained from 117 raccoons, 38 skunks, 51 foxes, 2 beaver, and 1 deer. The total number of terrestrial rabies cases (n=209) was a 28% decline from the number of cases detected during 2015 (n=291) and continues a 5-year trend in declining terrestrial rabies cases (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 2016, 64 out of 100 counties documented a positive terrestrial wildlife rabies case.

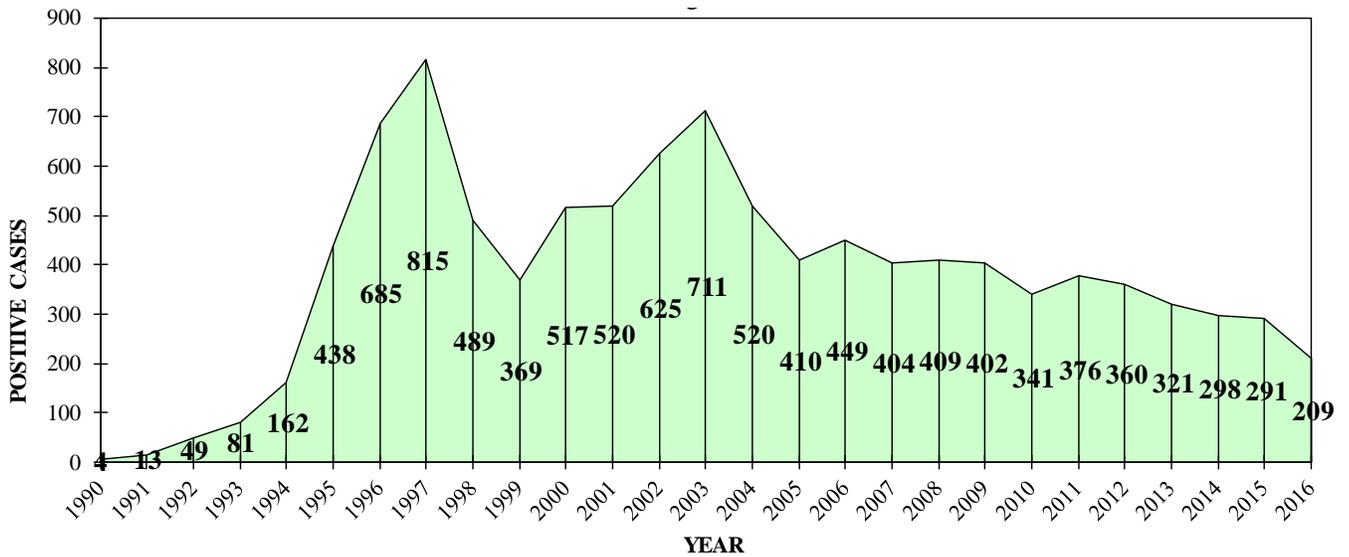


Figure 1. Positive terrestrial wildlife rabies cases from 1990 through 2016.

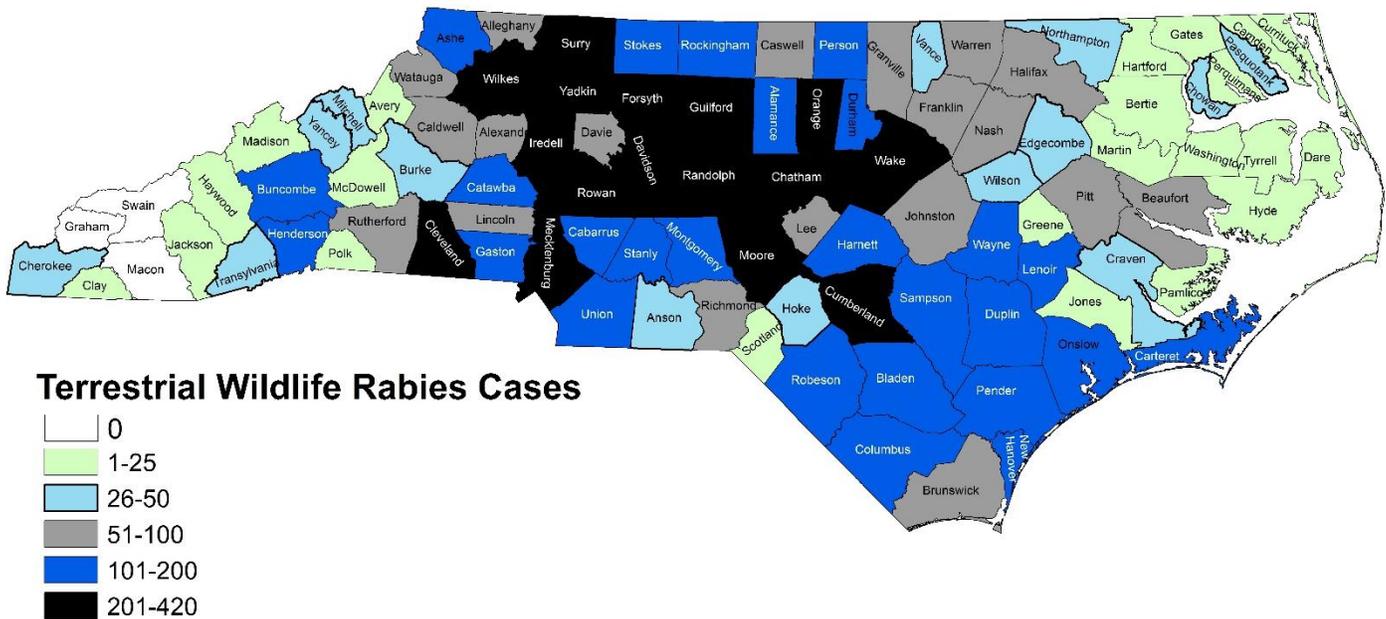


Figure 2. Number of positive rabies cases in terrestrial wildlife by county from 1990-2016. No positive terrestrial wildlife rabies cases in Graham, Macon and Swain counties.

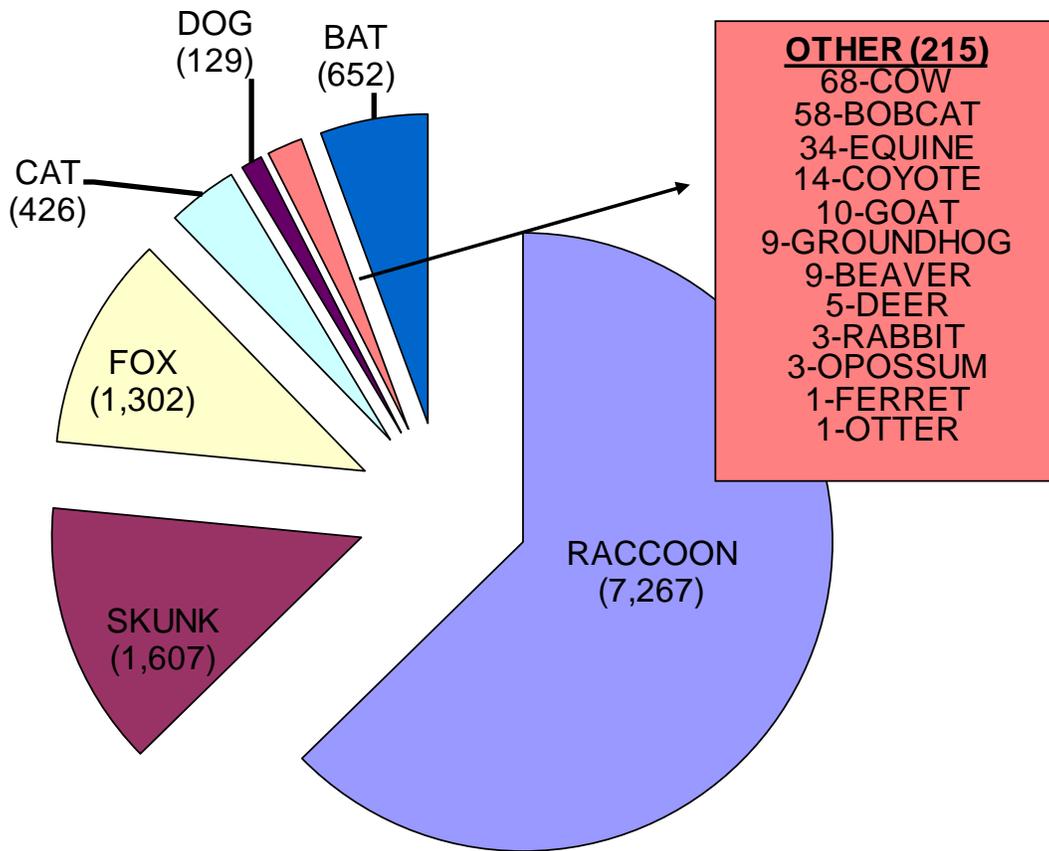


Figure 3. Number of positive rabies cases by species from 1990-2016.

### Voluntary Trapper Harvest Mail Survey Results

The response rate for the 2015-2016 mail survey was 49%, which was similar to the 2014-2015 survey year. During the 2015-16 trapping season, 43% of licensed trappers actively trapped during the season (Table 1). For the second year in a row, the number of licensed trappers declined; there was a 13% decline in the number of licensed trappers from the previous 2014-2015 trapping season (Table 1).

The 2015-16 furbearer harvest level was 19% lower than that seen during the prior trapping season, due to the decline in the number of licensed trappers and lower pelt prices (Table 2). Overall, pelt prices declined 27% from the 2014-15 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 69% 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; Table 2). During the 2015-16 trapping season, raccoon and beaver were the most commonly trapped furbearers, followed by coyotes and opossums (Figure 4). Fifty-two percent of furbearers are harvested in the Coastal Plain Furbearer Management region, followed by the Piedmont and Mountain regions (Table 3). But a majority of coyotes are trapped in the Piedmont region (Table 3).

Table 1. Data from the trapper harvest mail survey, 2002-03 through 2015-16.

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%

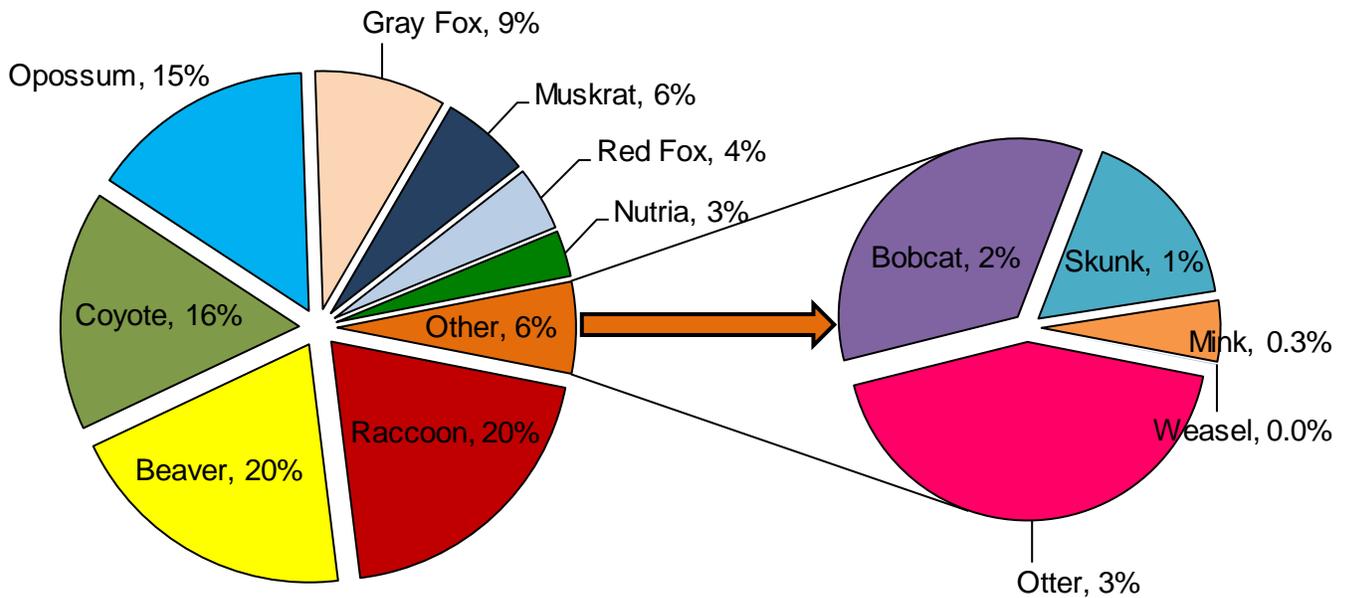


Figure 4. The wildlife species composition of the 2015-16 trapper harvest based on estimates from the voluntary trapper harvest survey.

Table 2. Estimated trapper harvest from the 2011-12 trapping season through the 2015-16 trapping season, based on voluntary trapper harvest surveys.

Species	2012-2013		2013-14		2014-15		2015-16	
	Harvest	Prices	Harvest	Prices	Harvest	Prices	Harvest	Prices
 Beaver	11,393	\$24.22	13,138	\$12.64	10,382	\$9.82	9,344	\$8.71
 Mink	444	\$17.90	530	\$15.38	237	\$8.06	161	\$6.45
 Muskrat	8,933	\$12.45	10,064	\$10.36	7,392	\$4.48	2,841	\$2.41
 Nutria	2,167	N/A	3,194	N/A	2,166	N/A	1,461	N/A
 Otter	2,787	\$92.48	2,908	\$56.09	2,102	\$35.07	1,254	\$19.08
 Bobcat	1,484	\$67.57	1,448	\$66.00	1,435	\$41.39	1,014	\$28.51
 Coyote	5,419	\$19.95	6,951	\$16.42	7,611	\$8.27	7,645	\$17.08
 Gray Fox	6,827	\$32.20	6,410	\$22.79	5,001	\$15.74	4,177	\$11.31
 Red Fox	1,768	\$49.39	2,186	\$27.91	1,658	\$15.70	2,041	\$9.14
 Opossum	12,320	\$3.08	11,630	\$1.31	6,423	\$1.49	7,149	\$0.15
 Raccoon	16,827	\$12.83	23,075	\$8.50	12,583	\$3.86	9,365	\$3.32
 Skunk	782	\$3.56	1,163	\$3.48	709	\$3.80	487	\$3.25
 Weasel	1	N/A	26	\$0.40	2	\$0.25	2	\$1.17
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>71,153</b>		<b>82,722</b>		<b>57,701</b>		<b>46,941</b>	

Table 3. Estimated trapper harvest by furbearer management region from the 2015-16 trapping season, based on voluntary trapper harvest surveys.

Species	2015-16 Season		
	Coastal Plain	Piedmont	Mountain
Beaver	5,375	3,336	545
Bobcat	582	232	190
Coyote	2,773	3,900	906
All Fox	2,972	2,835	357
Gray Fox	2,041	1,953	141
Mink	68	16	77
Muskrat	1,437	798	604
Nutria	1,391	48	0
Raccoon	4,434	3,425	1,349
Red Fox	932	882	216
River Otter	787	340	104
Skunk	64	280	139
Virginia Opossum	4,168	2,047	832
Weasels	2	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>24,054</b>	<b>17,259</b>	<b>4,916</b>
<b>% of regional harvest</b>	<b>52%</b>	<b>37%</b>	<b>11%</b>

### 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 2015-16 season, for every 1.5 coyotes harvested by hunters, trappers harvested 9.6 coyotes (Figure 6). Figures 7 and 8 show the raccoon and bobcat harvest by both hunters and trappers.

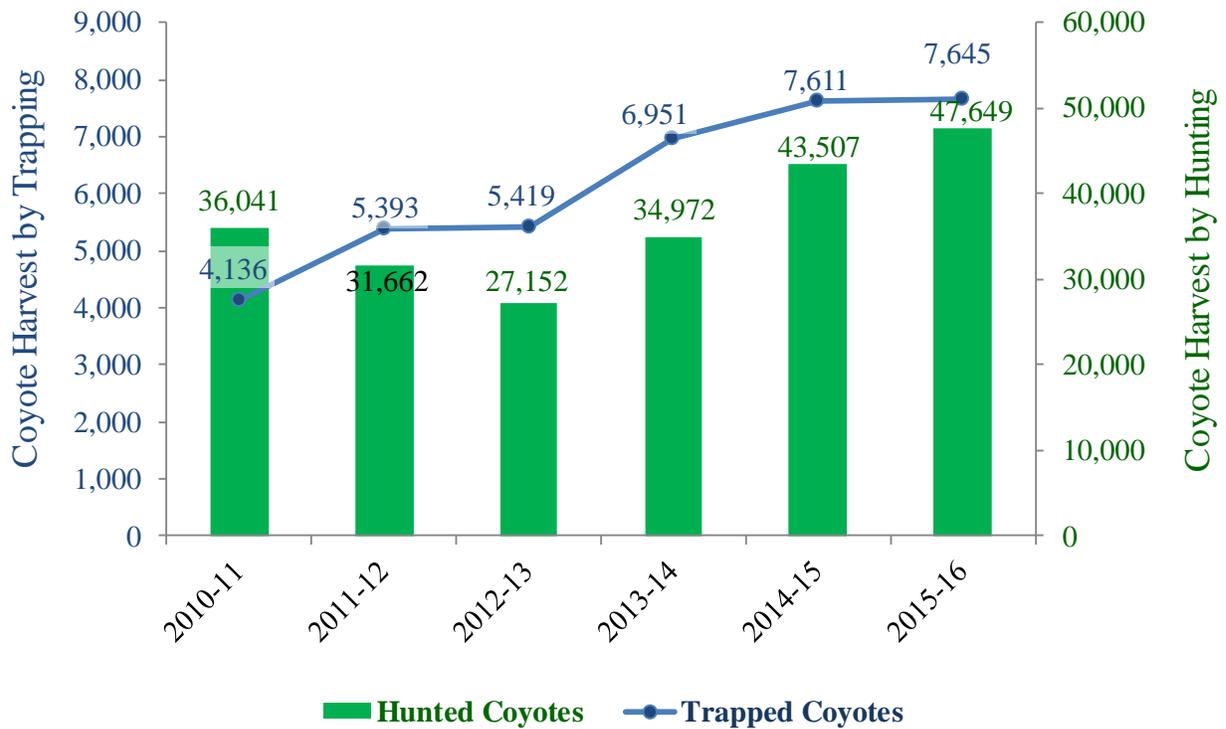


Figure 5. Estimated harvest of coyotes by hunters (green bars) and trappers (blue line).

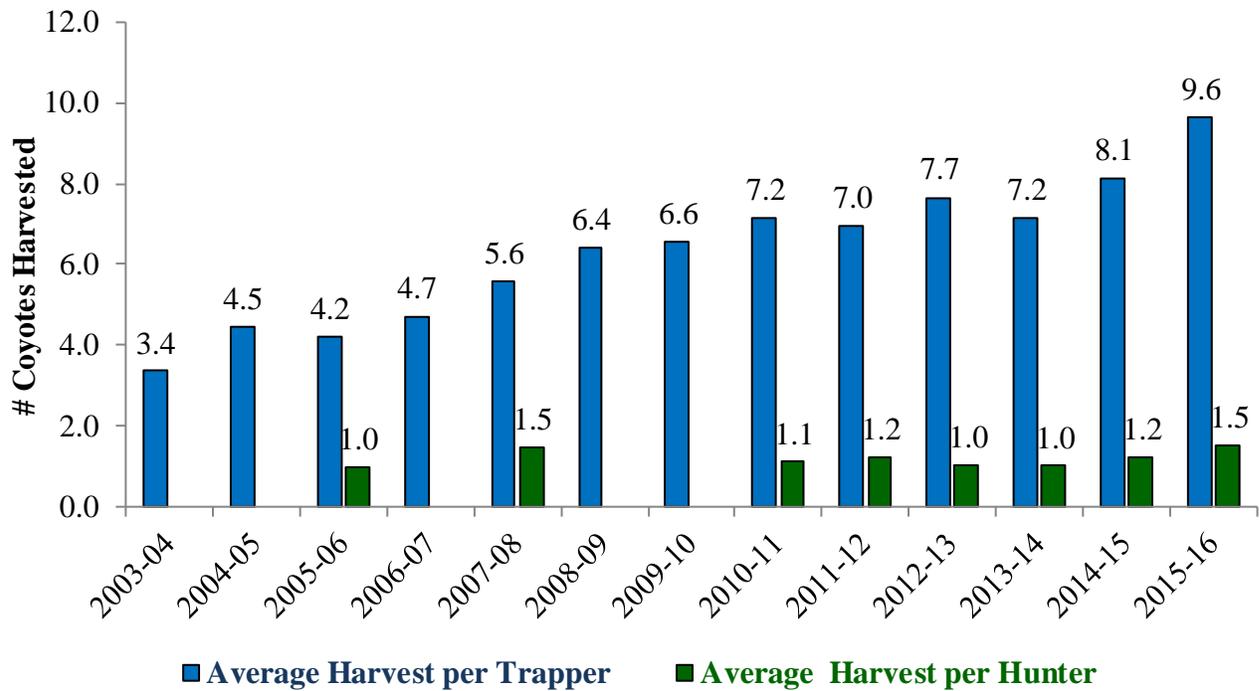


Figure 6. Average number of coyotes harvested by hunters (green bar) and by trappers (blue bar) from 2003 through February 2016.

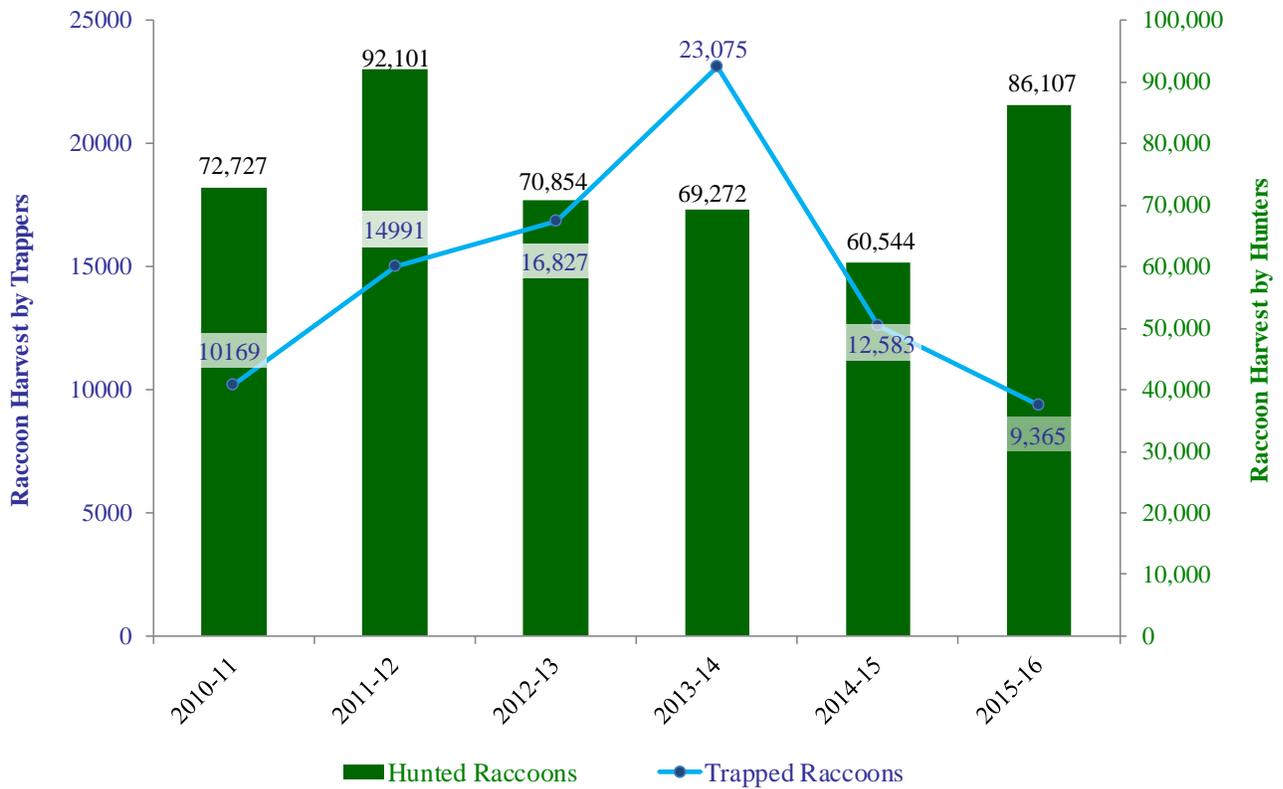


Figure 7. Estimated harvest of raccoons by hunters (green bars) and trappers (blue line).

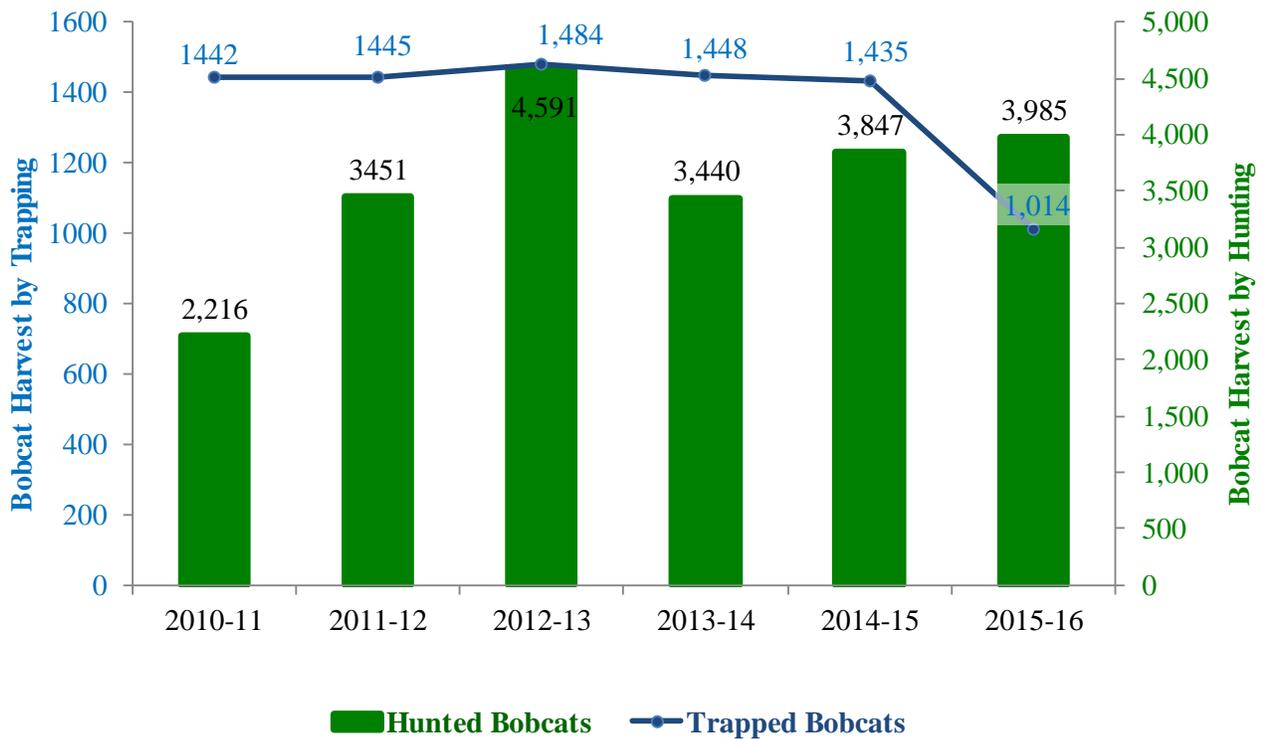


Figure 8 Estimated harvest of bobcats by hunters (green bars) and trappers (blue line).

## Coyote Management Workshops

Starting in 2017, the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission will annually conduct nine Coyote Management Workshops across the state. These workshops will occur in each of our nine wildlife districts.



The purpose of these workshops is to teach the basics of coyote biology and behavior, basic trapping techniques to address problem coyotes, practical non-lethal methods to prevent and reduce conflicts with coyotes, and the laws and regulations on coyotes. For example, many people still don't know that poultry and livestock owners can receive a depredation permit for coyotes upon request from the WRC outside the regulated trapping season. The poultry or livestock owner can put a licensed trapper on that permit to conduct coyote trapping activities.



We also provided information to participants about the contacting a licensed trapper during the regulated trapping season:

[ncwildlife.org/Trapping/Contact-a-Licensed-Trapper](http://ncwildlife.org/Trapping/Contact-a-Licensed-Trapper)

Information on upcoming workshops will be posted at [ncwildlife.org/coyote](http://ncwildlife.org/coyote) and click "Have a Problem?"

## 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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