



Preliminary Results from 2019-2020 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 18-19	Average Pelt Price 19-20	% Price Change from prior year	2018-19 Harvest	2019-20 Harvest ¹
Beaver	\$9.02	\$7.16	-21%	12,855	11,399
Mink	\$6.51	\$3.92	-40%	174	98
Muskrat	\$3.68	\$2.45	-33%	2,230	1,815
Nutria	N/A	\$1.00	N/A	1,234	1,464
Otter	\$24.38	\$16.37	-33%	2,019	1,875
Bobcat	\$29.54	\$24.02	-19%	1,176	781
Coyote	\$19.93	\$14.92	-25%	7,638	8,124
Gray Fox	\$11.62	\$7.64	-34%	2,410	1,973
Red Fox	\$11.68	\$7.51	-36%	1,716	2,186
Opossum	\$1.14	\$0.58	-49%	8,350	7,560
Raccoon	\$4.08	\$2.09	-49%	10,876	11,403
Skunk	\$3.12	\$2.42	-23%	688	653
Weasel	N/A	N/A	N/A	6	2

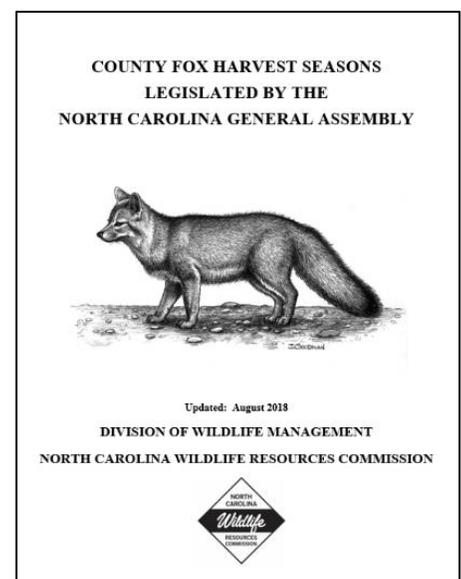
¹Preliminary estimate. Final 2019-20 harvest statistics will be in the 2020 Spring Furbearer Newsletter.

Fox trapping seasons

No new counties were opened to fox trapping during the 2020 NC General Assembly Legislative Session. As a reminder, the NC Wildlife Resources Commission does not have the authority to create fox trapping seasons; only the NC General Assembly has that authority.

There are 55 counties with fox trapping seasons in North Carolina. Outside these 55 counties, you cannot trap foxes during the regulated trapping season and any fox captured must be released in those 45 counties without a fox trapping season.

For more information on fox hunting and trapping seasons, including county-specific restrictions and season dates please go to: ncwildlife.org/foxseasons



Bobcat Sex and Age Ratio Data

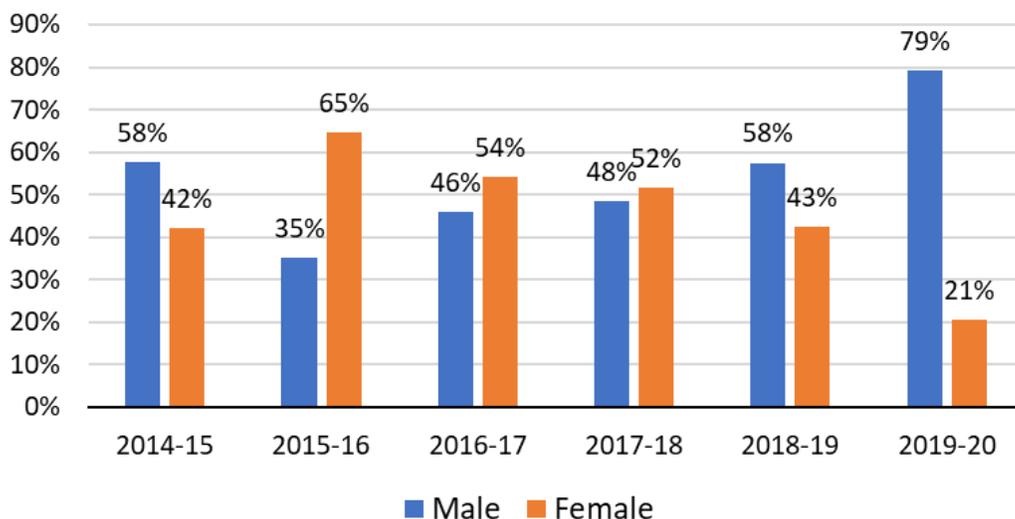
North Carolina started collecting bobcat skulls or lower jaw bones from licensed trappers to determine the sex and age ratio of the trapper harvest. Our sampling objective is 10-15% of the trapper harvest for 5 consecutive years. Due to low pelt prices and the voluntary nature of the program, we have not yet achieved collecting 10% of the harvest.



Since the 2013-14 season, we have collected 212 skulls; during the 2019-20 season, we collected 29 skulls. The majority of the harvest is of 1-year old bobcats (32%), followed by 2-year old bobcats (25%). The sex ratio of the harvest is slightly biased towards male bobcats (56%) and varies slightly by season.

Age class of sampled bobcats from licensed trappers from 2013-14 season through 2019-20 season.

Bobcat					
Age Class	M	F	U	Total Sampled	% Age class
0	4	10	7	21	10%
1	27	23	18	68	32%
2	34	11	9	54	25%
3	16	8	5	29	14%
4	10	4	0	14	7%
5	4	5	0	9	4%
6	1	6	0	7	3%
7	2	3	0	5	2%
8+	3	0	2	5	2%
Total	101	70	41	212	
Sex ratio	56%	44%			



Sex ratio of the sampled bobcats from licensed trappers from 2013-14 season through the 2019-2020 season.

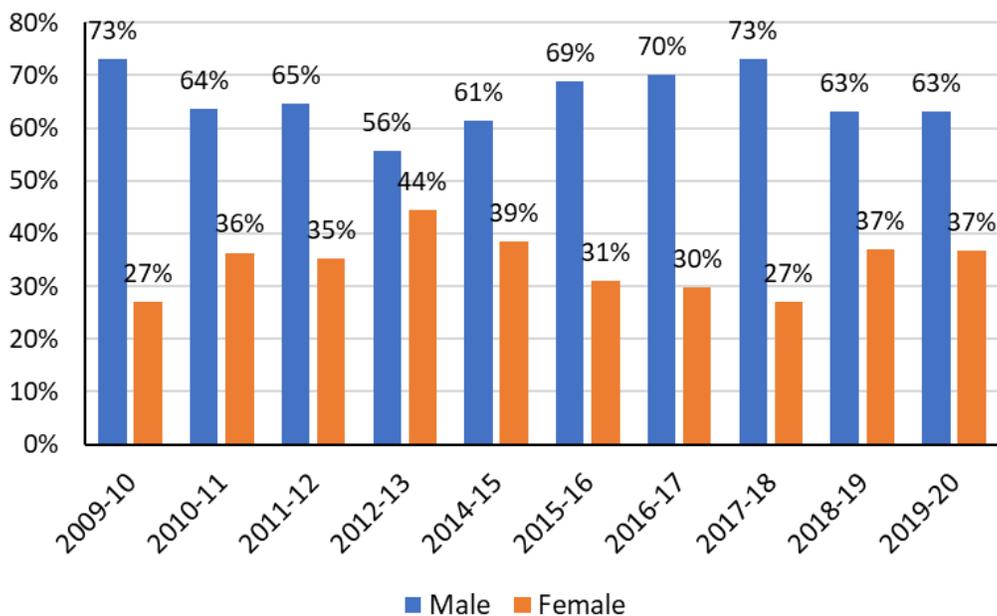
River Otter Sex and Age Ratio Data



River otter skulls are also collected to gather data on the age structure and sex ratio of harvested otters. Since the 2010-11 season, we have collected and aged 1,219 skulls; during the 2019-20 season we collected 95 skulls. The majority of the harvest is of 1-year old otters (40%), followed by 2-year old otters (18%). The sex ratio of the harvest is biased towards male otters (65%) but varies by trapping season.

Age class of sampled river otters from licensed trappers from 2013-14 season through 2019-20 season.

River Otter					
Age Class	M	F	U	Total Sampled	% Age class
0	97	101	11	209	17%
1	319	143	29	491	40%
2	132	71	14	217	18%
3	79	30	4	113	9%
4	32	25	8	65	5%
5	30	16	2	48	4%
6	28	7	2	37	3%
7	11	4	1	16	1%
8	14	7	2	23	2%
Total	742	404	73	1219	
Sex Ratio	65%	35%			



Sex ratio of the sampled otters from licensed trappers from 2009-10 season through the 2019-2020 season.

Skulls and Carcasses Wanted



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

- Bobcat Jaws
- Otter Jaws
- Spotted Skunk Carcasses
- Weasel Carcasses

This year we will be shipping coordinators pre-paid envelopes to mail in bobcat and otter samples. The canine tooth will be used to look at the age structure of the harvest.



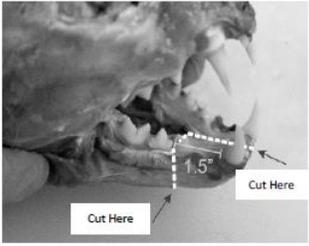
Additionally, we're hoping to obtain carcasses of spotted skunks to collect locations and tissue samples, including genetic samples, to increase our knowledge of this elusive furbearer species. Please contact Casey Dukes (information below) to submit a carcass.

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

In return for your cooperation, you will receive a furbearer cooperators patch and the age of submitted animals. Thank you in advance!

NCWRC – BOBCAT & OTTER JAW SAMPLE ENVELOPE



- USE ONLY ONE (1) ENVELOPE PER ANIMAL.** Only submit animals trapped during the regulated trapping season (no road killed or hunted animals please). If you need additional envelopes, please call 919-609-7226.
- We need the two (2) bottom canines from each animal; cut the jaw bone with loppers or hacksaw between the lower canines and 1.5 inches back from canine (see photo). Be careful not to cut too close to the canine tooth, so it is not damaged. The root of the tooth is needed to determine age of the animal. **DO NOT** attempt to pull the canine tooth from the jaw because it will break in half.

- Clean away as much flesh as possible from the sample to avoid spoilage. **Allow the jaw section to completely dry** before enclosing the sample within this pre-paid sample envelope and mail.

7-DIGIT WRC CUSTOMER # (found on your license, if applicable): _____

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____

ZIP CODE: _____ PHONE: _____

EMAIL: _____

DATE HARVESTED: _____ COUNTY OF HARVEST: _____
(if exact date unknown, please provide month and year)

SPECIES (Check one): BOBCAT RIVER OTTER

SEX OF ANIMAL* (Check one): MALE FEMALE UNKNOWN

*Note - The sex of otters and bobcats can be difficult to determine. If testicles are not visible, make an incision in the abdomen of the carcass and examine for presence of uterus and ovaries, which can be found behind the bladder and below the kidneys.

You will receive a cooperators patch and age report for your harvested animals.

Cut and dry the portion of the lower jaw containing the canine tooth and its root. To ensure you include the root, cut the jawbone at least 1.5 in. away from the canine. Follow instructions on pre-paid envelope to ship.

For envelopes, contact:
Casey Dukes
Surveys and Research Biologist
919-609-7226
casey.dukes@ncwildlife.org

For more information visit:
ncwildlife.org/furcooperator

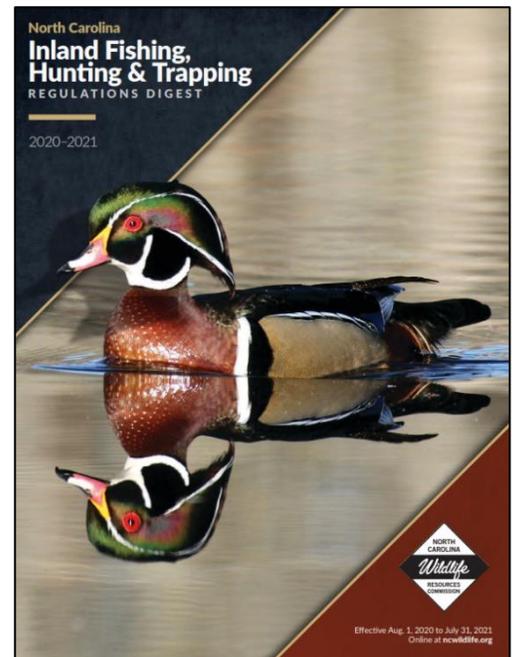
Local Laws on Trapping

This is a reminder to always check the local law section (page 88) of the North Carolina Inland Fishing, Hunting, and Trapping Regulations Digest.

This section provides county-by-county listing of acts that are prohibited by local legislation passed by the General Assembly. The electronic digest can be found at ncwildlife.org/trapping/laws-safety or call 888-248-6834 to request a hard-copy.

There are 6 counties with local laws that restrict trapping activity. The following is unlawful in the counties indicated:

1. **Brunswick:** Set or possess a trap or snare on another's land not under written lease. Set a leghold steel trap between March 1 and Jan. 1 or the last day of deer season, whichever is later. This local law was established in 1975.
2. **Camden:** Set a Conibear-type 330 or 220 trap or a No. 2 leghold steel trap, except in water where beaver or otter may be lawfully taken. This local law was established in 1981.
3. **Columbus:** Set a steel trap between March 1 – January 1. This local law was established in 1977.
4. **Cumberland:** Use or set any steel jaw leg hold on another's person's land, except a landowner to whom such animals have become nuisances and with whom he has a written contract to do such trapping. This local law was established in 1977 and amended in 1981.
5. **Dare:** Use any trap that has a jaw spread that exceeds 7½ inches until after Jan. 2 of each year or the last day of deer hunting season, which is later. This local law was established in 1985 and amended in 2009.
6. **Gates:** Take any game or furbearer by trapping on another person's land between the end of trapping season and Jan. 2. This local law was established in 1989.



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 25 counties in which trappers and hunters are exempt from fox tagging requirements. To order your tags, call 888-248-6834.

Reminders to Trappers

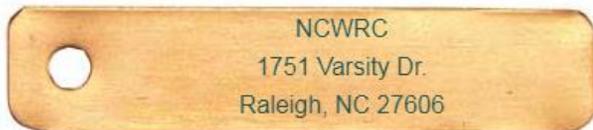
The N.C. General Assembly passed [legislation](#) in 2019 to modify the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission’s license structure and fees. As a result, there are significant changes the Commission must make to its license sales system to accommodate. These changes were outlined in the fall 2019 and spring 2020 furbearer newsletter. For your convenience, we have listed some key changes that relate to trapping:

Trap Tags

Effective Oct. 1, 2019, the Commission will issue each trapper a Trapper Identification Number (TIN) at the time they purchase or renew their trapping license. This number will be printed on their license.

Either the TIN and Commission telephone number (800-662-7137) or the trapper’s name and address can be used on trap tags.

If a trapper places a trap on the property of another, the Commission is required to disclose the identity of the trapper to the landowner where the trap is located at the landowner’s request.



Option 1: Trapper’s name and address



Option 2: Trapper Identification Number (TIN) and Commission telephone number (800-662-7137).

Resident Lifetime Trapping License

Effective Jan. 1, 2020, North Carolina residents will be able to purchase a Lifetime Trapping License. The cost will be \$300 and all proceeds from the sale of this license will go to the Wildlife Endowment Fund.



Wildlife Control Agent (WCA) License

The NC General Assembly established that the WCA license would become effective in 2021. Any individual who engages in wildlife damage control or wildlife removal activities, including bat eviction, for compensation, including reimbursement for the cost of materials, must first procure a wildlife control agent license. This will be an annual license issued by the Commission for \$50. *This license will not be required for licensed trappers taking wild animals during the established trapping season for that species.*

This fall, the Commission will be accepting public comment for 60 days on draft rules to implement the WCA license. See information below for how to comment on-line when these draft rules are available for public comment.

Proposed rules, Public Hearings and Public Comment Period!

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.

With Covid-19, the Commission has not yet scheduled public hearings for January. We anticipate holding most public hearings virtually, which would allow you to participate from the comfort and safety of your home. All proposed regulations will be posted on our website, where you can find information on virtual public hearings dates and times, the proposed rule language, and how to submit comments:

<https://www.ncwildlife.org/Proposed-Regulations/proposed-regulations>

Trapper Educational Opportunities

Due to Covid-19, the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission had to cancel our free Trapper Education Courses during 2020. We hope to start offering these courses again in 2021.

Once we are able to start these courses, go to [ncwildlife.org/trappered](https://www.ncwildlife.org/trappered) and click "Basic Trapper Education Courses" tab to see what courses are available and to sign up. Courses are often added throughout the year, especially in spring and summer. Courses are based on availability of our volunteer trapper educational instructors.

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 to purchase a trapping license.

The North Carolina Trappers Association is a partner in offering these courses.



Advanced Trapping Workshops

The North Carolina Trappers Association (NCTA) offers advanced hands-on trapping workshops. Want to improve your trapping skills? Are you a Wildlife Control Agent that wants to expand into other species besides squirrels? So far, two advanced workshops are scheduled for 2021, so start planning now! To learn more and for instructions on signing up for either workshop, go to [nctrapper.org/advanced-classes](https://www.nctrapper.org/advanced-classes)

Please go to [nctrapper.org/advanced-classes](https://www.nctrapper.org/advanced-classes) to register and read about how the NCTA plans to follow the governor's executive orders and CDC guidelines regarding Covid-19. For example, if more than 10 register, the workshop will be broken into smaller groups to stay within the governor's executive orders for social gatherings.

The NCTA Board of Directors will allow that if anyone decides they do not want to attend after registering, a "voucher" to attend a future NCTA workshop within a (24) month period or a refund of 50% of the amount of funds the NCTA received will be granted. This also applies to anyone who is not feeling well or gets sick prior to the workshop.



Advanced Hands-On Beaver Trapping Workshop in February 2021.

You will learn about:

- Beaver biology/behavior
- Traps/anchors/pan tensions
- Castor Mount Variations
- Blind/multiple sets
- Understanding signs/habitats
- Lures/baits – When/Why
- Weather/Winds – Dos/Don'ts
- Snaring/cable restraints
- Beaver laws and regulations
- Hands-on checking/setting traps

When: Saturday, February 20th, 2021, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Where: Orange County, Jordan Lake Boat Ramp, 605 Farrington Point Rd., Chapel Hill, NC 27517

Instructors: Todd Menke and Kevin Myers

Questions: Todd Menke, minkster1971@gmail.com or 919-885-6187

To register: <https://www.nctrapper.org/form/22021-advanced-beaver-trapping-class>



Advanced Hands-On Wildlife Damage Management Workshop in August 2021

You will learn about:

- Animal biology/behavior
- Trap types – cage/box style
- Investigations/Inspections
- Understanding signs/habitats
- Lures/baits/urines-when/why
- Prevent/exclusion techniques
- Non-lethal techniques
- WCA regulations
- Local laws/ordinance
- Dos and Don'ts



When: Saturday, August 21st, 2021, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
Where: McNeely Pest Control, 3831 Reynolda Rd., Winston-Salem, NC 27106
Instructors: Scott McNeely and Frank Fowler
Questions: Scott McNeely, smcneely@mcneelypest.com or 336-692-4200
To register: <https://ncorgdemostore.zibster.com/form/8212021-advanced-wildlife-damage-management-workshop>

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 2020 through February 2021 at ncwildlife.org/sellingfur



Tom Tyree, now with Fur Harvester Auctions, has pick-up sites.



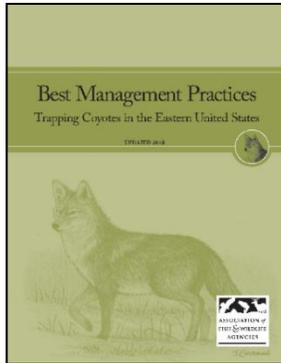
Trappers waiting to sell their fur to Groenewold Fur & Wool Co., which has pick-up sites throughout North Carolina every March.



NC fur buyer, Kevin Myers, inspects otter pelts at Marshall in March.

Trapping Best Management Practices (BMPs)

Trapping 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.

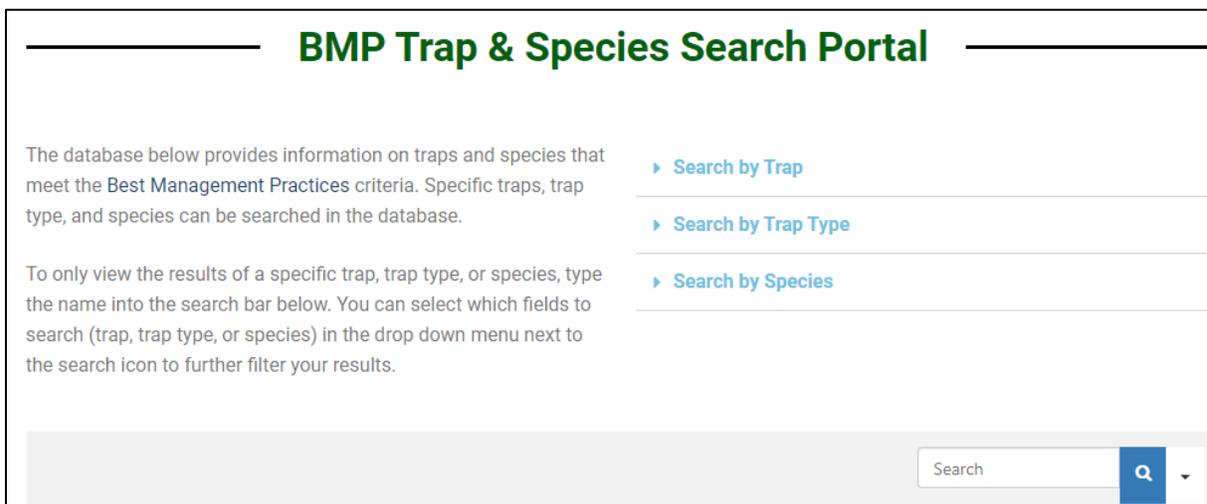


BMPs are intended to inform people about traps and trapping systems considered to be state-of-the-art in animal welfare, efficiency, selectivity, and practicality.

The 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!

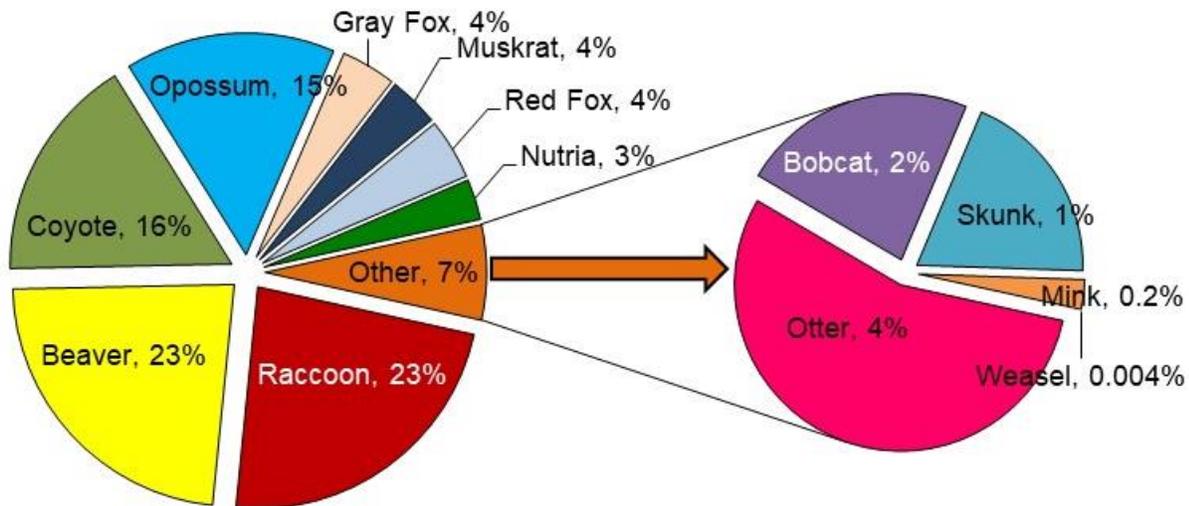
Trapping BMPs exist for 22 species of furbearers:
furbearermanagement.com

To make it easy to find a BMP-approved trap, this website has a trap [search portal](#), where you can search for BMP-approved traps by trap-type (e.g., foothold, bodygrip), species, or trap brand.

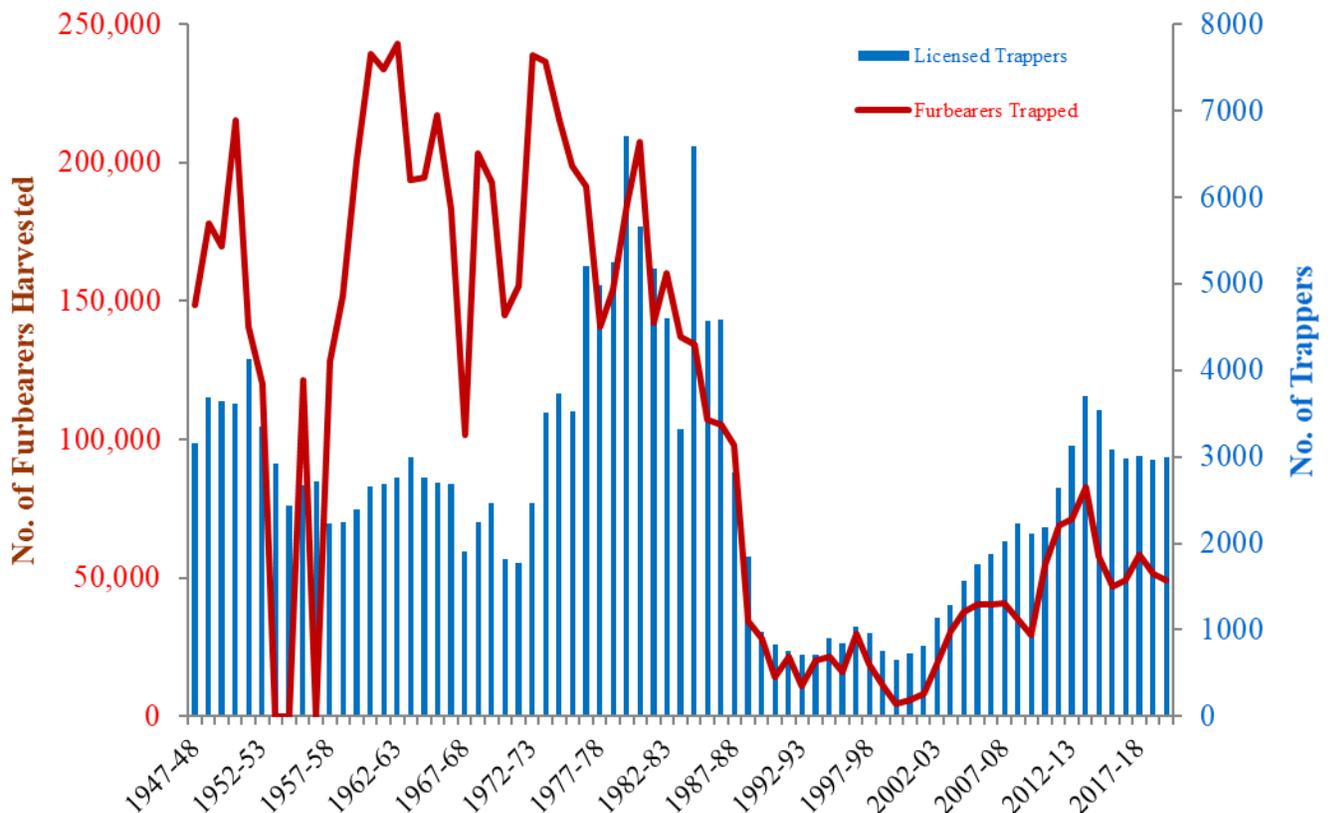


Trapping BMPs, combined with Trapper Education Programs, are intended to maintain the integrity of furbearer management programs throughout the nation and to sustain trapping methods now and in the future.

Composition of the 2019-20 Furbearer Harvest



Number of Licensed Trappers and Number of Harvested Furbearers



During the 2019-20 season, there were 2,992 licensed trappers, a 1% increase in license sales compared to the 2018-19 season. An estimated 49,333 furbearers were harvested, a 4% decline from the previous season. This was largely driven by declines in the harvest of muskrat, gray fox, red fox, coyote and raccoon as a result of low pelt prices.

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. The age ratio of muskrats can be an important index of population productivity. For example, a high proportion of adults could indicate poor reproduction.

Starting in 2011, North Carolina joined regional efforts by attending fur sales and working with North Carolina fur dealers. During the 2019-20 season, we sampled 231 muskrats, a 57% decline from the 2018-19 season. This reflected the decline in the overall harvest of muskrats during the 2019-20 season. The ratio of juveniles to adults, and juveniles to adult females was the 2nd lowest since this survey was initiated. While this could reflect poor reproduction, it may also reflect that 45% of pelts from sampled muskrats were too prime to determine age.



We will continue to monitor the age and sex ratio of the harvest and identify whether additional research is needed to monitor the status of muskrat populations.

2019-20 Ratios (n=231)

Adult	1.51 male to female
Juvenile	0.74 male to female
Juvenile vs. Adult	0.80 juveniles to adults
Juvenile vs. Ad. Female	2.00 juv. to ad. female

Category	Ratios									
	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
Adult Male/Female	1.5	3.64	1.11	1.91	1.34	1.11	1.22	0.80	1.06	1.51
Juvenile Male/Female	0.96	1.3	1.38	1.93	1.14	1.58	1.11	2.27	0.94	0.74
Juvenile/Adult	2.12	2.4	1.48	2.66	1.04	2.10	1.80	1.15	0.44	0.80
Juvenile/Adult Female	5.3	11.36	3.16	7.73	2.43	4.61	4.01	2.08	0.91	2.00
Sample size (n)	82	199	928	133	2,627	319	2,505	1,407	540	231

Trapping Season Reminders

There is a uniform statewide trapping season for all 100 counties from November 1 through last day of February for the following species:

- Armadillo
- Bobcat
- Coyote
- Groundhog
- Mink
- Muskrat
- Opossum
- Otter
- Raccoon
- Skunk
- Weasel

Beaver: State law established the beaver trapping season Nov. 1 through Mar. 31.

Outside the applicable trapping season, animals can only be trapped under a Depredation Permit. This is a free permit obtained from a Wildlife Enforcement Officer or District Biologist. Certified Wildlife Control Agents can also issue a depredation permit.

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!



Casey G. Dukes
Surveys and Research Biologist I
casey.dukes@ncwildlife.org

Colleen Olfenbuttel
Black Bear and Furbearer Biologist
colleen.olfenbuttel@ncwildlife.org



Ashley Hobbs
Asst. Black Bear and Furbearer Biologist (temp)
ashley.hobbs@ncwildlife.org



Phone numbers of interest

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

License Information
(888) 248-6834

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