



Welcome to the Spring/Summer edition of the North Carolina Furbearer Management Newsletter!

This newsletter is mailed to all Wildlife Resources Commission customers who purchased a trapping license during the recent 2021-22 regulated trapping season. Inside this newsletter, you will find recent changes to regulations, opportunities to attend trapper education courses, updates on trapping harvest levels, and other information. This newsletter, and previous newsletters, can also be found at <https://www.ncwildlife.org/Trapping/Learn-Resources/Surveys-Reports>

Monitoring Furbearer Populations

In order for the Commission 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 Commission 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. Check out our website: www.ncwildlife.org/Trapping/Contact-a-Licensed-Trapper

Resident Lifetime Trapping License

Effective Jan. 1, 2020, North Carolina residents can purchase a Lifetime Trapping License. The cost is \$300 and all proceeds from the sale of this license will go to the Wildlife Endowment Fund. As of February 28th, 2022, 263 lifetime trapping licenses have been sold. This is a 71% increase since last year's report in the 2021 spring/summer newsletter.

Did you lose your lifetime trapper decal? Contact 888-248-6834 (Customer Service, Monday – Friday, 8 a.m. – 5 p.m.) or licenses@ncwildlife.org to learn how to get a replacement decal.



Reminders to Trappers

Trapping Live Foxes and Coyotes:

Effective February 2021, the Commission approved rule changes regarding fox preserves and the live sale of foxes and coyotes in order to update language, clarify requirements, address animal welfare issues, and improve regulatory oversight. The following changes were made:

- A transportation permit is required prior to taking possession of live foxes and coyotes for live sale to licensed fox preserve. Licensed trappers and any individual(s) transporting live foxes and coyotes for live sale shall have a current and [valid transportation permit](#) prior to taking possession of the live foxes and coyotes, including removing the animal from the trap.
 - You can apply for this free [permit](#) at ncwildlife.org and click Licensing>Other Licenses & Permits>RAPS>Controlled Hunting Preserve Operator License Application – Fox/Coyote
 - You can also apply for this free permit in-person at the Commission’s booth at the annual [North Carolina Trappers Association State Convention](#), held September 23rd and 24th, 2022 at the Johnston County Livestock Auction arena.
- Licensed trappers shall keep accurate written records, [on a trapping report form](#) provided by the NC Wildlife Resources Commission, for each fox or coyote sold or transferred to licensed fox preserve.
 - This Fox-Coyote Trapping [report](#) can be found at ncwildlife.org and click Licensing>Other Licenses & Permits>RAPS>Controlled Hunting Preserve Operator License Application – Fox/Coyote
- Live-trapped foxes and coyotes shall not be held for more than 30 days after capture and shall be provided drinking water, food of a type and quantity appropriate for the species, and shelter that protects the foxes and coyotes from direct sunlight and precipitation.



Trapper Identification Number (TIN)

The Commission issues each trapper a Trapper Identification Number (TIN) at the time they purchase or renew their trapping license. This TIN is printed on your license (see picture on next page for example).

Either the TIN or Wildlife Control Agent (WCA) license number and Commission telephone number (800-662-7137), or the trapper’s name and address can be used on trap tags. The license number issued to licensed WCAs is equivalent to a TIN and can be used on the trap tags. See trap tag examples on next page.

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.

<u>North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission</u>		<u>North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission</u>	
WRC CUSTOMER NUMBER: 10685970		WRC CUSTOMER NUMBER: 10685970	
DATE OF BIRTH: 01/01/1978		ISSUED: 02/28/2022 09:52:31	
TRAPPER ID: 12345678		<u>VALID LICENSE/PERMIT TYPES</u>	<u>FEE</u> <u>EFFECTIVE-EXPIRATION</u>
		Res State Trap	\$32.00 02/28/2022 - 02/28/2023
MAILING ADDRESS		I certify that the information contained herein is true and accurate. I also understand that providing false, fraudulent, or misleading information for the purpose of obtaining this license or the use of a fraudulently obtained license is a Class 1 misdemeanor [G.S. 113-275 (j)].	
JOHN Q PUBLIC 1751 VARSITY DR RALEIGH, NC 27606		SIGNATURE: _____ (MUST BE SIGNED TO BE VALID)	
 DETACH THE ABOVE CARD FROM SIGN AND CARRY ON YOUR PERSON WHEN EXERCISING THE PRIVILEGES AUTHORIZED 			

The trapper identification number (TIN) is located below your date of birth on your license card.



Option 1: Trapper's name and address



Option 2: Trapper Identification Number (TIN) and Commission telephone number (800-662-7137). Note that a WCA license number can also be used on the trap tag.

Basic Trapper Education Opportunities

The Commission, 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.

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. There are two courses currently scheduled this spring

1. Saturday, April 16th, 2022, Wake County Wildlife Club, Durham, NC, 9:00 A.M. – 1:00 P.M.
2. Saturday, May 14th, 2022, Guthrie Land, Winston Salem, NC, 9:00 A.M. – 1:00 P.M.

Regulation Changes that impact Trappers

The N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission (NCWRC) reviewed proposed rule changes at its business meeting on February 25, 2022. The Commissioners accepted all proposed changes related to wildlife management, inland fisheries and game lands for the 2022-23 seasons, although a few were modified based on public comments prior to adoption. The anticipated effective date for these regulations is Aug. 1, 2022.

Snapping Turtles:

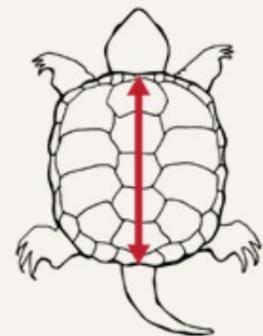
- A snapping turtle collection license will be required for persons taking more than four snapping turtles (family *Chelydriadae*).
 - This license is limited to North Carolina residents and now aligns with several adjacent states that prohibit non-residents from collecting snapping turtles within their state.
- No more than 15 trapping devices can be used per snapping turtle collection license.
- Trapping devices shall be:
 - Labeled with a waterproof tag that shows the licensee's name, WRC Customer Number, or Wildlife Collection License number.
 - Hoop traps or other trap style that allows for the unharmed release of any nontarget species or snapping turtles less than 13 inches.
 - Checked daily. This matches trap attendance requirements for most trapping activities.
- The minimum length for collecting snapping turtles was increased from 11 inches to 13 inches to protect females.
- *Justification for rule change:* There has been a growing demand for snapping turtle collection from North Carolina. Neighboring states have reduced or eliminated their commercial take of snapping turtles pushing more non-residents into our state. Limiting snapping turtle collection to North Carolina residents and increasing the minimum size of the curved carapace for legal collection will help conserve population numbers to allow for continued harvest in North Carolina. Implementing trap tag requirements and daily attendance aligns turtle trapping with regulations regarding trapping activity for other species.



Measuring a Snapping Turtle

Curved Carapace Length

Measure the length of a snapping turtle along the curvature of the carapace (top shell) with a flexible tape measure that conforms to the snapping turtle's shell from the nuchal scute (the scute directly behind the turtle's head) to the base of the notch where the two scutes above the tail meet.



CITES (bobcat and otter) Tag Fee:

- Removed the fee the Commission charges for otter and bobcat CITES tags (currently \$2.20 per tag) and created a limit on the number of tags that will be issued per request. Up to 50 bobcat CITES tags and 150 otter CITES tags may be issued per request.
- *Justification for rule change:* Fur prices have declined since their peak in the 1980's and the price of the CITES tags is becoming a larger percentage of the value of the pelt. In removing the CITES tag fee, the Commission limit the number of tags that will be issued per request. This will assure that while licensed trappers and hunters will still benefit from the removal of the fee, the lack of fee won't result in more CITES tags being issued than needed. Please note that the Commission does not have the authority to change the fee charged for fox tags; that fee is set in state law by the NC General Assembly.



Come meet 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!

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



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

One place you can always find us is at the annual North Carolina Trappers Convention. This year's convention is being held September 23rd and 24th, 2022 at the Johnston County Livestock Auction Arena (520 County Home Road, Smithfield, NC 27577). You can pick up the latest regulations digest, fox law publication, and fall furbearer newsletter.

And while you are at the convention, you can watch species-specific trap demonstrations by experienced and nationally well-known trapper, as well as purchase trapping supplies. For more information, go to nctrapper.org/2022-convention



The Wildlife Control Agent (WCA) Program

The WCA program allows trained and licensed 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. Licensed WCAs are authorized to issue permits for controlling certain wildlife species that are causing property damage.



Changes in 2021:

The NC General Assembly passed Session Law 2019-204, which created the Wildlife Control Agent (WCA) License and Alligator Control Agent (ACA) certification.

WCA Eligibility and Requirements:

To engage in wildlife damage control or wildlife removal activities for compensation, including eviction or exclusion activities, an annual WCA license is now required (\$50). Licensed trappers are excluded from the WCA license requirements when taking wild animals during the applicable open trapping season for that species.

To qualify for a WCA license, individuals must complete a WCA training course (the 2-day “certification” training course), take an exam and pass with a score of 80%, and have no misdemeanor convictions as specified in G.S. 113-294 or G.S. 14, Article 47. This 2-day training course covers laws, rules, health considerations, and humane handling techniques. Currently certified WDCAs do not have to take this course again to qualify for and purchase the WCA license.

WCA License Renewal and Revocation:

WCA license renewal is done by completing at least one Commission-approved continuing education course within the previous year (ncwildlife.org/wca for courses). If a license is not renewed for two consecutive calendar years, the individual will be ineligible for renewal and must repeat the requirements for licensure. WCA licenses may be revoked at any time.

Course Location and Dates

Three courses are offered annually. Two more courses remain for 2021 and are listed below. Courses will be held at McKimmon Center in Raleigh, NC; the WCA course is subject to change to a virtual course via Zoom at any time. The 2-day course fee is \$150, a \$25 reduction in costs from previous years and the WCA license fee is included in the registration fee. **To sign up, call us at 919-707-0061 or go to ncwildlife.org/wca**

Class Registration Deadline	Registration Fee	WCA Class Date
June 1, 2022	\$150	June 15-16, 2022 (Wednesday-Thursday)
September 1, 2022	\$150	September 14-15, 2022 (Wednesday-Thursday)

Skulls and Carcasses Wanted



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

Bobcat Skulls

Otter Skulls

Muskrat and Spotted Skunk Carcasses

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

Additionally, we're hoping to obtain muskrat carcasses to examine toxicology exposure and spotted skunk carcasses to collect locations and tissue samples, including genetic samples, to increase our knowledge of this elusive furbearer species. Please contact Ashley Hobbs (information below) to submit a carcass.



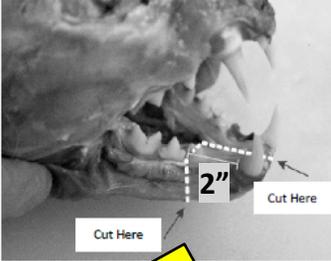
Projects such as these are important, as they help us monitor populations and improve our knowledge of North Carolina furbearers. We feel this information will help us maintain trapping for future generations.

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

NCWRC – BOBCAT & OTTER JAW SAMPLE ENVELOPE

1. **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.

2. 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.



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

7-DIGIT WRC CUSTOMER # (found on back of envelope) _____

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____

ZIP CODE: _____

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 cooperator patch and age report for your harvested animals.

Please send in your bobcat & otter jaws by April 30th!!

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 2 in. away from the canine. Follow instructions on pre-paid envelope to ship.

For more envelopes, contact:
Ashley Hobbs
Asst. Black Bear & Furbearer Biologist
919-698-4655
ashley.hobbs@ncwildlife.org

For more information visit:
ncwildlife.org/furcooperator

Rabies Statistics

During 2021, positive rabies results were obtained from 93 raccoons, 58 skunks, 37 foxes, 2 coyotes, 2 bobcats, and 1 beaver. The total number of reported terrestrial rabies cases (n=193) was a 18% decline from the number of cases detected during 2020 (n=235). 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 2 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 2021, 55 out of 100 counties documented a positive terrestrial wildlife rabies case. Mecklenburg County (n=20) had the highest number of positive terrestrial rabies, followed by Iredell (14), Forsyth (14), Catawba (12) and Guilford (11) counties.

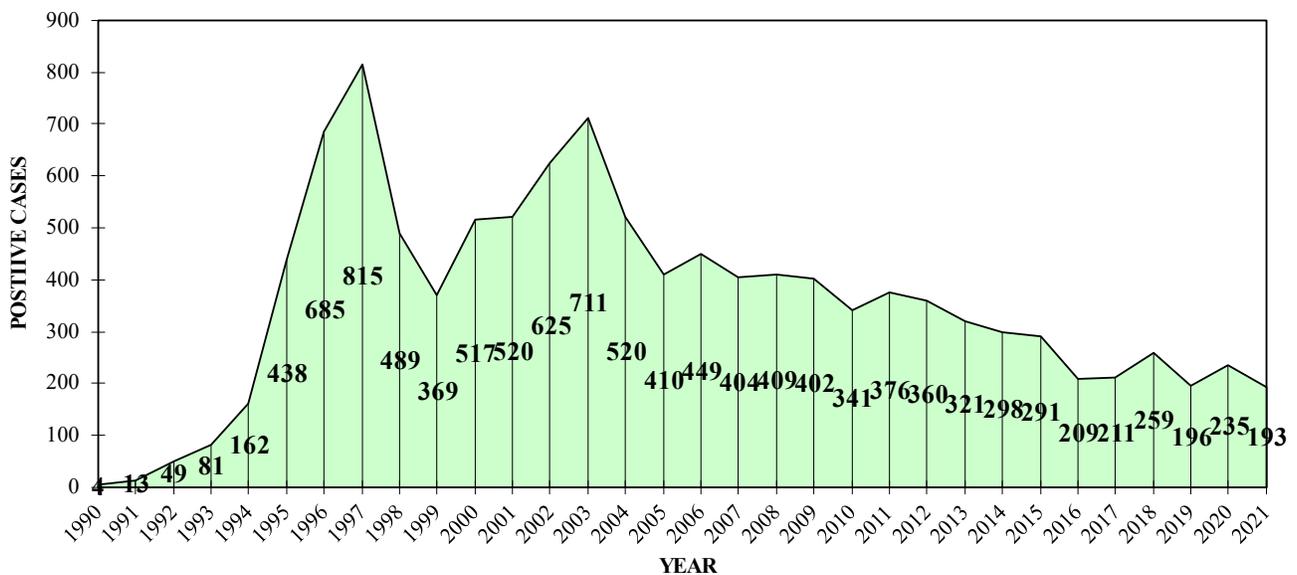


Figure 1. Positive terrestrial wildlife rabies cases reported from 1990 through 2021.

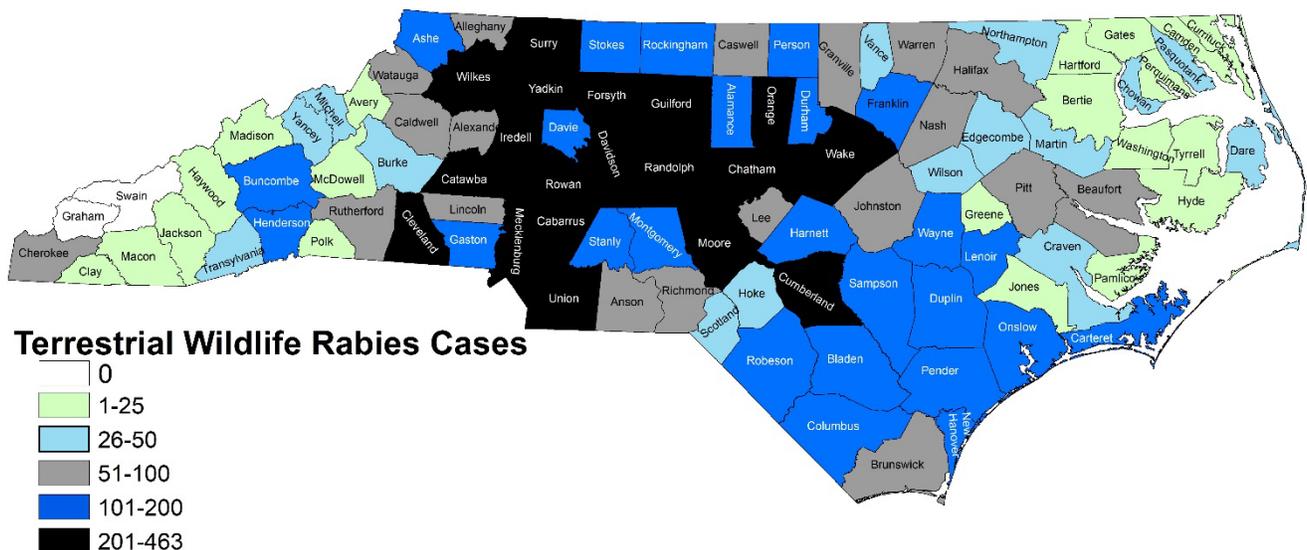


Figure 2. Number of positive rabies cases in terrestrial wildlife by county reported from 1990-2021. No positive terrestrial wildlife rabies cases in Graham and Swain counties.

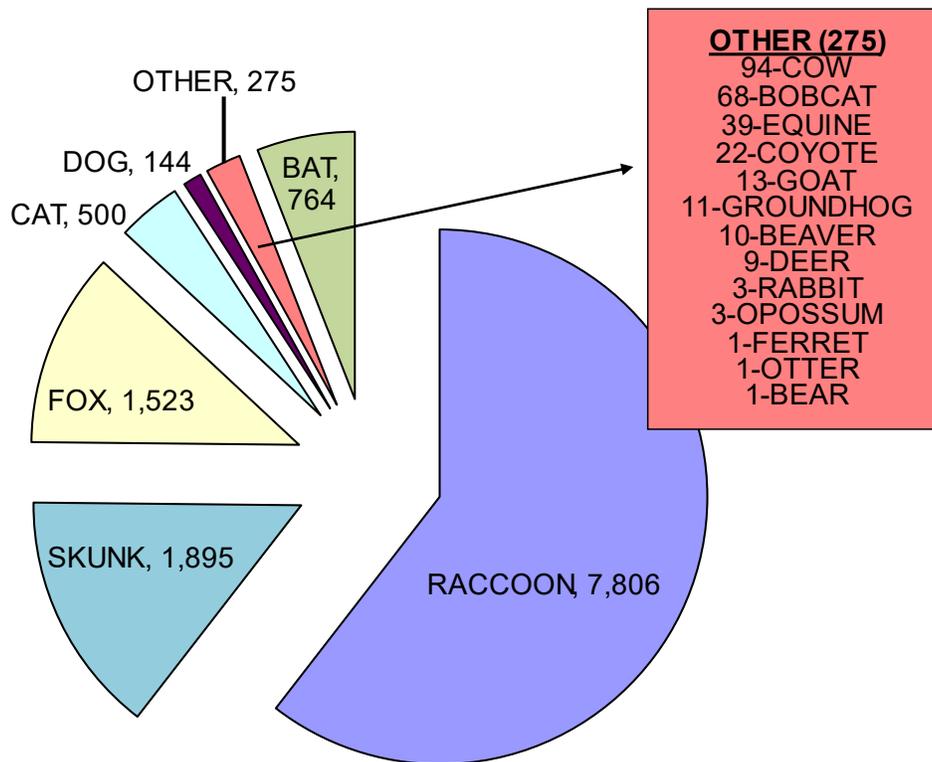


Figure 3. Number of positive rabies cases reported by species from 1990-2021.

Voluntary Trapper Harvest Mail Survey Results

The response rate for the 2020-21 mail survey was 44%, which was a decrease from the 2019-20 survey year (Table 1, page 10). During the 2020-21 trapping season, 44% of licensed trappers actively trapped during the season (Table 1).

The number of licensed trappers during the 2020-21 trapping season increased 10% from the previous trapping season (Table 1). This is the 3rd highest number of licensed trappers since the 1986-87 season. The increase in trapping license sales likely reflects the “COVID effect” that several states, including North Carolina, have experienced. During 2020 and 2021, many North Carolinians reconnected with the outdoors, including participating in regulated hunting and trapping. Of the licensed trappers that comprised the 2020-21 trapping season, 26% (n=863 trappers) had not purchased a trapping license in the previous 5 trapping seasons, indicating they were either new to trapping or had stopped trapping for greater than 5 seasons.

Despite the 10% increase in trapping license sales, the 2020-21 furbearer harvest level was 11% lower than that seen during the prior trapping season, driven by declines in river otters, striped skunk, opossum, red and gray foxes, coyotes, raccoon and beaver (Table 2, page 10). Bobcat (+45%) and muskrat (+10%) increased in harvest from the previous trapping season.

Table 1. Data from the trapper harvest mail survey, 2002-03 through 2020-2021.

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%
2018-19	2,958	46%	52%
2019-20	2,992	47%	46%
2020-21	3,281	44%	44%

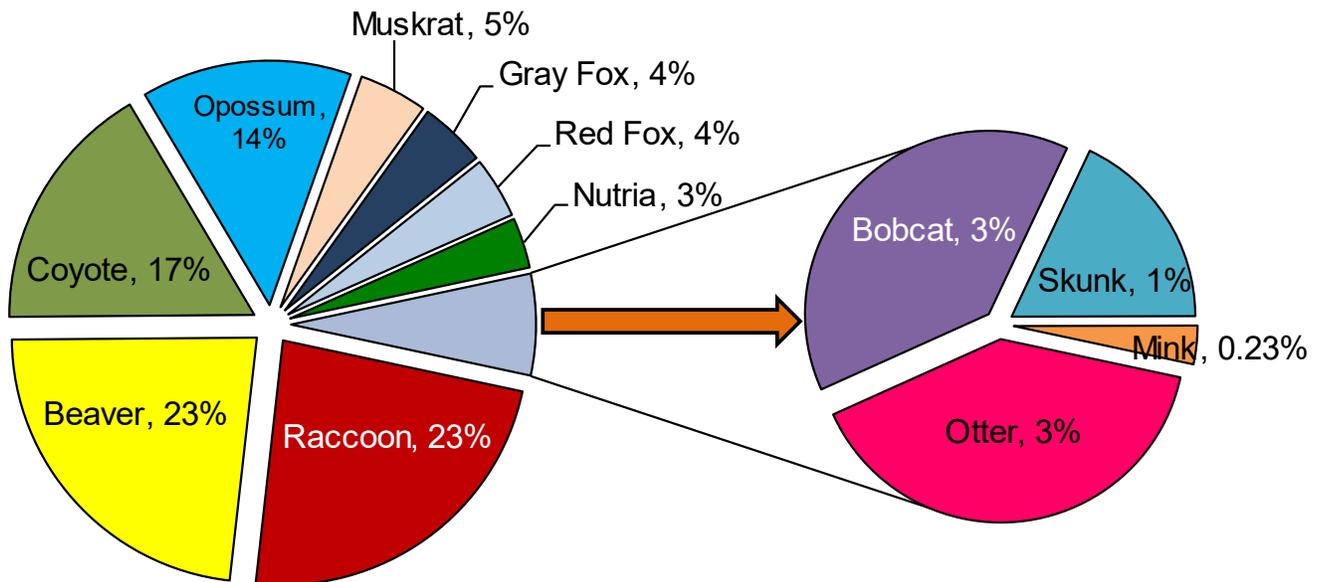


Figure 6. The wildlife species composition of the 2020-21 trapper harvest based on estimates from the voluntary trapper harvest survey.

Table 2. Estimated trapper harvest from the 2016-17 trapping season through the 2020-21 trapping season, based on voluntary trapper harvest surveys.

Species	2017-18		2018-19		2019-20		2020-21	
	Harvest	Prices	Harvest	Prices	Harvest	Prices	Harvest	Price
 Beaver	12,899	\$9.29	12,855	\$9.02	11,464	\$7.16	10,156	\$11.92
 Mink	181	\$5.24	174	\$6.51	99	\$3.92	100	\$4.88
 Muskrat	4,235	\$2.92	2,230	\$3.68	1,805	\$2.45	1,987	\$5.12
 Nutria	2,199	N/A	1,234	N/A	1,460	\$1.00	1,462	N/A
 Otter	1,702	\$20.78	2,019	\$24.38	1,927	\$16.37	1,176	\$20.57
 Bobcat	1,096	\$31.71	1,176	\$29.54	789	\$24.02	1,141	\$32.21
 Coyote	9,077	\$13.44	7,638	\$19.93	8,249	\$14.92	7,312	\$12.49
 Gray Fox	3,478	\$9.87	2,410	\$11.62	1,995	\$7.64	1,926	\$8.10
 Red Fox	2,165	\$6.35	1,716	\$11.68	2,173	\$7.51	1,778	\$4.96
 Opossum	8,829	\$1.00	8,350	\$1.14	7,513	\$0.58	6,100	\$0.64
 Raccoon	11,766	\$3.18	10,876	\$4.08	11,495	\$2.09	10,299	\$3.99
 Skunk	653	\$5.21	688	\$3.12	659	\$2.42	529	\$2.83
 Weasel	2	N/A	6	N/A	2	N/A	0	N/A
TOTAL	58,282		51,372		49,631		43,966	

Overall, pelt prices declined 29% from the previous trapping 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. See Table 2 on previous page for more information on pelt prices.

During the 2020-21 season, 52% of furbearers were harvested in the Coastal Plain Furbearer Management region, followed by the Piedmont and Mountain regions (Table 3). However, most foxes and skunks were trapped in the Piedmont region (Table 3). During the 2020-21 trapping season, raccoon and beaver were the most trapped furbearers, followed by coyote and opossums, matching trends from previous trapping seasons (Figure 6, page 10).

Table 3. Estimated trapper harvest by furbearer management region from the 2020-21 trapping season, based on voluntary trapper harvest surveys.

Species	Coastal Plain	Piedmont	Mountain
Beaver	6,257	3,007	706
Bobcat	758	156	210
Coyote	3,219	2,738	1,151
All Fox	1,310	1,739	618
Gray Fox	748	949	212
Mink	46	12	42
Muskrat	1,151	485	308
Nutria	1,289	77	8
Raccoon	4,454	3,833	1,674
Red Fox	562	791	406
River Otter	798	277	83
Skunk	50	292	187
Virginia Opossum	2,969	1,945	1,087
Weasels	0	0	0
Total	22,301	14,561	5,983
% of regional harvest	52%	34%	14%

North Carolina Hunter Harvest Survey

In addition to the survey we conduct of licensed trappers, the Commission 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 7 below, 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 2020-21 season, for every 1.34 coyotes harvested by hunters, trappers harvested 9.2 coyotes (Figure 8 on next page). Figures 9 and 10 on page 14 show the raccoon and bobcat harvest by both hunters and trappers. Figure 11 on page 15 shows the harvest of foxes by hunters.

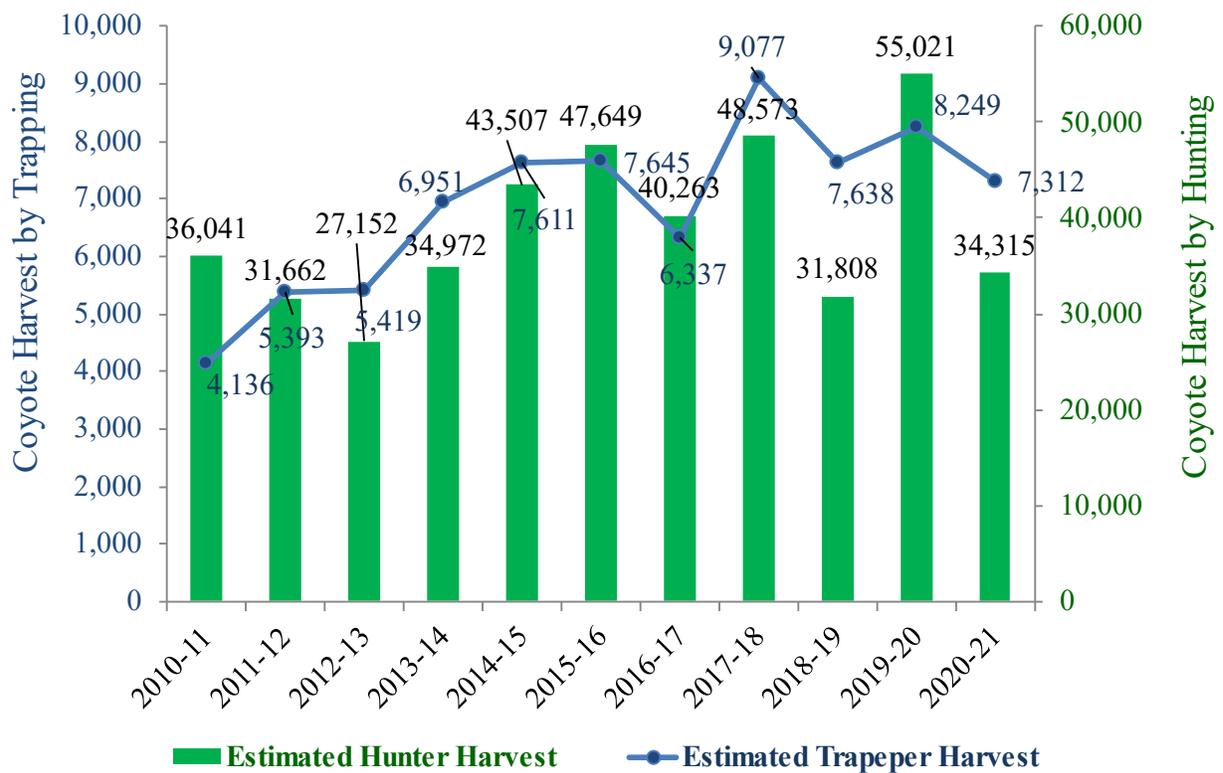


Figure 7. Estimated harvest of coyotes by hunters (green bars) and trappers (blue line) from the 2010-11 seasons through the 2020-21 seasons.

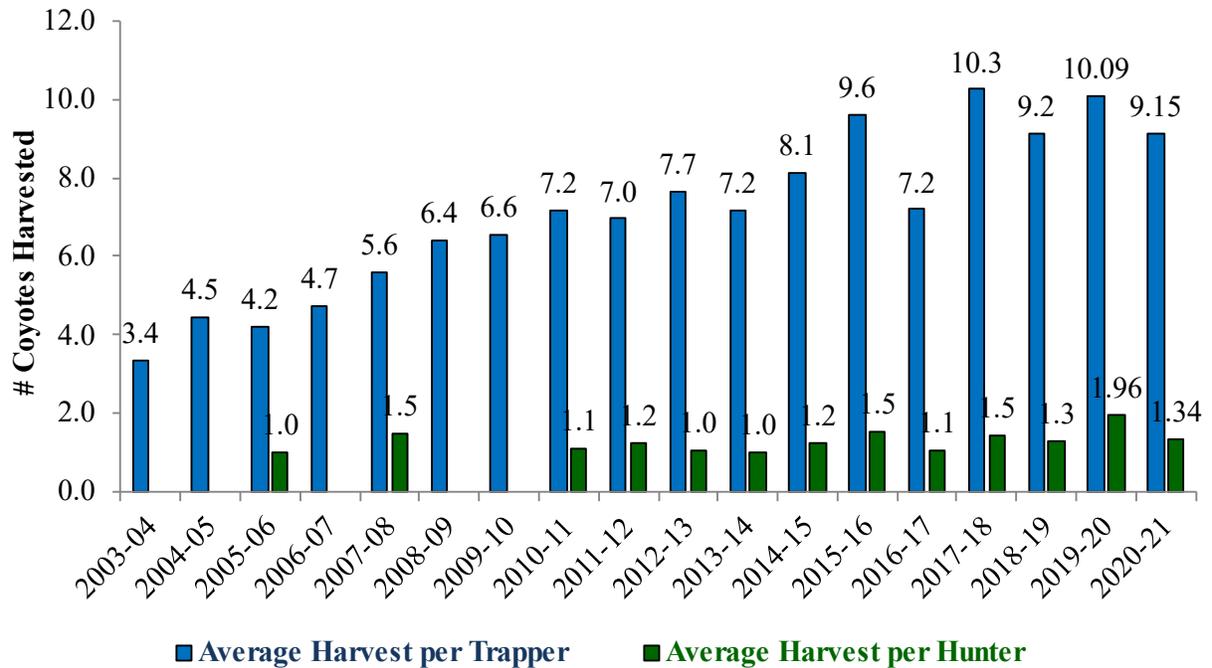


Figure 8. Average number of coyotes harvested by hunters (green bar) and by trappers (blue bar) from the 2003-04 season through the 2020-21 season.

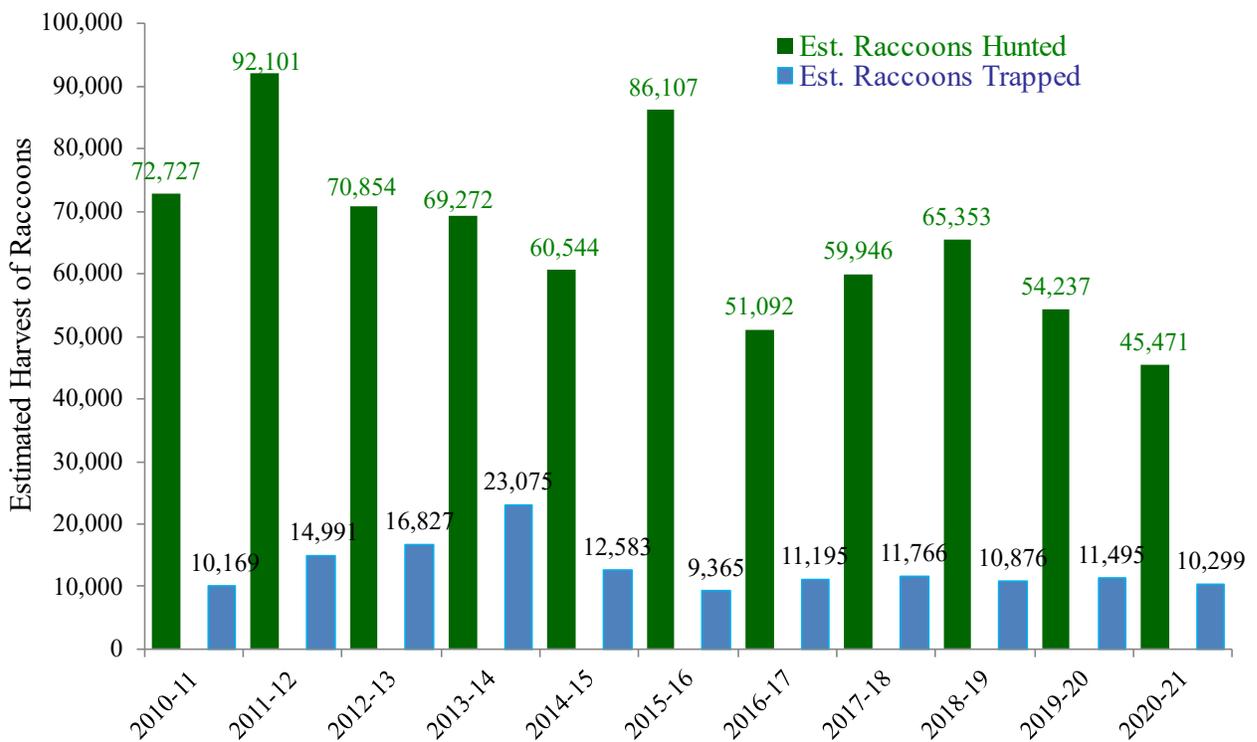


Figure 9. Estimated harvest of raccoons by hunters (green bars) and trappers (blue line) from the 2010-11 season through the 2020-21 season.

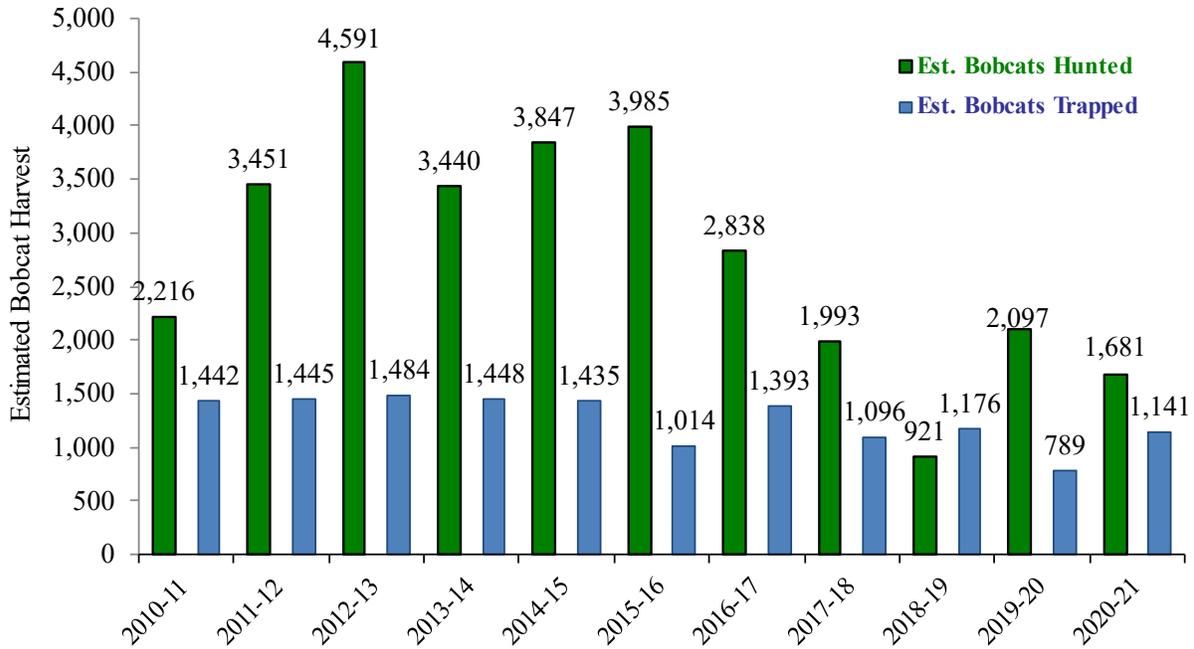


Figure 10. Estimated harvest of bobcats by hunters (green bars) and trappers (blue line) from the 2010-11 season through the 2019-20 season.

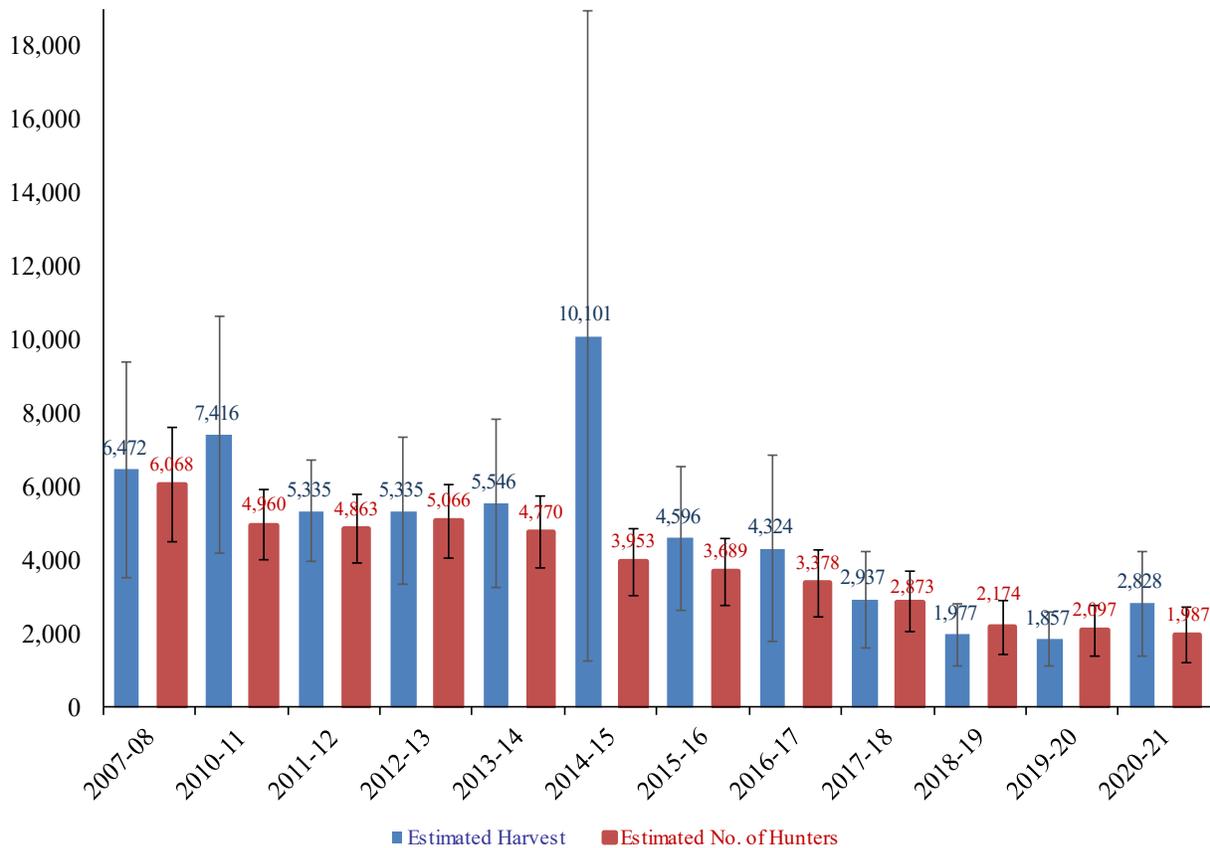


Figure 11. Estimated harvest of foxes (red bars) by hunters (blue bars) from the 2010-11 season through the 2020-21 season.

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.



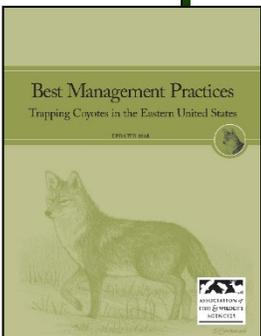
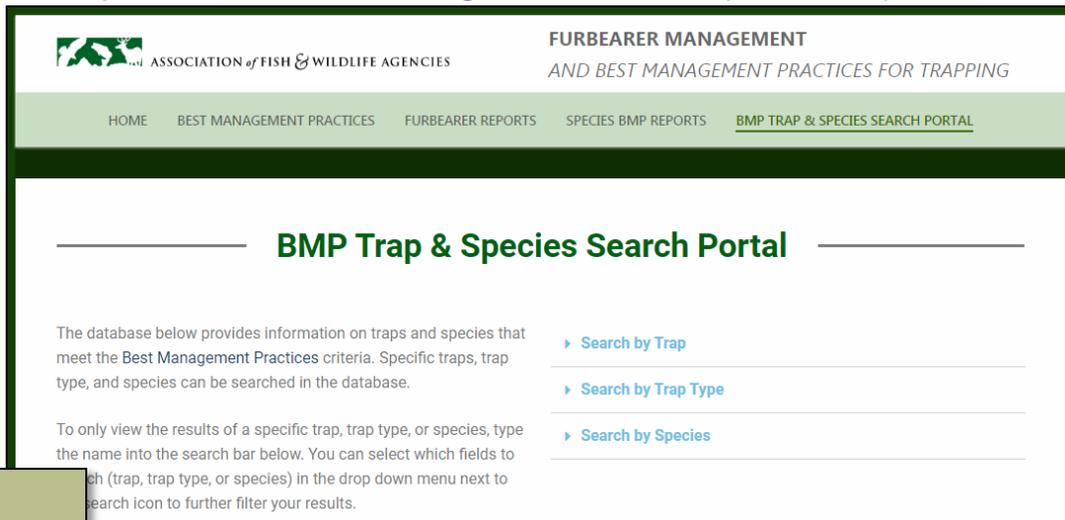
BMPs are intended to inform people about traps and trapping systems considered to be state-of-the-art in animal welfare, efficiency, selectivity, and practicality.

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, trapping key messages, 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.