



New Jersey Furbearer Management Newsletter

Spring 2013



TRAPPER AND HUNTER SURVEY REMINDER – *The 2012-13 NJ Trapper Survey was mailed to all 2012 New Jersey trapping license purchasers on or about March 30. If you received a survey and have not returned it please complete it ASAP and return in the stamped, return-addressed envelope included with the survey. Survey results provide important information used to evaluate, plan and improve recreational trapping in NJ. They are also used to estimate harvests for furbearer species, evaluate population trends and calculate the value of trapping to the State's economy.*

2011-12 New Jersey Trapper Harvest Survey Summaries

The survey was mailed to 1049 licensed trappers and 459 responses were received by May 15, 2011 (43.8 % response rate).

Summary of participation:

Species	Number of 2011-12 active respondents	Estimated number of active trappers	Mean experience (years)	Estimated total effort (trap-nights)	Reported (or estimated) capture
Beaver	77	178	9.27	14,041.58	711*
Coyote	60	138	7.19	110,415.31	162*
Fisher	0	Unknown			0
Gray fox	30	69	12.88	90,349.04	106
Mink	85	196	15.11	321,186.40	1,631
Muskrat	165	380	24.66	563,472.34	44,902
Nutria	0	Unknown			0
Opossum	77	178	15.60	62,494.04	943
Raccoon	207	477	16.14	348,724.16	9,549
Red fox	155	357	14.07	492,489.55	5,328
River otter	28	65	8.07	1,885.65	36*
Skunk	41	95	17.61	40,409.55	300
Weasel	3	7	3.00	0.00	7
Total	294	678			63,678

*Reported harvest

Summary of fur values:

Species	Estimated value (US\$)	Average pelt price (US\$)	% Trappers	Rec days	Trap-nights to harvest
Beaver	\$ 19,221	\$ 27.03	26.2%	2,720	19.7
Bobcat		-	0.3%	0	0.0
Coyote	\$ 2,514	\$ 15.52	20.4%	6,056	681.6
Fisher		-			
Gray fox	\$ 1,761	\$ 16.61	10.2%	3,021	851.9
Mink	\$ 34,645	\$ 21.24	28.9%	7,216	196.9
Muskrat	\$ 311,827	\$ 6.94	56.1%	10,862	12.5
Nutria		-			
Opossum	\$ 2,408	\$ 2.55	26.2%	4,772	66.3
Raccoon	\$ 107,632	\$ 11.27	70.4%	18,803	36.5
Red fox	\$ 145,138	\$ 27.24	52.7%	13,329	92.4
River	\$ 2,160	\$ 60.00	9.5%	655	52.4
Skunk	\$ 1,130	\$ 3.77	13.9%	3,798	134.8
Weasel	\$ -	\$ -	1.0%	145	0.0
Total	\$ 628,436			71,378	

Fur Prices from Space Farms Fur Sale- March 2012

Offered	Sold	Species	Total	Average	Median	Est. Value
345	230	Beaver	\$ 7,299.00	\$ 26.99	\$ 29.00	\$ 9,311
40	40	Coyote	\$ 1,131.50	\$ 24.88	\$ 30.00	
3	3	Fisher, female	\$ 193.00	\$ 59.00	\$ 59.00	\$ 177
2	2	Fisher, male	\$ 157.50	\$ 78.75	\$ 78.75	\$ 158
82	64	Gray fox	\$ 2,181.50	\$ 29.84	\$ 28.00	\$ 2,447
83	46	Mink, female	\$ 725.50	\$ 13.77	\$ 15.25	\$ 1,143
268	174	Mink, male	\$ 586.00	\$ 21.70	\$ 24.75	\$ 5,817
2832	2013	Muskrat	\$22,556.75	\$ 8.84	\$ 9.55	\$ 25,033
306	104	Opossum	\$ 296.75	\$ 2.33	\$ 2.45	\$ 714
15	9	Otter	\$ 790.00	\$ 84.86	\$ 93.00	\$ 1,273
1772	730	Raccoon	\$ 8,502.75	\$ 9.38	\$ 9.00	\$ 16,613
1006	521	Red fox	\$19,277.50	\$ 32.63	\$ 31.13	\$ 32,821
34	58	Skunk	\$ 314.25	\$ 4.61	\$ 4.75	\$ 157
4	4	Weasel	\$ 5.75	\$ 1.58	\$ 1.00	\$ 6
						\$ 95,668

New Jersey Coyotes: where are they?

Municipalities with 80 reports* or more

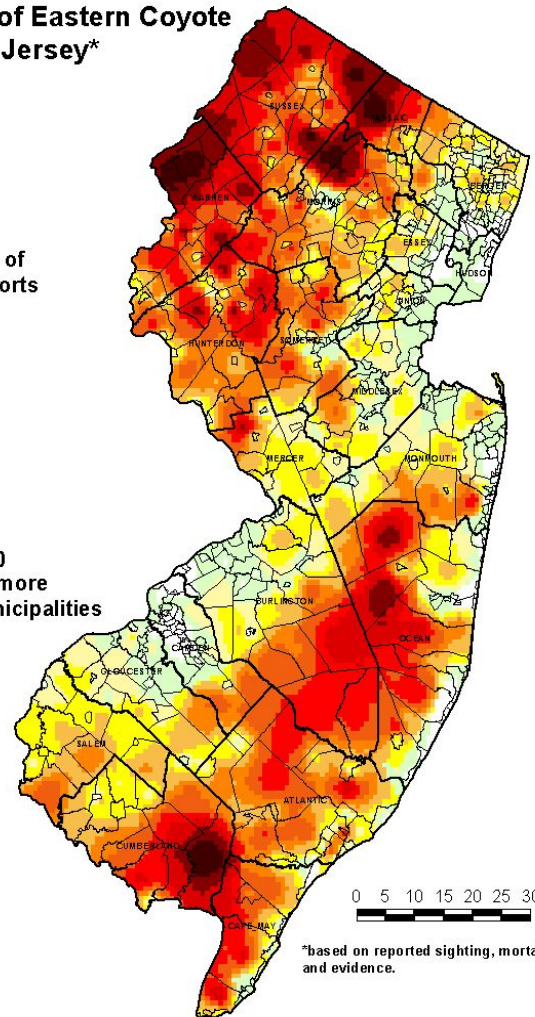
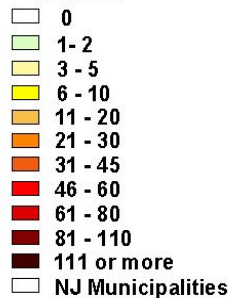
County	Municipality	Reports
Cumberland	Maurice River Township	147
Warren	Blairstown Township	131
Passaic	West Milford Township	129
Sussex	Sparta Township	127
Morris	Jefferson Township	123
Sussex	Vernon Township	117
Morris	Rockaway Township	113
Warren	Knowlton Township	112
Hunterdon	Clinton Township	103
Ocean	Manchester Township	103
Warren	Hardwick Township**	100
Warren	Allamuchy Township	99
Hunterdon	Union Township	96
Sussex	Sandyston Township	93
Ocean	Jackson Township	93
Warren	White Township	91
Warren	Mansfield Township	90
Sussex	Frankford Township	90
Sussex	Wantage Township	89
Hunterdon	Lebanon Township	88
Mercer	Hopewell Township	84
Hunterdon	Tewksbury Township	83
Sussex	Stillwater Township	83
Cape May	Lower Township	82
Warren	Hope Township	82
Sussex	Montague Township	81

*total number of reports, all years; includes mortalities, sighting and any other incidents.

**Includes Hardwick and Pahaquarry Townships.

Range of Eastern Coyote in New Jersey*

Frequency of coyote reports as of 7/1/12



*based on reported sighting, mortalities and evidence.

Furbearer Facts and Fur Handling Tips

Raccoon – *Procyon lotor*

What is the name of a medium-sized animal with a long, ringed tail and black mask? Everyone knows these are the well-known characteristics of the raccoon. The raccoon is second only to the muskrat for the total numbers harvested (*2011-12 New Jersey Trapper Harvest Survey*) and tops the muskrat for numbers of trappers pursuing the species each year.

The animal-

The average weight of raccoons differs by sex and age. Adult male weights average from about 12 to 20 pounds and adult females from 11 to 18 pounds, overall length of an adult is 20 to 40 inches, including the bushy, ringed tail.

When it snows or when temperatures drop to or below 20 degrees or so, raccoons will den until warmer weather again arrives. The raccoon's winter sleep is not true hibernation since raccoons don't experience the extreme slowing of heart rate, lowering of body temperature and slowing of respiration or metabolism that occurs in true hibernating mammals like woodchucks. If the winter temperature hits ranges above freezing and the snow isn't too deep, raccoons may wake up and wander out to forage for food.

Distribution

Raccoons are found in every county in the state of New Jersey and are found in even the most urban areas. It's difficult to describe habitat- either urban or rural where the adaptable raccoon will not live.

The raccoon was originally found only on the North American continent except areas of the Rocky Mountains. Since the 1930s, raccoons have ranged so far north into Canada that native Indians have no name for it. Raccoons have also been introduced into Europe and now occupy a large portion of western Germany.

Reproduction

Mating generally takes place from early February through March (sometimes as late as June). Yearling females usually breed in their second year, but may breed younger when conditions are optimum. Birth occurs from mid-April through May following a 63-day gestation. Young are born with eyes closed and will nurse for 2-4 months. Juveniles will remain with their mothers until the next breeding season.

Mortality

As raccoons are fairly large, night-wandering animals that are very agile tree climbers, they have few serious natural enemies. The young in the first few months of life may sometimes fall prey to coyotes, great horned owls and domestic dogs. An adult raccoon comes equipped with thick fur, powerful muscles and sharp teeth to even the odds greatly when it comes to a fight. Pound for pound adult raccoons can beat-up most any dog as large or many even larger than themselves. Many tales exist regarding the craftiness of raccoons when followed by hounds and all the amazing tricks the raccoon will pull to shake the hounds off the trail. But, when chased/pursued the animal generally heads to the nearest tree which it easily climbs and can remain clinging all day, or at least until its pursuer loses interest and leaves the area. The major causes of death for raccoons in New Jersey are motor vehicle collisions, disease, predation and trapping and hunting. As trapping and hunting declines, mortality from the other causes increases.

Raccoons are susceptible to a wide range/variety of diseases. And, as with any wildlife species, disease is most common in over-crowded habitats where the animals become far too abundant. This includes residential

areas and parks where hunting and trapping are prohibited. Healthy populations exist in rural areas where hunters and trappers help reduce the overabundance of the animals. Parvovirus, canine distemper, and rabies are viral infections that cause mortality in raccoons. Rabies is capable of producing widespread deaths when outbreaks spread through a dense population of raccoons. Outbreaks of rabies have occurred in New Jersey in the last 10 to 15 years.

Baylisascaris procyonis, or raccoon round worm is fatal not only to the raccoons but may also be to people and pets. This parasite is probably the key factor in the decline of the Eastern Wood Rat in New Jersey. Raccoons also host parasitic nematodes that cause trichinosis. Other parasitic roundworms, tapeworms and flukes of the intestinal tract and internal organs are not generally fatal to the animal. However, when worms become extremely abundant in the animal, they do cause health issues. Raccoons are susceptible to such external parasites as biting and sucking lice, ticks and fleas.

Fur Handling-

- Trappers harvest raccoons because they are fairly easy to catch and they wear a durable pelt of good monetary value. Raccoon fur is used to make high quality coats, collars, hood trims and hats. Below are some tips for to help trappers/hunters realize better pelt prices from their raccoons: Check live holding traps on a regular basis to minimize damage to fur.
- Hunters should keep dogs away from raccoons as much as possible as bite marks from dogs pull hair and underfur. This also leaves unsightly stains on the leather. Where there is evidence of dog bite marks, the pelts are usually downgraded.
- Do not pile freshly-killed raccoon carcasses on top of each other. Separate them to allow proper cooling thus avoiding taints and hair-slip.
- Skin the animal as soon as possible – remember, as with all furbearers, freshly trapped raccoons are easiest to skin and, and what is most important, skin them ASAP to avoid taint in the belly region.

Skinning-

The starting cut is made from the heel of one foot to the other foot passing about an inch under the anus following a line separating the longer guard hair from the shorter belly fur.

This cut will take advantage of the long guard hairs located in this area and easily add length to the pelt. Freshly-skinned raccoon pelts should be left flesh side out until the pelt is cooled. After cooling, the pelt can be turned fur-out until fleshing. Simply turn the pelt fur-out, roll into a tight ball and place in a plastic bag for freezing. Fold the head and tail to the center before rolling the pelt into a ball. Rolled and bagged this way raccoon pelts can be stored in a freezer without the worry of freezer-burn of the pelt. Before thawing for fleshing remove the pelts from the plastic bag and separate them (if there is more than one pelt per bag).

Pelt Preparation-

- As with any furbearer pelt always brush out dirt, blood mats and burrs. Dirty and/or blood-stained pelts should be washed. The removal of burrs and mats is important as the fleshing tool may cut into the flesh-side of the pelt at this lump of debris.
- All fat and gristle must be removed starting behind the ears and working down the length of the pelt. Pelts not sufficiently cooled can be difficult to flesh. The use of sawdust on the fat will help to keep the fur clean as well as absorbing fat and grease/oil.

- Again, and this is important, the tail must be split and scraped clean of flesh and fat. If sawdust is used, make sure it is scraped clean from the fleshed side of the pelt to give a fresh appearance when dried. Please remember that the sawdust does not affect grade, but it can stain the flesh side of the pelt.
- Sew any holes that appear in the hide. There is no need to waste time sewing small holes like as .22 bullet holes.
- Be careful not to over-scrape pelts, this is important for early pelts where the hair roots can be exposed/damaged- this is less of an issue when pelts are prime.

Stretching/boarding-

- Make sure you select the correct-sized wire stretchers or wooden boards for raccoons.
- Pull the pelt snugly on the board by working the sides, especially in the neck and belly areas. It is important these areas are properly stretched so maximum length is achieved without overstretching.
- When you're using boards, gather the fur and tail towards the base of the tail toward the edge of the board. This helps to ensure dense fur in the inspection area. If the base of the pelt near the tail is pulled away from the tail it will give the fur a poor appearance. This step is especially important with early season pelts, which lack fur depth and density. Keep the base of the pelt, (skirt) in a straight line with the base of the tail ensures maximum length of the pelt.
- If wire stretchers are used, stretch the pelt in the same manner as with boards. Make sure to bend your wire frames to conform to the diagram indicating recommended shape. The hooks are placed into the base of the tail and the legs. The edges of the pelt should be pulled down and held with clothes pins, so the skirt is straight across the line with the base of the tail.
- Do not stretch the tail long—push it towards the inspection area. Wire or plastic screen may be used over top of the tail if desired. On wire stretchers, a wooden insert may be used to tack the tail out or it can be left to hang loose to dry.
- The legs are now tacked on the side of the board, or in the case of wire frames the legs are pulled down.
- Do not pull down tight on the legs as you will rob fur density from the inspection area. Keep the legs short but snug.
- Remove any further bits of fat or sawdust. Sawdust allowed to dry on the pelt doesn't look good and sometimes stains the leather.
- Cut the front legs short. Do not cut flush with the pelt- a too-big hole results. Trim off the lower lip.
- Trim out the inspection window. The cut should be made no higher than the penis opening (or in the same vicinity on females), taking care not to extend the cut into the flanks. Never cut a window after the pelt dries. This will cause a weak edge, which is sharp and may tear. A window cut out green will 'seal' at the edge and be strong when the pelt is dry.
- Dry the pelt slowly; wipe off any excess oil which appears on the leather.

Correctly Boarded Pelt

- 1.Shoulder is stretched to maximize length.
- 2.Skin is tacked toward the inspection area to increase density.
- 3.Tail is pushed toward inspection area to increase density.
- 4.Maximum length obtained as the skirt is in a straight line to the base of the tail. Measurement is taken at this point.



Incorrectly Boarded Pelt

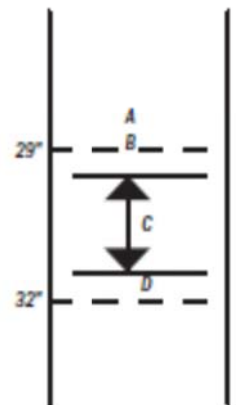
1. Shoulder not pulled tight.
2. Skin is pulled away from inspection area weakening the fur.
3. Tail is pulled too tight, taking fur density from the inspection area
4. Length is lost from not bringing the edges down to the base of the tail.
Measurement is taken at this point



When stretching a raccoon, make certain they are stretched well into the required size. If they are exactly to the lower limit, shrinkage will result to the next lower size. If the pelt is too tight into the next size then back off to the upper limits of the lower size.

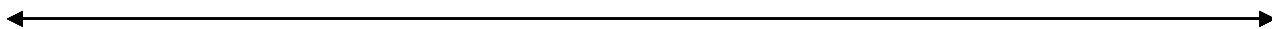
Example for 2XL – 29” – 32”

- 1.If pelt easily stretches to this point then pull the pelt into the next size (area C).
 - 2.If the pelt is brought only to this point it will shrink back into the size smaller.
 - 3.Preferred area of stretch to ensure good size and eliminate borderline sizes.
- If a pelt reaches this area and is too tight into the next size, back off into area C for good heavy fur density.



Storing Dried Pelts

Dried pelts may be wrapped in plastic garbage bags and held over in the freezer. However, it is desirable to market pelts as soon as possible. Pelts should be removed from plastic when taken out of the freezer and allowed to dry for a couple of days before shipping.



***Please report the capture of any bobcat.
- Call: 877-WARNDEP (877-927-6337)***





Please Remember to Report Your Coyotes!

Coyotes harvested by any method must be reported to a New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife Regional Law Enforcement office within 24 hours.

Regional NJ Fish and Wildlife Law Enforcement Office phone numbers:

Northern Region Office 908-735-8240
Central Region Office 609-259-2120
Southern Region Office 856-629-0555



New Jersey Fishers

Please report fisher captures - Call: 877-WARNDEP (877-927-6337)

There haven't been any fishers caught in snares or conibears by New Jersey trappers- at least not yet. Reports of road-killed and of box-trapped "fishers" have been received however and the box-trapped "fishers" were examined in the trap. Thus far the reported box-trapped "fishers" have turned out to be either mink or weasel. The road-kills turned out to be mink, usually big males.

Photos of fishers have been taken over the last few years; several by trail cameras in northern Sussex County and one photographed in a tree in northern Warren County.