



New Jersey Furbearer Management Newsletter

Fall 2019

New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife
Bureau of Wildlife Management
Upland Wildlife and Furbearer Project



Important Upcoming Dates:

- **Trapper Education courses are scheduled. Call 877-2-HUNT NJ for registration and further information.**
October 12 and 13, Tuckahoe WMA (Lenape Farms) in Atlantic County
October 19 and 20, Hackettstown Fish Hatchery in Warren County
October 24 (evening) and October 27, Joint Base McGuire Dix Lakehurst Range 14 in Burlington County
- **October 1-31 – Application period for beaver and otter permits**
- **Sunday October 6 – New Jersey Trappers Association annual convention at Space Farms**
- **Sunday November 3 – New Jersey Fur Harvesters annual convention at Atsion Recreation Area.**
- **Black Bear, Fall Turkey and Deer Permits now available.**

Remember:

- To trap or use cable restraints a person must have first passed a Fish and Wildlife-approved trapper education course which included use of cable restraints and carry the certificate while trapping.
- Any person must be at least 12 years of age in order to obtain a trapping license.
- **TAKE A KID TRAPPING!**



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Changes in Coyote and Gray Fox Harvest Reporting

As in the past, all coyotes harvested in any manner must be reported within 24 hours. However, beginning this year, GRAY FOX harvests must also be reported within 24 hours. Harvest must be reported by calling a dedicated phone line at (609) 748-2058 and leaving your name, CID# and a daytime telephone number.

Reporting procedures for coyote and gray fox will change once the Division's new licensing and harvest reporting system, **Automated Harvest Reporting System (AHRS)**, becomes operational later this year (check our website for updates). Once operational, coyote and gray fox harvests will be handled through the AHRS as follows:

- Make your report via mobile phone or computer at www.NJ.WildlifeLicense.com or by calling 1-855-I HUNT NJ (1-855-448-6865)
- Use the same location information that is used to report your deer harvest. This can be found at www.NJFishandWildlife.com/ahrs_deer_viewer.htm
- Note: the harvest of RED fox DO NOT need to be reported

2018-19 NJ Trapper Harvest Survey Results

Harvest by County and Species

County	Estimated Harvest						Reported Harvest					Total Harvest
	Mink	Muskrat	Gray fox	Red fox	Opossum	Raccoon	Skunk	Weasel	Beaver	Otter	Coyote	
Atlantic	14	768	12	43	26	86	26	3	36	4	7	1,025
Bergen	-	-	-	29	-	34	-	-	12	1	2	78
Burlington	12	91	63	632	11	166	3	6	45	3	15	1,047
Camden	-	11	-	23	37	43	6	-	21	-	-	141
Cape May	38	159	-	3	-	92	-	-	-	-	-	292
Cumberland	35	54	9	52	6	366	6	3	14	7	9	561
Essex	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
Gloucester	6	583	9	23	86	343	26	-	31	4	-	1,111
Hudson	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
Hunterdon	98	60	-	898	97	329	14	-	4	-	11	1,511
Mercer	3	54	-	20	9	123	-	-	37	1	-	247
Middlesex	20	40	-	61	3	114	3	-	12	1	-	254
Monmouth	3	40	-	136	83	432	6	3	20	2	-	725
Morris	390	168	12	309	109	312	134	-	75	3	10	1,522
Ocean	9	74	-	89	14	186	9	-	39	6	7	433
Passaic	-	-	-	23	17	134	31	-	10	2	4	221
Salem	59	1,572	3	20	40	192	20	-	8	1	4	1,918
Somerset	211	330	-	355	-	63	-	-	12	-	6	977
Sussex	9	515	12	271	74	117	-	-	168	3	5	1,174
Union	-	-	-	3	-	14	-	-	-	-	-	17
Warren	124	37	12	623	37	132	6	-	38	1	64	1,074
Total	1,027	4,558	130	3,613	649	3,277	289	12	608	39	144	14,744

Harvest by Region

Region	Mink	Muskrat	Gray fox	Red fox	Opossum	Raccoon	Skunk	Weasel	Beaver	Otter	Coyote
North	51%	16%	27%	35%	37%	22%	59%	0%	54%	26%	59%
Central	33%	13%	0%	43%	32%	38%	11%	25%	20%	26%	17%
South	16%	71%	73%	22%	32%	39%	30%	75%	25%	49%	24%

North: Bergen, Essex, Hudson, Morris, Passaic, Sussex and Warren counties (27% of resident trappers)

Central: Hunterdon, Mercer, Middlesex, Monmouth, Ocean, Somerset and Union counties (29% of resident trappers)

South: Atlantic, Burlington, Camden, Cape May, Cumberland, Gloucester and Salem counties (44% of resident trappers)

Number of Trappers, Trapper Effort and Estimated Fur Value

Species	# Active respondents	Est. # of trappers	Est. # trap-nights	Est. pelt price	Est. value (US\$)	Catch/100 trap-nights	Est. # released	Total captures
Beaver	138	206	9,718	\$ 11.50	\$ 6,994	6	0	608
Otter	78	147	3,036	\$ 26.79	\$ 1,045	1	0	39
Mink	54	156	56,880	\$ 6.51	\$ 6,685	2	14	1,042
Muskrat	64	185	78,188	\$ 3.57	\$ 16,265	6	0	4,558
Nutria	0		0					0
Coyote	114	329	352,332	\$ 28.39	\$ 4,088	0	0	144
Red fox				\$ 6.39	\$ 23,090	1	118	3,732
Gray fox	26	75	21,924	\$ 18.71	\$ 2,430	< 1	6	136
Opossum	102	294	64,540	\$ 1.91	\$ 1,240	1	263	909
Raccoon				\$ 5.03	\$ 16,492	5	260	3,535
Skunk				\$ 6.17	\$ 1,782	< 1	107	395
Weasel	7	20	1,766	\$ 3.74	\$ 43	< 1	0	12
					\$ 80,155			

2019-20 Fur Market Forecast

What we have been hearing for the past several years remains the same with a few hopeful upturns in fur prices for several species. However, what was important last year still holds for this year and for the New Jersey trapper targeting raccoon, foxes, opossum, muskrat, mink, beaver or otter; expect another tough outlook for fur prices in 2020.

Remember - *in tough times, only the best furs sell*. Be very selective on what you spend your time targeting, harvesting and handling. Remember, only the best of the best will sell in a slow fur market. Low grade and unprimed furs are near worthless while fur with any kind of damage will have little or no value. Take the extra time to improve your fleshing technique, and do not try to over-stretch your pelt – that will only expose any flaws in the pelt to graders (they have been grading fur for a long time and it is nearly impossible to pull the wool over their eyes). Projected average fur values and fur peak prime periods by species are as follows:

Species	Avg. Value	Prime Peak
Beaver	\$10-15	15 Dec-28 Feb
Otter	\$25-30	15 Nov-31 Dec
Mink	\$5-10	15 Nov-31 Jan
Muskrat	\$3-4	1 Feb-15 Mar
Coyote	\$25-30	15 Nov-15 Jan
Fox	\$15-20	15 Nov-15 Jan
Raccoon	\$5-10	15 Nov-15 Jan
Skunk	\$6-8	15 Nov-15 Feb
Opossum	\$1-2	15 Nov-31 Jan
Weasel	\$3-4	1 Dec-15 Feb

Remember all the time you spent in the past to put your fur up right, only to be disappointed by auction results? In days of “not so good” fur prices it may be worth considering getting your furs tanned. There is always the possibility of selling the tanned, finished pelts and making a profit. Or, giving your fur as a gift once it is tanned. Ask other trappers or members of the NJ State trappers associations. They’ll point you in the right direction to get your harvested pelts into truly memorable items. Furs look beautiful when they are tanned and in “finished” condition.

If you are having garments made from your fur, many garment makers request that the fur is garment-tanned prior to their receiving it. Did you ever consider getting a coon-skin, fox or coyote hat made, or pillows or blankets made from your beaver skins? Now might be the time.



Furbearer Fun Facts: The Raccoon

The raccoon (*Procyon lotor*) is found across southern Canada south to northern South America. It is considered abundant in New Jersey where it has both hunting (Oct. 1-Mar. 1) and trapping seasons (Nov. 15-Mar. 15).

Raccoons are amazingly adaptable mammals and live in a variety of habitats from woodlands and forests far from mankind to cities where they thrive in storm sewers and forage by raiding garbage cans. Almost everyone will recognize the raccoon by its “bandit” mask and by its bushy ringed tail. This facial mask; a black band across the eyes and the bushy tail with anywhere from four to ten black rings are the animal’s most distinct features. Coloration may vary slightly with habitat but tends to range from gray to reddish brown to buff.

The body is stocky, ranging from 28 to 42 inches long, and the animal generally weighs from 10 to 30 pounds. There are records of raccoons weighing in excess of 40 pounds, but this is uncommon. Males are usually heavier than females, but the difference is often indistinguishable. Weight and size may vary with habitat. Wooded wetlands or at least woodlands near water are preferred habitats, although raccoons can be found in farmlands as well as suburban and very urban areas. In an urban/suburban setting with



readily available man-discarded refuse, a raccoon may only need about 12 acres, but most home range sizes are 100-250 acres.

Thanks to their highly dexterous forepaws, raccoons are opportunistic omnivores consuming both plants (fruits and nuts such as wild grapes, cherries, apples, persimmons, berries, beechnuts and acorns, as well as commercially grown fruit and produce such as peaches, plums, figs, citrus fruits, watermelons, walnuts, and corn) and animals (crayfish, insects, rodents, frogs, and bird eggs), in addition to trash and other food available in suburban and urban areas. They also consume carrion along roadway, and often become victims themselves.

Raccoons are mainly nocturnal and are seldom active during daylight hours. Their gait is a shuffle-like walk, but they can run up to 15 mph. They are strong swimmers, but do not particularly like to swim as water adds to their weight. Raccoons have excellent hearing and night vision. During periods of extended cold or snow, they will remain in their den and sleep for long periods at a time, but do not hibernate. An extremely agile climber, they generally prefer to den in trees, but they may also use woodchuck burrows, caves, mine shafts, deserted buildings, barns, garages, rain sewers, or houses (attics or basement of occupied houses).

Female raccoons usually mate at one year of age, while males do not breed until they are two years. Breeding occurs from January to February and the year's single litter of 1-8 (average 3-4) is born 65 days later (March-April). At birth, both the ear and eye canals are closed and do not open until the animal is about three weeks of age. Young raccoons are weaned at 2-3 months of age but continue to hunt with their mother and are under her care for about one year. The year-old young will then disperse 1-2 miles away from its mother's home area, although some young males may move much further.

Most raccoons do not live past two years of age in the wild and have a maximum life expectancy in the wild of about ten years. They have been known to live 18 years in captivity.

Did you know?

- The genus, *Procyon* was originally found only in the New World; however, raccoons were introduced into the Soviet Union in 1936 and by 1964 had increased to an estimated 40,000–45,000!
- It is conservatively estimated that today there are 15–20 times as many raccoons in North America as there were during the 1930s
- At present the raccoon has extended its range so far north into new areas of Canada that the indigenous people have no name for it!



Wildlife Disease Facts: Beaver Fever (Giardiasis)

It's late December, the beginning of beaver trapping season. You're setting the last of your beaver traps for the morning and are tired and hot from slogging through the mud, cutting ice and making sets. You're thinking to yourself that beaver trapping certainly is work. You're hungry and thirsty but you are about a quarter mile from the truck. The stream you are trapping sure looks crystal clear and from standing in it all morning you know that it's cold. You look down at the clear stream and think about cupping some water in your hand and taking a drink.

DON'T DO IT! Here's why.



Giardiasis, commonly called Beaver Fever, is a parasitic infection of the digestive system caused by a microscopic, single-celled organism (*Giardia lamblia*). Giardiasis occurs all over the world, but it is more common in areas with poor sanitation or in situations where sanitary habit may be compromised; such as while splashing water while setting traps, fishing or handling trapped animals with bare hands. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), giardiasis is the most common intestinal parasitic disease in the United States with 15,223 reported cases in 2012. Infection occurs after ingestion of contaminated water, and the parasite can survive in the host body from a few weeks to a few months. Symptoms include mild-severe

diarrhea, intestinal gas, stomach cramps, nausea, and/or dehydration (but rarely a fever) appearing 3-25 days after exposure. Some people may have chronic diarrhea over several weeks or months, with significant weight loss, while some people exhibit no symptoms.

Diagnosis is done by fecal testing, perhaps from several stool samples as the number of Giardia passing through varies from day to day and may be too low to detect in a single sample. Prescribed antibiotics such as metronidazole, tinidazole or nitazoxanide is the usual treatment. Some infected individuals recover on their own in a few weeks.

Giardia can infect people and wild and domestic animals. Beavers are a potential source of Giardia contamination in lakes and streams, but fecal wastes from any infected animal or human also can spread the parasite. Spread of the parasite directly from one person to another may occur where handwashing practices are poor.

Trappers, hunters and fisherman may encounter it by drinking what appears to be clear, pure water from those streams or lakes. Protect yourselves from possible infection by following some basic guidelines:

- DO NOT DRINK WATER from any untreated water sources.
- Wear latex or nitrile gloves while skinning or handling animals, especially feces or intestines.
- Carefully wash hands thoroughly with soap and water after handling (skinning) any possibly infected furbearers, especially muskrats and beavers.



New Jersey Bobcats and Fishers

Bobcats are classified as endangered in New Jersey; they are distributed widely across the northern part of the state. During the 2018-19 trapping season, 17 bobcats were accidentally captured in Morris, Sussex and Warren counties and the majority were removed unharmed and released at their capture site. Fishers have been successfully reintroduced in New York and Pennsylvania and have expanded their range into New Jersey where they once lived. Reliable reports have been received in several northern and select southern NJ counties.

So, please remember:

- **There is no open trapping season for either bobcat or fisher.**

If you encounter a live bobcat or fisher captured on your trapline, do not disturb the animal or the set, but immediately notify Fish and Wildlife by calling (877) WARNDP (877-927-6337). A Fish and Wildlife technician will provide further instructions. Call the same number for a dead bobcat or fisher on your trapline; a Fish and Wildlife technician will arrange to pick up the animal. Biological samples will be taken from all bobcat and fisher carcasses and the information used to monitor population status and distribution.

The New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife is *the* professional, environmental agency overseeing the protection and management of the state's fish and wildlife to maximize their long-term biological, recreational and economic value for all New Jerseyans, and has been *managing your wildlife since 1892.*

