

2007-08 New Jersey Trapper Harvest, Recreational and Economic Survey

Summary

Mail questionnaires were sent to 799 trappers requesting harvest, recreational and socio-economic information for the 2007-08 trapping season. The mean age of licensed trappers sampled was 47.4 years. Resident trappers live in every county of the state and have a tendency to reside in rural areas. The majority of licensed NJ trappers (51.3 percent) are affiliated with one or both statewide trapping organizations. Trapping is a lifelong activity and respondents had a mean 25.6 years of overall experience. Annual expenditures on trapping equipment and supplies during 2007-08 were estimated at \$776, 500 (mean \$1,615 per trapper) and overall investment was estimated at \$4.39 million (mean \$9,133 per trapper). An estimated 9,446 Conibear™ traps, 8,420 cable restraints, 1,530 box traps and 638 diver traps were in use during the 2007-08 season. The number of active trappers was estimated at 481, with most trappers targeting raccoon (69.6 percent), muskrat (60.4 percent), red fox (44.9 percent) and beaver (31.9 percent). Survey results estimated that 25,721 muskrats, 5,823 raccoons, 3,238 red fox, 144 gray fox, 1,199 opossum, 160 skunks, 1,052 mink and 9 weasels were harvested during the 2007-08 season. According to mandatory coyote and beaver-otter check station reports, trappers harvested 653 beaver, 40 river otter and 90 coyote. The total estimated raw pelt value of the 2007-08 harvest was \$257,600 based on reported fur sales.

This survey was conducted as part of **Job III-B. Hunter and Trapper Harvest, Recreational and Economic Survey**. This job is included within **Grant Number W-68-R-12, New Jersey Wildlife Research and Management: Project III. Upland Wildlife and Furbearers**.

Methods

New Jersey instituted an electronic licensing system in June 2006. A listing of 2007 trapping license purchasers was obtained from the system vendor, Automated License Systems, Inc. (ALS). The 2007 file contained 799 unique records, excluding duplicates. Age and demographic analyses were completed on all 799 individuals.

A survey packet was mailed to 799 trappers by April 1, 2008. Eight questionnaires (1.0 percent) were returned by the postal authorities as undeliverable and 791 were presumed delivered. Trapper group affiliation, prior experience and activity were based on the 347 (43.9 percent) responses that were correctly completed and returned by May 15, 2008.

Harvest and economic data analyses were based on the 207 survey respondents (26.2 percent) that actively participated in the 2007-08 trapping season.

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Results

Age

The age class of licensed trappers (as of 15 November 2007) is presented in Table 1. Ages ranged from 12 to 94 years, with a mean age of 47.4 ± 1.0 years in 2007-08. The simple majority of the 2007-08 sample (15.8 percent) was between 45 and 49 years of age. Estimates of trapper numbers by age class for 2006-07, 2005-06 and 2004-05 are presented for comparison purposes.

Table 1. Age class of licensed trappers sampled during the 2007-08 New Jersey Trapper Harvest Survey

Age Class	Licensed trappers (2007-08)	Percent of 2007-08 sample	Licensed trappers (2006-07)	Estimated number of trappers (2005-06)	Estimated number of trappers (2004-05)
<16	22	2.8%	15	21	6
16 to 19	21	2.6%	14	7	3
20 to 24	23	2.9%	21	16	18
25 to 29	33	4.1%	29	30	12
30 to 34	47	5.9%	37	33	21
35 to 39	57	7.1%	58	68	65
40 to 44	119	14.9%	101	92	107
45 to 49	126	15.8%	105	100	83
50 to 54	89	11.1%	81	71	68
55 to 59	92	11.5%	77	57	86
60 to 64	80	10.0%	71	40	56
65+	90	11.3%	69	59	80
Unknown	0	0.0%	0	1	3
Total	791	100.0%	678	596	609

Gender

Information on trapper gender was obtained from the database provided by ALS. Nearly all (776 or 97.1 percent) of 2007 license holders were male and 23 (2.9 percent) were female. Based on prior survey results, an estimated 586 males and 24 females were licensed trappers in 2004, compared to 593 males and 17 females licensed in 2003.

Occupation

Information on trapper occupation was not solicited during the current survey. Occupations for 77.1 percent of 2004-05 respondents could be categorized into three of the nine groupings: Trade (33.7 percent), Professional (22.9 percent) and Retired (20.5 percent). These three groups constituted 68.2 percent of the 2003-04 responses.

Residency

The estimated number of resident trappers by county (2007 v. 2006, 2005 and 2004) is presented in Table 2. Nearly all (98.9 percent) of licensed trappers are New Jersey residents, while non-resident trappers resided in neighboring Pennsylvania (7) and New York (2). Resident trappers live in every county of the state and have a tendency to reside in predominantly rural areas. The majority (51.9

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percent) of New Jersey's resident trappers live in Cumberland, Gloucester and Salem Counties (31.0 percent) or Morris, Sussex and Warren Counties (20.9 percent).

Table 2. The number of licensed resident trappers in New Jersey, by county

County	Number of trappers (2007-08)	Percent of 2007-08 database	Number of trappers (2006-07)	Estimated number of trappers (2005-06)	Estimated number of trappers (2004-05)
Atlantic	44	5.5%	29	25	18
Bergen	27	3.4%	23	26	24
Burlington	43	5.4%	42	33	33
Camden	26	3.3%	20	20	23
Cape May	39	4.9%	30	26	24
Cumberland	106	13.3%	88	42	61
Essex	3	0.4%	5	5	2
Gloucester	61	7.6%	58	44	36
Hudson	1	0.1%	2	2	1
Hunterdon	32	4.0%	22	29	33
Mercer	16	2.0%	14	16	20
Middlesex	29	3.6%	23	23	23
Monmouth	30	3.8%	29	16	16
Morris	44	5.5%	29	38	36
Ocean	40	5.0%	24	20	20
Passaic	26	3.3%	28	17	19
Salem	81	10.1%	77	75	74
Somerset	13	1.6%	10	10	9
Sussex	76	9.5%	71	85	76
Union	6	0.8%	6	1	2
Warren	47	5.9%	43	34	48
Total	790	98.9%	672	587	600

Affiliation

New Jersey has two statewide trapping organizations, the New Jersey Fur Harvesters (NJFH) and the New Jersey Trappers Association (NJTA). Affiliation of respondents in either organization is presented in Table 3. The majority (51.2 percent) of survey respondents is affiliated with one (46.1 percent NJTA, 38.8 percent NJFH) or both (14.0 percent) of these organizations. A small percentage (7.3) also belong to a national trapping organization (e.g., Fur Takers of America, National Trappers Association). A large percentage (48.8) of respondents is unaffiliated with any trapping organization. Based on survey results, an estimated 244 trappers were NJTA members, 214 trappers were NJFH members and 385 trappers were unaffiliated in 2007. The current reported membership of the NJTA is 246 (J. DeStephano, personal communication 08 July 2008) and 248 for the NJFH (J. Mounier, personal communication 2008). It should be noted that each organization lists members who may not be licensed to trap in New Jersey or family memberships that include more than one licensed trapper.

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Table 3. Affiliation in New Jersey trapping organizations

Affiliation	Estimated number of trappers (2007)	Estimated number of trappers (2006)	Estimated number of trappers (2005)	Estimated number of trappers (2004)
NJ Fur Harvesters	157	142	98	62
NJ Trappers Association	187	170	210	255
Both NJFH and NJTA	57	52	82	68
Unknown	5			
Subtotal	406	364	390	386
Unaffiliated in NJ	372	321	206	217
Subtotal	777	695	596	603
No response	14	2	0	6
Total	791 licensees	697 licensees	596 licensees	609 licensees

Prior Experience

Prior to the 1972-73 season, it was unlawful to trap any fur-bearing animal without possessing a Trapping and Firearm Hunting License. This requirement did not apply to occupant farmers and their immediate family members and to bona fide residents of the State under 14 years that required no license to trap according to state law. A separate Trapping License was provided for residents (age 12 and older) and non-residents (age 14 and older) in 1972. A previous year's license or a certificate showing successful completion in a trapper education course has been required since 1978. Junior Trapping Licenses were required for residents between the ages of 12 and 15, inclusive, from 1980 through 1999. Since 2000, trapping licenses are required for all persons age 16 year or older. Survey respondents indicated years of trapping experience prior to the 2007-08 season ranging from 0 to 79 years, with a mean 25.6 ± 2.2 years of experience ($n = 326$). Twenty-four respondents (8.1 percent) were new to the sport in 2006-07, and 52 (17.6 percent) were relatively inexperienced (1-5 years of prior experience).

Table 4. Years of experience of licensed trappers prior to the 2007-08 trapping season

Year of prior experience	Estimated number of trappers (2007-08)	Estimated number of trappers (2006-07)	Estimated number of trappers (2005-06)	Estimated number of trappers (2004-05)
0 years	50	57	7	0
1-5 years	146	123	137	100
6-10 years	68	71	43	63
11-15 years	36	43	36	41
16-20 years	50	61	56	41
21-25 years	23	31	46	47
26-30 years	71	59	36	47
31-35 years	50	31	39	44
36-40 years	59	61	56	41
41-45 years	39	28	36	47
46-50 years	68	50	49	69
+ 50 years	82	59	39	69
Unknown	48	24	16	0
Total	791	697	596	609
Mean	25.6	23.5	24.9	28.6

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License Buyers

The Division's electronic licensing system, administered by Automated Licensing Systems (ALS), was fully functional for calendar year 2007. According to ALS, 799 trapping licenses were sold for calendar year 2007. A breakdown of license sales is presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Summary of trapping license sales, 2007

License type	2007 Issuance	Percent of 2007 Total
Non-resident	5	0.6%
Resident	689	86.2%
Resident (Disable Veteran)	79	9.9%
Youth (< 16 years of age)	26	3.3%
Total	799	100.0%

Active Trappers

Two hundred seven (59.7 percent) of the respondents participated in trapping activities during the 122-day, 2007-08 season that began 15 November 2007 and concluded 15 March 2008. Active 2007 respondents had slightly more experience trapping (mean 26.5 ± 2.8 years) compared to non-participants (mean 24.3 ± 3.5 years). An estimated 481 trappers were active during the 2007-08 season.

Trap Types

Steel-jawed leghold type traps, such as coil springs and long springs, have been prohibited in New Jersey since 1985. Box traps, Conibear™ traps, diver traps and body-gripping cable restraints are currently legal for use, and active trappers seldom utilize one trap type to the exclusion of all others (Table 5). Conibear™ traps were used by the majority of active respondents (73.9 percent), followed by cable restraints (62.8 percent), box traps (46.4 percent) and diver traps (19.3 percent). Based on survey responses, there were an estimated 1,530 box, 9,446 Conibear™, 638 diver and 8,420 cable restraints in operation during the 2007-08 season.

Table 6. Trap types utilized by active respondents in New Jersey during 2007-08.

Trap Type	Percent 2007-08 active respondents	Estimated number of active trappers (2007-08)	Estimated number of active trappers (2006-07)	Estimated number of active trappers (2005-06)	Estimated number of active trappers (2004-05)
Box only	5.3%	26	21	10	6
Box and cable restraint	5.3%	26	26	23	18
Box and Conibear™	7.7%	37	57	43	42
Box and diver	0.0%	0	2	0	0
Box, cable restraint, Conibear™	15.5%	74	78	98	121
Box, Conibear™ and diver	2.4%	12	17	13	3
Box, cable restraint, Conibear™, diver	10.6%	51	43	33	68
Cable restraint only	12.1%	58	54	16	42
Cable restraint and Conibear™	17.9%	86	59	72	71
Cable restraint and diver	0.0%	0	2	3	0
Cable restraint, Conibear™, diver	1.4%	7	26	13	12
Conibear™ only	14.53%	70	97	105	74
Conibear™ and diver	3.9%	19	5	10	15
Diver only	0.5%	2	0	3	3

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No response	2.9%	14	14	3	3
Total	100.0%	481	501	445	478

Expenditures and Investment

Information on expenditures (exclusive of license and permit fees) by active 2007 respondents is presented in Tables 7 and 8. The majority of active respondents (58.5 percent) spent less than \$300 on items such as gasoline, food, clothing, trapping equipment and supplies during 2007-08. Total expenditures by active trappers during 2007-08 was estimated at \$776,502 with a mean \$1,615 per trapper. Over one-half (58.9 percent) of active respondents reported an overall investment in trapping equipment and supplies exceeding \$1,000. Total investment for active trappers was estimated at \$4.39 million with a mean \$9,133 per trapper. The NJDFW received an \$25,963 in revenue from license and \$3,374 in permit sales during calendar year 2007 (total revenue \$29,337).

Table 7. Expenditures on gasoline, food, clothing, trapping equipment and supplies (excluding license fees) in New Jersey by active respondents, 2007-08

2007-08 Expenditures (US\$)	Number of active 2007-08 respondents	Estimated number of active trappers (2007-08)	Estimated number of active trappers (2006-07)	Estimated number of active trappers (2005-06)	Estimated number of active trappers (2004-05)
\$0	2	5			
\$1-100	47	109	144	82	160
\$101-200	40	93	59	98	151
\$200-300	32	74	92	82	74
\$301-400	17	39	33	46	50
\$401-500	29	58	57	59	9
\$501+	25	67	85	75	27
No response	15	35	31	3	6
Total	207	481	501	445	478

Table 8. Total investment in trapping equipment and supplies by active respondents, 2007-08

Overall Expenditures (US\$)	Number of active 2007-08 respondents	Estimated number of active trappers (2007-08)	Estimated number of active trappers (2006-07)	Estimated number of active trappers (2005-06)	Estimated number of active trappers (2004-05)
\$1-500	79	183	191	105	128
\$501-1,000	43	100	97	85	107
\$1,001-1,500	13	30	38	85	42
\$1,501-2,000	12	28	40	46	71
\$2,001-2,500	5	12	10	29	24
\$2,501+	33	77	80	88	101
No response	22	51	45	7	6
Total	207	481	501	445	478

2007-08 Fur Harvest

A summary of the 2007-08 fur harvest is presented in Table 9. An estimated 38,202 animals from eleven game species open for trapping were harvested. No nutrias were reported by survey respondents. Nearly all (94.0 percent) of the animals harvested consisted of muskrat (67.3 percent), raccoon (15.4 percent), red fox (8.5 percent) and mink (2.8 percent). The raw fur value of these four

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species represents 90.4 percent of the total raw fur value, estimated at \$257,600 at the local level. Information by species is also presented.

Table 9. New Jersey fur harvest results for 2007-08

Species	Number of 2007-08 active respondents	Estimated number of active trappers (2007-08)	Mean experience (years)	Mean days trapped (2007-08)	Mean effort (traps / day)	Estimated harvest	Estimated value (US\$)
Beaver	66	153	11.4	17.4	4.0	653	14,114
Coyote	45	105	5.2	41.3	15.8	90	1,713
Gray fox	31	72	15.5	36.0	102.8	144	4,183
Mink	54	125	18.6	33.1	11.4	1,052	13,835
Muskrat	125	290	29.5	29.9	35.1	25,721	90,044
Nutria	0	Unknown	0.0	0.0	0.0	0	0
Opossum	66	153	30.9	33.2	4.8	1,199	2,204
Raccoon	144	334	20.8	31.2	8.3	5,870	79,849
Red fox	93	216	18.9	35.2	27.4	3,263	49,368
River otter	26	60	10.1	13.4	2.0	40	1,427
Skunk	28	65	17.2	26.8	6.0	160	855
Weasel	4	9	29.0	5.0	5.0	9	9
Total	207	481	25.6			38,202	257,600

Land Ownership Utilized by Trappers

The opening date for trapping in areas outside of State WMA is November 15. In previous years, the opening date for trapping on all State WMA was delayed until January 1 to avoid possible conflicts between pheasant and waterfowl hunters, and trappers. New areas are added annually to the State WMA system but do not receive game bird stockings. Waterfowl season dates now vary over a wide range of dates by zone and season. The delayed opening for trapping on all State WMA was therefore no longer warranted. Accordingly, the opening date for trapping in those WMA not stocked with pheasants was changed in 2006 to conform to the regular opening dates for trapping in surrounding areas. The opening date for trapping on pheasant or quail stocked WMA remained January 1. This change increased recreational trapping opportunity on approximately 147,000 acres within the WMA system (49 percent) with minimal impact on the furbearer resource (Table 10).

Table 10. Percentage of trappers utilizing private and public land in New Jersey, 2007-08

Land type	Percent of active trappers			
	2007-08	2006-07	2005-06	2004-05
Private land only	32.9%	29.7 %	32.4 %	38.5 %
Public land only	16.9%	22.6 %	16.2 %	14.9 %
Both private and public	47.3%	47.2 %	50.7 %	45.3 %
No response / unknown	2.9%	0.5 %	0.7 %	1.2 %
Number of active trappers	481	501	445	478

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Changes in Trapping Season Lengths and Regulations

No changes were enacted regarding season lengths or other regulations for the 2007-08 season. Several changes in season lengths and regulations enacted for the 2005-06 season based on field investigations, complaint data, scientific studies conducted in other states and in response to comments received from previous harvest surveys continue to be evaluated.

Comments

The 2007-08 survey did not ask recipients how many days they trapped during the entire season nor did it include a section for recipient comments due to space and budgetary considerations.

Remarks

Twenty-five other individuals applied for special beaver and/or otter permits, but were not on the list of 2007 license buyers provided by ALS. Of these 25 individuals, seven were determined to be holders of a Youth trapping license based on their age and likely obtained a license prior to 2007. Therefore, the number of licensed trappers during the 2007-08 season was determined to be a minimum of 806. Two individuals were 17 years of age by 01 January 2007, and 16 individuals were over 30 years of age.

Occupant, qualified farmers are exempt from licensing requirements on their own property and consequently are normally excluded from the mailing database. Licenses are otherwise required. Qualified farmers may receive a beaver and/or otter trapping permit. It is presumed that an unknown number of such individuals received such permits during 2007-08, and underscores the need to acquire information from the predominantly non-licensed, farming community.

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Beaver (*Castor canadensis*)

The beaver trapping season was 26 December 2007 – 09 February 2008 (46 days), except on the 23 State Wildlife Management Areas that received game bird releases where beaver trapping was permitted from 01 January – 09 February 2008 (40 days). A special, beaver trapping permit was required in addition to a trapping license. Two hundred thirty-four applications were received for the 186 available permits. All permits were issued via lottery (182) or OTC (4). One hundred fourteen trappers (61.3 percent) were successful in harvesting at least one beaver and 42 trappers (22.5 percent) were successful in harvesting the permit bag limit of eight beavers. Successful trappers were required to present their beaver pelts for examination at regional check stations on Saturday, 23 February 2008. Permit holders harvested 639 beavers. Four site-specific permits were issued and resulted in the harvest of 14 beavers, bringing the total 2007-08 harvest to 653. Additional information on the 2007-08 beaver harvest may be found in Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Performance Report W-68-R-12 Job III-C entitled Beaver Distribution and Population Trends and River Otter Harvest.

Based on active survey respondents (n = 66), there are 153 active beaver trappers in New Jersey. Active respondents had 25.5 years of overall trapping experience and 11.4 years experience trapping beaver. Active respondents trapped a mean 17.4 days using a mean 4.0 traps per day. The majority of active respondents (83.3 percent) utilized the 330 Conibear™ trap. Total trap-nights were estimated at 10,597 and 16.2 trap-nights were needed to harvest a single beaver. The reported mean price per pelt received by active respondents was \$21.61 and the estimated raw pelt value of the 2007-08 beaver harvest was \$14,114 based on reported fur sales.

Coyote (*Canis latrans*)

The eastern coyote trapping season was 15 November 2007 – 15 March 2008 (122 days), except on the 23 State Fish and Wildlife Management Areas that received game bird releases where trapping was permitted 01 January – 15 March 2008 (75 days). State regulations require successful trappers to report their harvest to a regional, Division Law Enforcement office within 24 hours. Ninety coyotes were reported by trappers in 2007-08. Additional information on coyotes may be found in Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Final Report W-68-R-10 Job III-D entitled Occurrence and Distribution of the Eastern Coyote in New Jersey.

Based on active survey respondents (n = 45), there are 105 active coyote trappers in New Jersey. Active respondents had 25.0 years of overall trapping experience and 5.2 years experience trapping coyote. Active respondents trapped a mean 41.3 days using a mean 15.8 traps per day. A simple majority of active respondents (44.4 percent) utilized the 3/32" cable restraint. Total trap-nights were estimated at 68,261 and 758.5 trap-nights were needed to harvest a single coyote. The reported mean price per pelt received by active respondents was \$19.04 and the estimated raw pelt value of the 2007-08 coyote harvest was \$1,713 based on reported fur sales.

Gray fox (*Urocyon cinereoargenteus*)

The gray fox trapping season was 15 November 2007 – 15 March 2008 (122 days), except on the 23 State Fish and Wildlife Management Areas that received game bird releases where trapping was permitted 01 January – 15 March 2008 (75 days). Based on active survey respondents (n = 31), there are 72 active gray fox trappers in New Jersey. Active respondents had 23.3 years of overall trapping experience and 15.5 years experience trapping gray fox. Active respondents trapped a mean 36.0

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days using a mean 102.8 traps per day. A simple majority of active respondents (41.9 percent) utilized the 5/64" cable restraint. Total trap-nights were estimated at 266,850 and 1,853.0 trap-nights were needed to harvest a single gray fox. An estimated 144 gray fox were taken by trappers, the reported mean price per pelt received was \$29.05 and the estimated raw pelt value of the 2007-08 gray fox harvest was \$4,183 based on reported fur sales.

Mink (*Mustela vison*)

The mink trapping season was 15 November 2007 – 15 March 2008 (122 days) in the Northern Zone, 01 December 2007 – 15 March 2008 (106 days) in the Southern Zone, and 01 January – 15 March 2008 (75 days) on the 23 State Fish and Wildlife Management Areas that received game bird releases. Based on active survey respondents (n = 54), there are 125 active mink trappers in New Jersey. Active respondents had 31.8 years of overall trapping experience and 18.6 years experience trapping mink. Active respondents trapped a mean 33.1 days using a mean 11.4 traps per day. A simple majority of active respondents (40.7 percent) utilized the 110 Conibear™. Total trap-nights were estimated at 47,195 and 44.9 trap-nights were needed to harvest a single mink. An estimated 1,052 mink were taken by trappers, the reported mean price per pelt received was \$13.15 and the estimated raw pelt value of the 2007-08 mink harvest was \$13,835 based on reported fur sales.

Muskrat (*Ondatra zibethicus*)

The muskrat trapping season was 15 November 2007 – 15 March 2008 (122 days) in the Northern Zone, 01 December 2007 – 15 March 2008 (106 days) in the Southern Zone, and 01 January – 15 March 2008 (75 days) on the 23 State Fish and Wildlife Management Areas that received game bird releases. Based on active survey respondents (n = 125), there are 290 active muskrat trappers in New Jersey. Active respondents had 29.7 year of overall trapping experience and 29.5 years experience trapping muskrat. Active respondents trapped a mean 29.9 days using a mean 35.1 traps per day. The majority of active respondents (84.8 percent) utilized a 110 Conibear™. Total trap-nights were estimated at 304,627 and 11.8 trap-nights were needed to harvest a single muskrat. An estimated 25,721 muskrat were taken by trappers, the reported mean price per pelt received was \$3.50 and the estimated raw pelt value of the 2007-08 mink harvest was \$90,044 based on reported fur sales.

Virginia opossum (*Didelphis virginianus*)

The Virginia opossum trapping season was 15 November 2007 – 15 March 2008 (122 days), except on the 23 State Fish and Wildlife Management Areas that received game bird releases where trapping was permitted 01 January – 15 March 2008 (75 days). Based on active survey respondents (n = 66), there are 153 active opossum trappers in New Jersey. Active respondents had 26.7 years of overall trapping experience and 30.9 years experience trapping opossum (for those targeting opossum). Active respondents trapped a mean 33.2 days using a mean 4.8 traps per day. A simple majority of active respondents (34.8 percent) utilized box traps. Total trap-nights were estimated at 24,573 and 20.5 trap-nights were needed to harvest a single opossum. An estimated 1,199 opossum were taken by trappers, the reported mean price per pelt received was \$1.84 and the estimated raw pelt value of the 2007-08 opossum harvest was \$2,204 based on reported fur sales.

Raccoon (*Procyon lotor*)

The raccoon trapping season was 15 November 2007 – 15 March 2008 (122 days), except on the 23 State Fish and Wildlife Management Areas that received game bird releases where trapping was

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permitted 01 January – 15 March 2008 (75 days). Based on active survey respondents (n = 144), there are 334 active raccoon trappers in New Jersey. Active respondents had 24.4 years of overall trapping experience and 20.8 years experience trapping raccoon. Active respondents trapped a mean 31.2 days using a mean 8.3 traps per day. A simple majority of active respondents (47.9 percent) utilized a box trap. Total trap-nights were estimated at 87,097 and 14.8 trap-nights were needed to harvest a single raccoon. An estimated 5,870 raccoons were taken by trappers, the reported mean price per pelt received was \$13.60 and the estimated raw pelt value of the 2007-08 raccoon harvest was \$79,849 based on reported fur sales.

Red fox (*Vulpes vulpes*)

The red fox trapping season was 15 November 2007 – 15 March 2008 (122 days), except on the 23 State Fish and Wildlife Management Areas that received game bird releases where trapping was permitted 01 January – 15 March 2008 (75 days). Based on active survey respondents (n = 93), there are 216 active red fox trappers in New Jersey. Active respondents had 24.6 years of overall trapping experience and 18.9 years experience trapping red fox. Active respondents trapped a mean 35.2 days using a mean 27.4 traps per day. A simple majority of active respondents (29.0 percent) utilized a 5/64" cable restraint. Total trap-nights were estimated at 208,549 and 63.9 trap-nights were needed to harvest a single red fox. An estimated 3,263 red fox were taken by trappers, the reported mean price per pelt received was \$15.13 and the estimated raw pelt value of the 2007-08 red fox harvest was \$49,368 based on reported fur sales.

River otter (*Lontra canadensis*)

The river otter trapping season was 26 December 2007 – 09 February 2008 (46 days), except on the 23 State Wildlife Management Areas that received game bird releases where otter trapping was permitted from 01 January – 09 February 2008 (40 days). A special, river otter trapping permit was required in addition to a trapping license. Two hundred two applications were received and all 106 available permits were issued. Forty trappers (37.7 percent) were successful in harvesting the season bag limit of one otter. Successful trappers were required to present their otter pelts for examination at regional check stations on Saturday, 23 February 2008. Additional information on the 2007-08 river otter harvest may be found in Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Performance Report W-68-R-12 Job III-C entitled Beaver Distribution and Population Trends and River Otter Harvest.

Based on active survey respondents (n = 26), there are 60 active otter trappers in New Jersey. Active respondents had 23.7 years of overall trapping experience and 10.1 years experience trapping river otter. Active respondents trapped a mean 13.4 days using a mean 2.0 traps per day. The majority of active respondents (53.8 percent) utilized a 330 Conibear™. Total trap-nights were estimated at 1,616 and 40.4 trap-nights were needed to harvest a single otter. The reported mean price per pelt received by active respondents was \$35.67 and the estimated value of the 2007-08 otter harvest was \$1,427 based on reported fur sales.

Striped skunk (*Mephitis mephitis*)

The striped skunk trapping season was 15 November 2007 – 15 March 2008 (122 days), except on the 23 State Fish and Wildlife Management Areas that received game bird releases where trapping was permitted 01 January – 15 March 2008 (75 days). Based on active survey respondents (n = 28), there are 65 active skunk trappers in New Jersey. Active respondents had 21.4 years of overall trapping experience and 17.2 years experience trapping skunk. Active respondents trapped a mean 26.8 days using a mean 6.0 traps per day. A simple majority of active respondents (32.1 percent)

2007-08 New Jersey Trapper Harvest, Recreational and Economic Survey

utilized a box trap. Total trap-nights were estimated at 10,449 and 65.2 trap-nights were needed to harvest a single skunk. An estimated 160 skunks were taken by trappers, the reported mean price per pelt received was \$5.33 and the estimated raw pelt value of the 2007-08 skunk harvest was \$855 based on reported fur sales.

Long-tail (*Mustela frenata*) and Short-tail (*M. erminea*) weasel

The weasel trapping season was 15 November 2007 – 15 March 2008 (122 days), except on the 23 State Fish and Wildlife Management Areas that received game bird releases where trapping was permitted 01 January – 15 March 2008 (75 days). Based on active survey respondents (n = 4), there are nine active weasel trappers in New Jersey. Active respondents had 40.7 years of overall trapping experience and 29.0 years experience trapping weasel. Active respondents trapped a mean 5.0 days using a mean 5.0 traps per day. Weasels were captured with box traps, or in 1/16” snares set for other target species. An estimated 9 weasels were taken by trappers, the reported mean price per pelt received was \$1.00 and the estimated raw pelt value of the 2007-08 weasel harvest was \$9 based on reported fur sales.

2007-08 New Jersey Trapper Harvest Survey

Dear Fellow Trapper:

This is a copy of the 2007-08 NJ Trapper Harvest Survey. This survey contains questions about your trapping activities in New Jersey during the past season. Kindly take a moment now to complete this survey and return it in the Business-Reply envelope provided. Any personal information you provide is kept confidential.

The information you provide will be used in evaluating, planning and improving trapping in New Jersey, and for determining harvest levels and trends for several species. For example, the information provided in 2004 was used to support the positive changes in snare regulations enacted in 2005. Your reply is very important, even if you did not trap or trapped but were not successful in harvesting any game.

Thank you for completing this brief questionnaire and for promptly returning it in the envelope provided.

Sincerely,

Larry Herrigty

Larry Herrigty, Chief
Bureau of Wildlife Management
NJ Division of Fish and Wildlife

SURVEY INSTRUCTIONS

1. Please answer all applicable questions, even if you did not trap or trapped but didn't harvest any game.
2. Please report only the game taken by you, not the entire trapping party (if sharing a trap line). For example, if you were trapping with a friend, who snared two red fox while you snared only one; you would report 1 red fox.
3. Estimate the number of days trapped or game harvested if you don't recall the exact number. List specific numbers where they are asked for in days; please do not write in "week" or "month".
4. Record your answers in the space provided after each question.
5. After completing the questionnaire, return it in the envelope provided.

If you would like a copy of the survey results emailed to you, send a request to Wildlife Biologist Andrew Burnett at Andrew.Burnett@dep.state.nj.us and type "Trapper Survey Results" in the subject bar.

2007-08 New Jersey Trapper Harvest, Recreational and Economic Survey

2007-08 New Jersey Trapper Harvest Survey Questionnaire

1. Do you belong to a NJ trapping organization? (check one) YES* _____ NO _____
2. *If YES, which organization(s)? (check any) NJFH _____ NJTA _____ Other _____
3. Prior to the 2007-08 season, how many years have you been trapping? _____ years experience.
4. Did you actively trap during the 2007-08 season? (check one) YES _____ NO** _____

****If you answered NO to Question # 4, STOP HERE and return the survey. Otherwise, please continue.**

Please provide the information requested (if known) for each species you harvested in New Jersey only from November 15, 2007 through March 15, 2008 on the following table. There are several questions for each species, so please take your time completing this portion of the survey.

Species	A. How many did you harvest?	B. Was this a targeted species? [Yes or No]	C. If a target species, how many years have you trapped for it [prior to 2007-08]?	D. How many days did you trap for this species during the current season [2007-08]?	E. What size trap did you mainly set for this species? [Ex: #110 Conibear, 1/8" Snare, etc.]	F. How many of these traps per day did you set for this species?	G. In which county did your primarily set for this species? [Use first 3 letters of county name(s), i.e. SUS for Sussex]	H. If known, what was the total dollar amount you received for this species' pelts?
5. Beaver								
6. Coyote								
7. Gray fox								
8. Mink								
9. Muskrat								
10. Nutria								
11. Opossum								
12. Raccoon								
13. Red fox								
14. River otter								
15. Skunk								

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16. Weasel								
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17. During the past season, did you trap primarily on: (Check one)

- A. Privately owned land**

 B. Publicly owned land

 C. Both private and public land

18. How much money would you estimate spending on items such as gasoline, food, clothing, equipment and supplies for trapping (excluding license fees) in New Jersey during 2007-08? \$_____

19. How much would you estimate you have invested in trapping equipment and supplies overall? \$_____

20. Please indicate the number of traps you used during the 2006-07 season (Complete all that apply)

- | | | | | |
|----------------------------|-------------|--------------------|-------------|-----------------------|
| A. Cage / Box traps | | B. Conibear | | C. Colony |
| <u>Number</u> | <u>Size</u> | <u>Number</u> | <u>Size</u> | _____ |
| ----- | | ----- | | D. Snare _____ |
| ----- | | ----- | | |
| ----- | | ----- | | F. Other _____ |

Thank you, the survey is now complete. Please return the survey in the envelope provided, or mail to NJ Division of Fish and Wildlife, Northern Region Office, 26 Rt. 173 West, Hampton, NJ 08827, Attn: Joseph Garris. The NJ Division of Fish and Wildlife values your input and the information provided.

Optional: A common failing in anonymous surveys is the inability to contact survey recipients in the event of an answer need to be clarified. If needed, may we contact you? If so, please supply your first name and daytime telephone number where we may reach you: _____