



New Jersey Furbearer Management Newsletter Fall 2021



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

This year is going to be another very different and trying time for all of us-- trappers, outdoorsmen/outdoorswomen, and everyone in general. The present global COVID19 pandemic has changed so much in how we interact with each other as humans and it's changing our approach on how we are going to enjoy our time hunting, fishing, and trapping.

The Division of Fish and Wildlife is modifying its Hunter and Trapper Education course procedures in response to the global COVID-19 pandemic. At present the classes will be held outdoors divided into small groups with social distancing practiced. The plan is for the actual written test to be taken online prior or after the field portion so that there will not be any in-the-classroom portion and thus no close contact with others. Keep an eye on the Division's webpage https://www.njfishandwildlife.com/trapping_info.htm for further updates.

Important Upcoming Dates:

- **Trapper Education courses are scheduled. Call 877-2-HUNT NJ for registration and further information.** September 18 and 19 - Hackettstown Fish Hatchery (Warren County)
Late September – Tuckahoe WMA (Atlantic County)
Mid-October - Hackettstown Fish Hatchery (Warren County)
October 25 – Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst Range 14 (Burlington County)
- **October 1-31 – Application period for beaver and otter permits**
- **October 3 – NJ Trappers Association Convention at Space Farms, Beemerville (9AM-3PM)**
- **November 6-7 – NJ Fur Harvesters Convention in the Pines, Russ Anderson Rd., Chatsworth (9AM-3PM both days)**

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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- 2021-22 Fur Market Forecast
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2020-21 Trapper Harvest Survey Results

During 2020, 1,183 trappers were licensed including previously licensed youths. A survey conducted by the Division indicated that there were 632 active trappers who expended 20,820 trap-nights during 2020-21, with 85% successful in taking fur. Dog-proof type traps were utilized by 325 trappers. The average age of all trappers is 48.6 and respondents averaged 21 years of prior trapping experience. Women make up 3.8% of New Jersey's licensed trappers. Most (43%) resident trappers live in the seven southern counties, while central and northern counties are each home to 29% of resident trappers. Pennsylvanians account for over two-thirds (68.7%) of non-resident trappers.

Species	2019-20		2020-21		# Released in 2020-21
	# Trappers	# Harvested	# Trappers	# Harvested	
Beaver	200 permits	728	200 permits	604	0
Otter	143 permits	51	143 permits	44	0
Mink	182	820	137	571	0
Muskrat	270	10,460	223	7,192	0
Nutria	0	0	0	0	0
Coyote	63	248	177	167	0
Red fox	313	3,576	284	2,068	125
Gray fox	80	168	46	122	36
Raccoon	419	5,279	339	2,866	147
Opossum	114	604	79	364	211
Skunk	60	114	37	76	37
Weasel	9	18	6	3	0
# Trappers	672		632		



Fur Market Forecast

The fur market and fur prices have not really changed in the past 5 years. The outlook is similar for this trapping season. What has been said on these pages for the last several years still stands: in tough times, only the best furs sell. Be very selective on what you spend your time targeting, harvesting, and handling – perhaps think about waiting the extra two weeks until fur is fully primed before making a set (see the Fur Primeness Chart on page 3). Remember, only the best of the best will sell in the climate of this slow fur market. Fur with any kind of damage will have little to no value. Focus on trapping for the recreation and not the dollar return.

Remember that the prices listed below are averages prices. Better handled fur may see higher prices.

Beaver, as anyone who has ever trapped and handled beaver pelts well know, the effort required to put up a beaver pelt is time consuming. With beavers, the work starts as soon as you get out of the truck. Pelt prices for beaver should be about what we have seen in the last few years: \$10 to \$15 for a good prime blanket.

Raccoon, like beaver take more effort to put up than other pelts. Expect the usual \$10 to \$15 for a good, big heavy pelt. However, the market suggests that there has been some change for the better, at least some of the past year's collections have sold and we may see more demand for heavy, prime raccoon pelt with (hopefully) some increase in prices.

Foxes, both red and gray, expect about the prices as last year; around \$15 to \$20 for a good prime red. For grays expect around \$10 to \$15.

Muskrat, expect around \$3 to \$4.

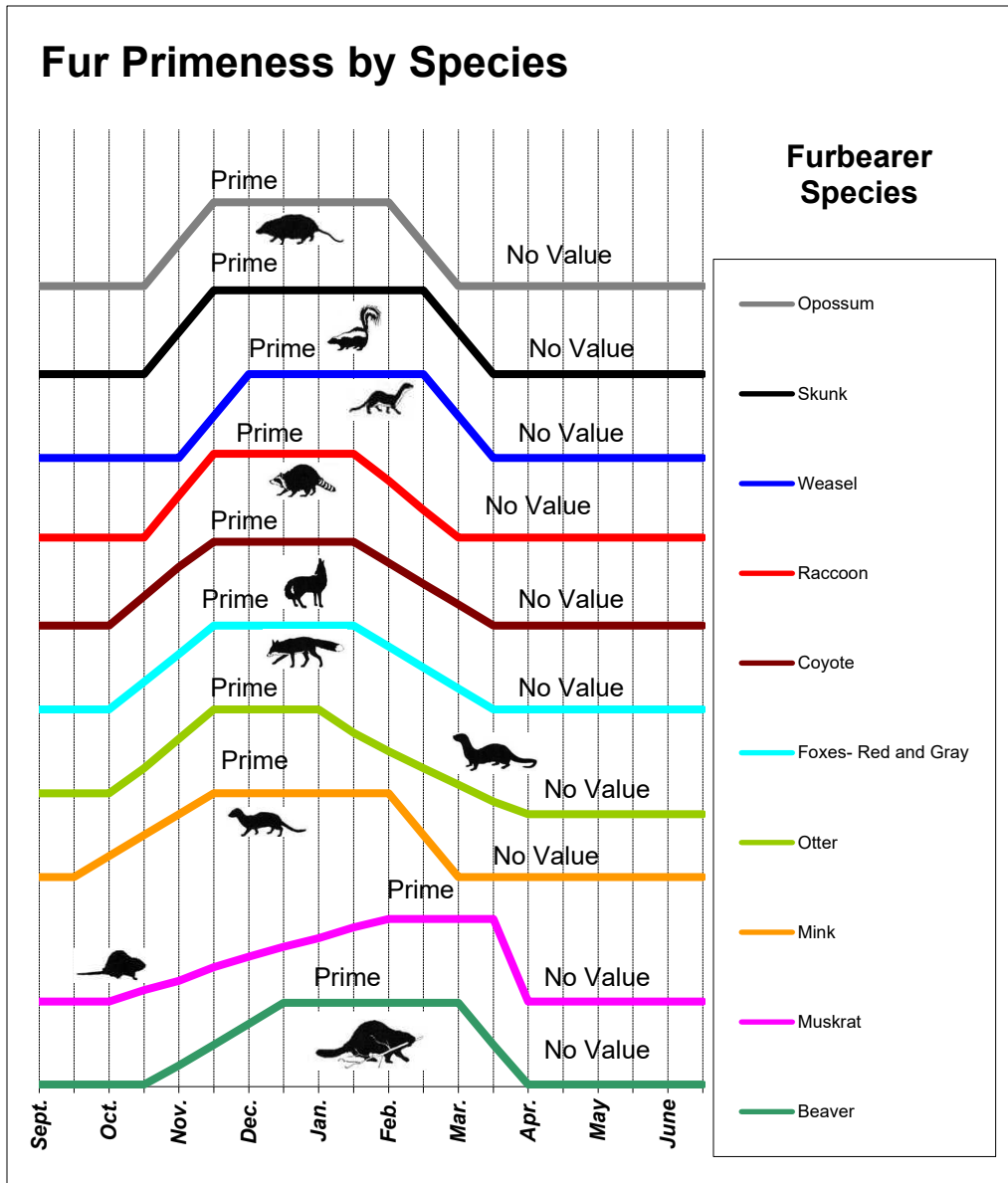
Otter, expect \$25 to \$30. Demand seems to be increasing as is price.

Mink, expect possible \$10 for your best pelts, more for males, less for females.

Skunk, expect possible \$6 to \$8 for a good one, possible as much as \$10 for a very good one.

Opossum, expect less than \$5.

Coyote, the bright spot in the fur market. Prices have increased as has the demand for this item for garment trim. During the past 2 years, pelts in prime condition were going for a high of about \$40. Expect less for average pelts and much less for poor pelts.

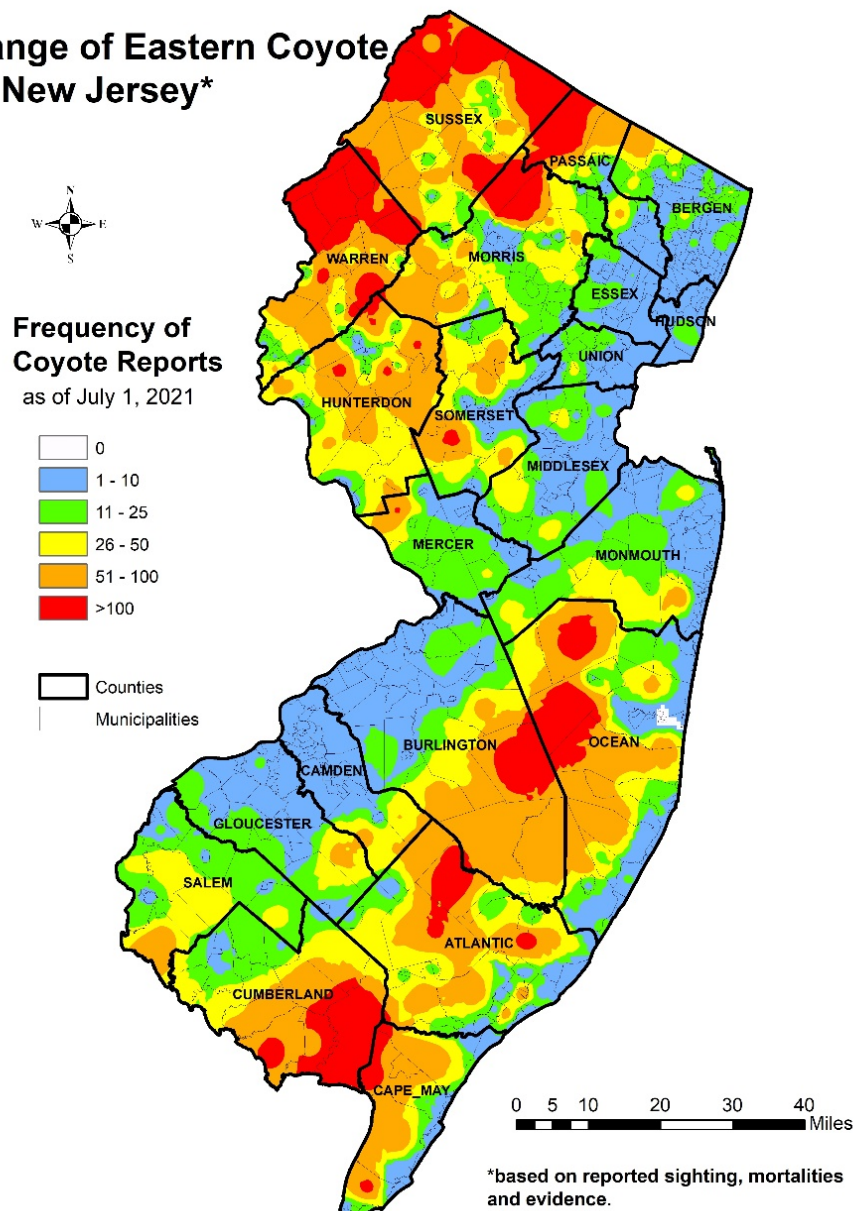


Reporting Coyote and Gray Fox

As in past years ALL coyotes harvested in any manner must be reported with 24 hours. Reporting procedure for **COYOTE** and **GRAY FOX** is unchanged from last year, and the NJ Fish and Wildlife's new harvest report system is operational. **COYOTE** and **GRAY FOX** harvest reports will be handled through that system as follows:

- Reports can be made via mobile phone or computer at: www.NJ.WildlifeLicense.com or calling: 1-855-I HUNT NJ (1-855-448-6865).
- Hunters should use the same location information used for deer hunting, found at: www.NJFishandWildlife.com/ahrs_deer_viewer.htm
- Red fox harvests CANNOT and DO NOT need to be reported.

Range of Eastern Coyote in New Jersey*





New Jersey Bobcats and Fishers

Bobcats are classified as endangered in New Jersey and are widely distributed across the northern part of the state. Fishers are returning, naturally and through reintroduction efforts in New York and Pennsylvania, to most of their historic range in the northeastern United States. Fishers have been documented in several northern and southern New Jersey counties.

- **There is no open trapping season for bobcat or fisher. Further, possession is not permitted except for properly documented animals legally harvested in another state or Canadian province.**
- **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. The data collected will be instrumental to understand population status for these species.



Helpful Tips on Skinning and Boarding Beavers

There are a number of ways to skin a beaver, and it seems that every trapper with experience skinning beavers has their favorite method, one that works best for them. Gaining experience by working with someone who handles beaver will shorten the learning curve.

However, some may be new to handling beaver or may not have access to an experienced fur handler. So here is a list of helpful tips that will make the task quicker and easier.

1. Cut the feet off first to make the skinning process faster and easier. A pruning shear or lopper is a safe, ideal tool for this. A hatchet or a big knife will also do the trick.
2. Lay the beaver on its back. Using a regular pointed skinning knife, start your initial cut at the base of the tail straight up the belly to the chin. Use a sharp, round tipped knife for skinning the remainder of the beaver once the initial cut is completed.
3. It is important to CLEAN skin the first inch or so all the way around the hide. A clean edge to nail on your board will make the boarding process easier.
4. Flesh the pelt. There's only one way to learn how to do this correctly and cleanly and that is to physically do it. Talk to a few experienced beaver fur handlers and ask them who they think does

the best job. It may be time well spent to at least watch an expert flesh a beaver and see what works best for them. Or pay that experienced fur handler to help you do it. The more pelts you handle and flesh, the better you will get.

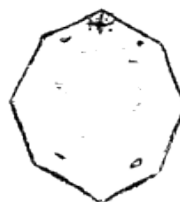
- To figure how big the stretched pelt will be, first hang the pelt vertically by the nose and measure from nose to tail (x). To (x), add $\frac{1}{2}x$ and add 2 inches to arrive at a result. Divide the result by 2 to find the diameter of the circle into which the pelt should stretch. As an example, for a pelt that has a hanging length (x) of 32 inches. The circle diameter would then be:

$$32 + 32/2 + 2 \text{ (or } 32 + 16 + 2) = 50. \text{ Then } 50/2 = 25 \text{ inches in diameter.}$$

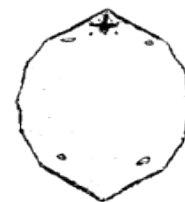
- Boarding. *The proper shape of a finished beaver pelt is oval, not round.* Lay the pelt **fur side down** on the board. Nail the nose at the 12 o'clock position of your circle and the tail at the 6 o'clock position. Nail the sides at the 3 and 9 o'clock positions. See the diagrams below for the proper nailing sequence for boarding the pelt. The skin should be pulled and nailed until nails are spaced no less than one inch apart around the perimeter of the pelt. A general rule of thumb is to place the nails the thickness of your index finger apart.
- Any fat left around the leg holes should be removed and the leg holes closed up with at least 3 or 4 nails. The stretched pelt should be further scraped of any remaining fat with a curved knife blade or similar tool. **Important:** Leave $\frac{1}{4}$ " to $\frac{1}{2}$ " of air circulation space under the pelt on the board to allow the pelt to dry from both sides.
- Drying boards should be placed upright in a cool dry area at least 6 inches apart. Under favorable drying conditions, the skins should be dry enough to remove from the boards within 7 to 10 days. Drying time can be reduced to as little as 2 days if fans and artificial heat are used. Heaters should only be used to dry the air under humid conditions and not blow directly on the pelt. Excessive heat and direct sunlight will damage your pelt and reduce its value to the buyer.
- Helpful Hint:** New Jersey still seals all beaver pelts at check-in. Placing a popsicle stick through at least one of the eye holes after boarding will make it easier to seal your pelt!



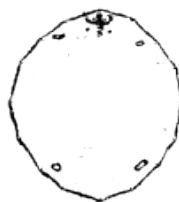
First four nails at proper distances.



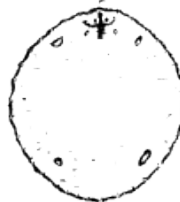
Add four more nails.



Add eight nails.



Add 16 nails.



After Michael Stockney, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation.