



New Jersey Furbearer Management Newsletter Spring 2014

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



TRAPPER AND HUNTER SURVEY REMINDER - 2013-14 NJ Trapper Survey

•Mailed to all 2013 New Jersey trapping license purchasers on or about March 30.
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.
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. Responses must be received before May 1!

2012-13 New Jersey Trapper Harvest Survey Summaries

A 2012-13 New Jersey Trapper Harvest Survey was mailed to 1195 licensed trappers requesting harvest, recreational and socio-economic information for the 2012-13 trapping season. Seventeen questionnaires (1.4 percent) were returned by the postal authorities as undeliverable, all of which were forwarded to corrected address, and 1178 were presumed delivered. One survey was returned with responses unusable.

Summary of participation for NJ trappers for the 2012-13 season:

Species	Number of 2012-13 active respondents	Estimated number of active trappers (2012-13)	Mean experience (years)	Mean days trapped (2012-13)	Estimated total trap-nights	Estimated harvest	Estimated value (US\$)
Beaver	64	170	8.60	15.35	14,098.22	708 ¹	17,293.54
Coyote	76	202	5.91	40.80	189,291.69	243 ²	6,337.65
Gray fox	38	101	14.74	38.06	108,054.39	164	4,811.01
Mink	94	250	14.82	36.00	231,864.29	1,086	23,582.17
Muskrat	156	414	23.72	29.56	485,808.46	21,229	205,292.41
Nutria	0	Unknown				0	
Opossum	72	191	17.25	43.69	106,564.73	1,121	2,819.87
Raccoon	189	502	17.17	34.28	295,381.84	6,159	75,836.12
Red fox	162	430	14.65	42.93	641,318.48	5,967	213,676.24
River otter	24	64	13.00	24.00	1,465.87	52 ¹	3,357.71
Skunk	34	90	15.85	39.85	44,139.98	295	2,417.09
Weasel	1	3	43.00	0.00	0.00	5	-
Total	286	759	22.2			37,043	555,423.81

¹ Harvest as reported at mandatory beaver and otter check stations

² Harvest as reported by mandatory call-in to regional Division Law Enforcement offices

Summary of fur values for the 2012-13 season:

Species	Estimated value (US\$)	Average pelt price (US\$)	% Trappers	Rec days	Trap-nights to harvest
Beaver	\$17,294	\$24.43	22.4%	2,601	19.9
Coyote	\$6,338		26.6%	8242	779.7
Fisher		-			
Gray fox	\$4,811	\$29.40	13.3%	3,848	660.3
Mink	\$23,582	\$21.71	32.9%	9,000	213.5
Muskrat	\$205,292	\$9.67	54.5%	12,254	22.9
Nutria		-			
Opossum	\$2,820	\$2.52	25.2%	8,347	95.1
Raccoon	\$75,836	\$12.31	66.1%	17,972	54.8
Red fox	\$213,676	\$35.81	56.6%	18,447	107.5
River otter	\$3,358	\$64.57	8.4%	506	28.2
Skunk	\$2,417	\$8.20	11.6%	3,582	149.7
Weasel	-	-	.40%	-	-
Total	\$555,424			84,799	

Years of experience of licensed trappers prior to the 2012-13 trapping season.

Years of experience prior to 2012	Estimated number of active trappers										
	Total	Beaver	Coyote	Gray fox	Mink	Muskrat	Opossum	Raccoon	Red fox	River otter	Skunk
0 years	12	0	4	1	1	1	0	3	2	0	0
1-5 years	248	82	94	31	89	108	61	167	163	21	42
6-10 years	71	13	37	13	21	19	19	37	35	8	5
11-15 years	34	5	3	3	13	13	5	13	13	0	0
16-20 years	30	11	5	3	5	24	5	19	11	5	3
21-25 years	12	5	0	3	5	8	0	8	3	0	0
26-30 years	20	3	5	8	8	21	11	24	21	0	3
31-35 years	35	3	3	3	0	13	8	19	11	0	5
36-40 years	52	8	0	3	8	5	5	16	21	0	0
41-45 years	34	3	0	3	0	19	8	16	11	0	3
46-50 years	61	0	0	3	8	27	5	16	3	0	3
>50 years	91	0	0	0	13	42	8	21	8	0	8
Unknown	57	37	51	29	77	114	56	143	130	29	19
Mean experience	22.2	8.6	5.9	14.7	14.8	23.7	17.3	17.2	14.6	13.0	15.9
Est. active trappers	759	170	202	101	249	414	191	502	430	64	90

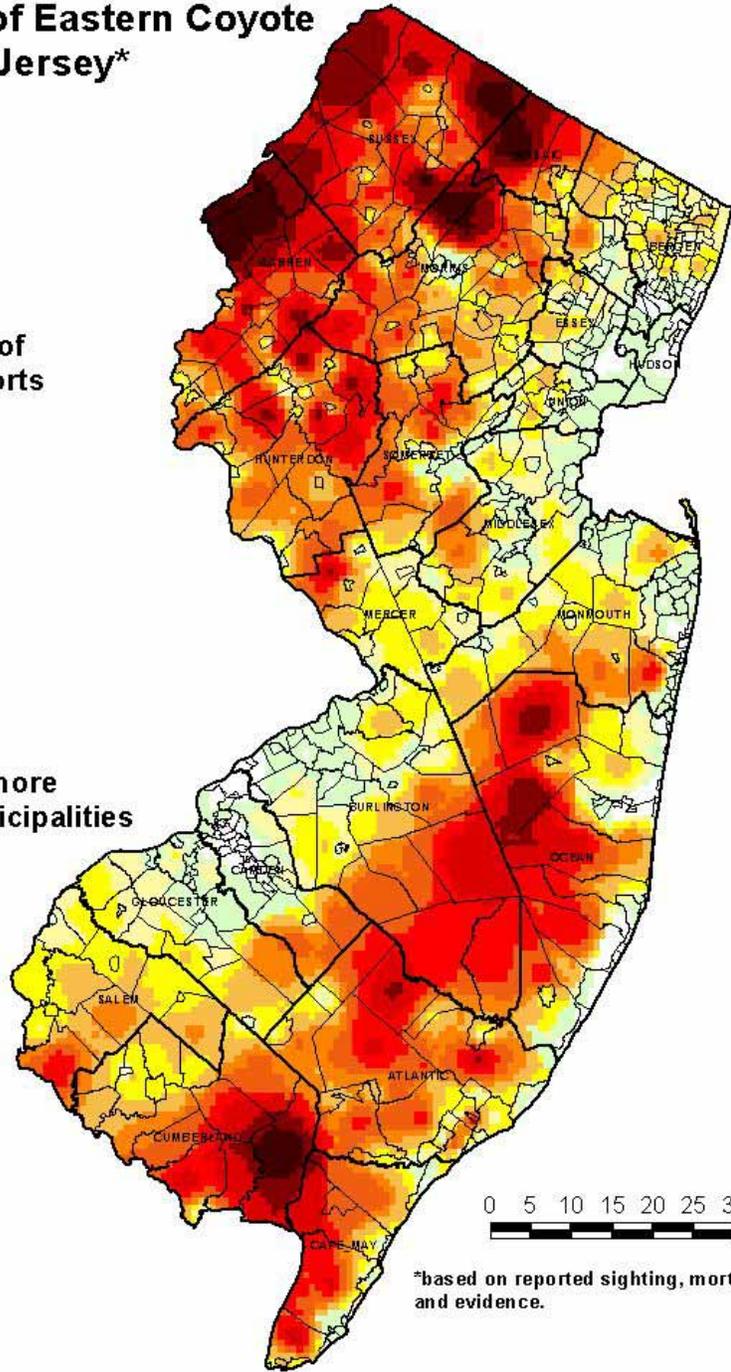
Mean age of 47.1 years for NJ trappers.

New Jersey Coyotes: Where are they reported?

Range of Eastern Coyote in New Jersey*

Frequency of coyote reports

as of 7/1/13



*based on reported sighting, mortalities and evidence.

Municipalities with 80 coyote reports* or more

County	Municipality	Number of Reports
Cumberland	Maurice River Township	155
Warren	Blairstown Township	139
Sussex	Sparta Township	133
Morris	Jefferson Township	133
Passaic	West Milford Township	130
Sussex	Vernon Township	128
Warren	Knowlton Township	123
Morris	Rockaway Township	117
Ocean	Manchester Township	115
Sussex	Sandyston Township	109
Ocean	Jackson Township	108
Warren	Hardwick Township**	108
Hunterdon	Clinton Township	105
Atlantic	Mullica Township	103
Warren	Allamuchy Township	101
Warren	White Township	99
Sussex	Frankford Township	96
Sussex	Wantage Township	96
Hunterdon	Union Township	96
Cape May	Lower Township	93
Hunterdon	Tewksbury Township	91
Warren	Mansfield Township	90
Hunterdon	Lebanon Township	90
Sussex	Stillwater Township	87
Cape May	Dennis Township	86
Mercer	Hopewell Township	86
Warren	Hope Township	86
Atlantic	Galloway Township	84
Sussex	Montague	82
Sussex	Walpack Township	80

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

**Includes Hardwick and Pahaquarry Townships.

NEW - Hunters may harvest coyotes *incidentally* to Spring Gobbler hunting beginning in 2014!



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

Summary of documented coyote mortalities in New Jersey from July 1, 1991 to June 30, 2013.

Fiscal year	Vehicle collision	Disease	Legal hunting			Legal trapping		Wildlife control	Illegal harvest	Unknown	Total
			Archery	Shotgun	Muzzleloader	Box trap	Snare				
1992	13						4			1	18
1993	25	1					6				32
1994	20	1					3	6			30
1995	17						5	1			23
1996	17	1					2			1	21
1997	19	2		2	2		12		1	1	39
1998	26	2	1	8	2	2	5			1	47
1999	25	2		5	1		1			2	36
2000	26	1		5	2		6				40
2001	22	4	5	26	4		6			2	69
2002	27	1	3	16	4		8	1	1		61
2003	36	1	3	56	5		31	1		2	135
2004	22	1	12	56	10		59			2	162
2005	34		9	59	9		46	1		2	160
2006	28	1	18	61	12		85	2		1	208
2007	12		5	51	12		108	6			194
2008	15		11	44	5		90	2			167
2009	16		10	41	12		93	2			174
2010	19		9	65	22		69	4		2	190
2011	11		13	62	11		171	2			270
2012	13		17	57	13		162	8		1	271
2013	22	1	10	38	8		243	2			324
Total	465	19	126	652	134	2	1215	32	8	18	2671

New Jersey Fishers

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



Trappers have yet to report any fishers caught in snares or body-grippers by trappers. Reports of road-killed and of box-trapped “fishers” have been received however and the box-trapped “fishers” were examined in the trap (usually either mink or weasel). The road-kills turned out to be mink (usually big bucks); however one fisher carcass was picked up this year in Lafayette, Sussex County.

Trail camera photos of fishers have been taken over the last few years in northern Sussex County since 2006. One was photographed in a tree in northern Warren County (2003).

**Furbearer Facts:
Beavers in New Jersey**



The beaver, (*Castor canadensis*) has played an important part in New Jersey's and the nation's early history. The pelts of this one animal played a great part in the economic base for the trade and eventual growth of New Jersey's earliest settlements, especially those along the banks of the Delaware River. The beaver's range prior to European colonization was throughout the forested areas of all North America from Alaska through Canada and south to Mexico.

Beavers were plentiful at the time when over 4,000,000 acres of New Jersey were forested. Trade in the mid-1600s was reported to be 9,000 to 10,000 pelts per season in the areas along the Delaware near the New Sweden settlements alone. Beaver skins and wampum (shell beads) were the currency in the early years of settlement by the people along the river. The settlers purchased the pelts from the Indians, paying for them with wampum. The sellers then used the pelts to purchase the supplies and services that the settlements required. At the time, the pelts were worth about seven florins or two dollars each. Historical reports tell of members of the settlement of New Sweden who made a trip to Manhattan in 1643 to purchase animals to work the fields. In Manhattan, the leader of the expedition purchased seven oxen for 124 pelts, one cow for 22 pelts, and 75 bushels of rye for 32 pelts. Trade continued into the 1700's. New Jersey had a flourishing beaver-hat trade with Portugal and the West Indies. This trade apparently died out prior to the Revolutionary War period. The combination of the earlier high and unregulated demand for beaver pelts and the extensive deforestation and cultivation of the land and the expansion of the human population greatly reduced the beaver numbers as the eighteenth century came to a close. These same factors led to the near extirpation of the beaver in most of the country. However, the process was greatly accelerated in the northeast because the human population was greatest in that area.

By the late 1800's the beavers had almost disappeared from Atlantic, Camden, Cape May, Mercer, and Burlington, Ocean, Salem and Warren counties. Some of the last sites with active beaver colonies were in the Great Egg Harbor, Machesautuxen, Nescochaque, Big Timber Creek, Wading River, Sluice Creek, Toms River, Raccoon Creek and the Assunpink waterways.

Beaver activity was described in 1902 around the towns of Roseville and Two Bridges in Sussex County. At that time those beaver represented almost all the activity in the state. It is possible that these beaver in the northern areas were the results of escaped beaver from the Rutherford-Stuyvesant game preserve in Allamuchy, Warren County. Apparently these escaped beavers were able to gain a foothold and spread across the Delaware River from Sussex County to Monroe County, Pennsylvania.

Historical reports note that a bill before the state legislature in 1902 gave total protection to beaver. In fact, the beaver was afforded complete protection in 1903.

In the first half of the twentieth century, New Jersey, as well as other northeastern states began augmenting the few remaining beaver colonies with beaver obtained from

Wisconsin, Michigan, Wyoming, and Minnesota. This restocking enabled the beaver to re-establish itself and by 1947, New Jersey instituted a trapping season on the animals. Today beavers have established themselves throughout most of the state, excluding the most metropolitan counties of Essex, Hudson, Middlesex, Somerset and Union.

The largest North American rodent, the beaver is a muscular animal often exceeding 60 pounds in weight at maturity (The only rodent in the world larger than the beaver is the capybara of Central and South America).

A beaver's vision is weak, although its hearing and sense of smell are very good. Food is located by smell. Beavers are slow movers on dry land but are very mobile in their natural element – water. A beaver can stay underwater for up to 15 minutes. During a dive, the heart of a beaver slows and valves close off the ears and nose.

A beaver's front teeth are always growing; a beaver must gnaw continually throughout its life to keep them worn down. The lower and upper incisors are the primary cutters. The lips of the beaver seal tightly behind the incisors and the tongue fits tightly against the roof of the mouth providing a watertight seal so that the animal doesn't choke when gnawing underwater.

Both male and females have musk sacs, called castors (thus the Latin designation for the beaver – Castor). These sacs produce an oily, heavily scented substance called "castoreum" used to mark its territory. This castoreum is used commercially to produce medicines and perfumes. Beavers also have two other glands at the base of the tail which secrete an oil which is used during grooming to waterproof its fur.

The forefeet are equipped with claws that enable the animal to dig burrows and hold food. The hind feet are webbed for swimming. The second toe on each rear foot has a split double toenail that allows the beaver to remove parasites and groom and oil its fur. Its tail is large and muscular serving as a rudder while swimming. The tail also helps in temperature regulation and fat storage. The beavers *do not* carry mud around on their tails or use them to "pat" the mud into place on the dams or lodges as old wives tales have related to us through the years.

The fur of the beaver consists of two layers. The outer layer of fur is made up of sparse, coarse guard hairs. The inner layer of fur (undercoat) is dense soft and waterproof. The pelage color varies but usually ranges from brownish-black to yellowish-brown.

The beaver can live anywhere a lake, stream, marsh or river is adjacent to suitable woodland habitat. In this habitat the beaver constructs its dams or lodges and burrows. The dam is most important to the animal enabling the beavers to raise the water levels necessary for the floating building materials and food to the lodge, burrow or cache area. Beavers may raise the height of the dam to raise the water level of their pond so the beavers can reach more food without leaving the safety of the water; or they may build additional dams up or downstream for the same reason. All members of the beaver colony, except the very young keep the dam in good repair.

The lodge is constructed by the beaver by laying down layers of mud and sticks over a bank burrow entrance or in a shallow area of already elevated waterway. The beaver forms a roughly conical structure as it lays down additional material, leaving the center as a hollow chamber. The entire lodge may be 6 to 8 feet high when completed. The bottom is thicker than the top; the loose top layer allows for ventilation. Tunnels lead from the

chamber and lead underwater. Each fall in New Jersey, beavers build a stockpile of tree branches and limbs near the lodge or burrow. These stockpiles are called a cache. These caches enable the beavers to continue activity throughout the winter if the watercourse is completely covered by a layer of ice.

A beaver eats about 1.5 to 2 pounds of food each day. Beaver will utilize the bark of birch, poplar, maple, willow, cherry, hazelnut, viburnum, alder, beech, ash, dogwood, pine and hemlock. Beavers will also eat grasses, sedge and roots such as cattail or water lily in the spring and summer.

Breeding occurs in January and February. It is assumed that the male and female beavers form a pair bond for life. The young, usually 3 to 5 in number (depending on the quality of the food) are born about 3 ½ months later. The kits which are fully furred at birth and weigh between 1 and 1½ pounds and have been known to enter the water within the first week after birth. The kits stay with the colony until they are 1½ to 2 years of age and are sexually mature, at which point they are either driven away by the adults or disperse on their own and attempt to establish themselves in another area.

The activities of the beaver are often viewed as points of controversy among its human neighbors. In areas where beavers and suitable beaver habitat and human development exist side by side views of the beavers activity ranges from beneficial to detrimental. Normal beaver activities such as the cutting of trees and the building of dams alter the environment in dramatic ways. The flooding of these areas by the dams built by the beavers can flood large areas which depending on the individual and their perception of the situation can be either wonderful or terrible. The beavers alter the existing area by flooding roads and property and areas that once supported deer, rabbits, squirrels, livestock and other land dwelling animals. But, the beaver can create habitat that not only benefits itself but also waterfowl, muskrat, otter, amphibians and many other life-forms associated with aquatic habitats and the food sources found there. Beaver impoundments are beneficial because stream flow is stabilized and soil erosion is controlled by the creation of the dams.

New Jersey Bobcats – Status may be changed from ‘Endangered’ to ‘Threatened’!
More data needed (isn’t it always?)

Contact Fish and Wildlife if you have observed a bobcat or found bobcat sign:

- Live sightings and trail cam photos– Complete a brief sighting report form:
<http://www.nj.gov/dep/fgw/ensp/pdf/rptform.pdf>. Data from central and southern New Jersey counties are of particular interest.
- Dead on the road – please call us at 908-638-4127 to provide the location of the carcass.

