

New Jersey Furbearer Management Newsletter



Winter 2012

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



Deadlines and Dates to Remember-

Beaver and Otter Trapping Season Dates

Coyote and Fox Special Permit Season Dates

Dec. 26 – Feb. 9 (Jan. 1 – Feb. 9 on some WMA)

January 2 thru March 15, 2012

**Please remember- the Beaver/Otter check station date is:
February 25, 2012**

New Jersey's Wild Canids- Red Fox, Gray Fox and Coyote



Three species of the family Canidae, or dog family are found in New Jersey. They are the red fox (*Vulpes vulpes*), the gray fox (*Urocyon cinereoargenteus*) and the coyote (*Canis latrans*). All three of these animals can be found nearly anywhere in the state and all three are valuable furbearers listed as game animals with a regulated season.

The red fox is the most common of the three canids and one of the most sought after species. Generally, the red fox harvest ranks third behind muskrat and raccoon in total numbers caught and in total fur value. The total harvest of gray foxes has decreased over the last 30 years perhaps due to increased competition from coyotes and red fox. During the early 1980s the gray fox harvest was nearly equivalent to that of the red fox. For example, in 1980-81 the red fox harvest was an estimated 6,315 animals while the gray fox harvest was an estimated 5,894.

The 2010-2011 estimated trapper harvest of red fox in New Jersey was 3,534 red foxes with an estimated total value of \$49,723 and an average price per pelt of \$14.07. For gray fox, the estimated harvest was 134 gray foxes with an estimated total value of \$3,676 and an average price per pelt of \$27.43. The coyote harvest is known rather than estimated due to mandatory reporting. There were 171 coyotes harvested by trappers in 2010-11 with an estimated total fur value of \$3,443 and an average price per pelt of \$20.16. Recent changes in trapping regulations have enabled trappers to harvest significantly more coyotes compared to previous years (see Table below).

These canids, like raccoon and opossum, may also be taken by hunters. During the 2009-10 hunting seasons for fox and coyote, hunters in New Jersey took an estimated 1,280 red foxes, 783 gray foxes and 96 coyotes.

Nearly all of the coyotes that are shot by hunters in New Jersey since 1997 were killed incidentally to hunting deer as the seasons for foxes and coyotes have run concurrently with deer seasons since October of 1997. Mandatory harvest reports show that less than 7% of all the coyotes harvested by hunters were killed during the special permit coyote and/or fox season. Only 3 reports are recorded for coyotes that were harvested as incidentally taken while hunting small game.

New Jersey Coyote Mortalities

Fiscal year	Vehicle collision	Disease	Legal hunting			Legal trapping		Wildlife control	Illegal harvest	Unknown	Total		
			Archery	Shotgun	Muzzleloader	Box trap	Snare						
1992	13		No Hunting Season				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		
Total	430	18	99	557	113	2	810	22	8	17	2076		

New Jersey Furbearer Facts: The Coyote



Background

Historic records show the coyote is not native to New Jersey. The coyote extended its range north and east across Canada from the mid-west. It is theorized that the species may have bred with gray wolves, emerged into the New England states and has extended its range south through New Jersey. Contrary to popular opinion, the Division of Fish and Wildlife has never imported coyotes for any reason at any time.

Biologists maintain that eastern coyotes are not first generation crosses of dogs and coyotes or "coy-dogs", but rather a definite coyote strain although with more variations in fur color and a larger body size than their western counterpart. In New Jersey, adult males generally weigh between 35 and 40 pounds, with a few animals reaching the 45 to 50 pound range. Females generally weigh about 5 pounds less, in the 30 to 35 pound range. Color variations range from the typical "western coyote" gray-tan to a fox-like red to almost black. The coyote is a German Shepherd-appearing animal when seen from a distance, but when viewed up-close its thinner

muzzle and the fox-like "brush" tail are distinctive.

In the last 30 years or so sightings of coyotes have increased throughout New Jersey. This increase is due to the coyote's ability to co-exist successfully with man, and to of the ability of coyotes to adapt to varied habitat types and food sources. Coyotes have been documented in all 21 New Jersey counties and 392 New Jersey municipalities.

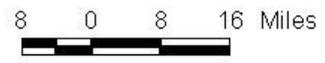
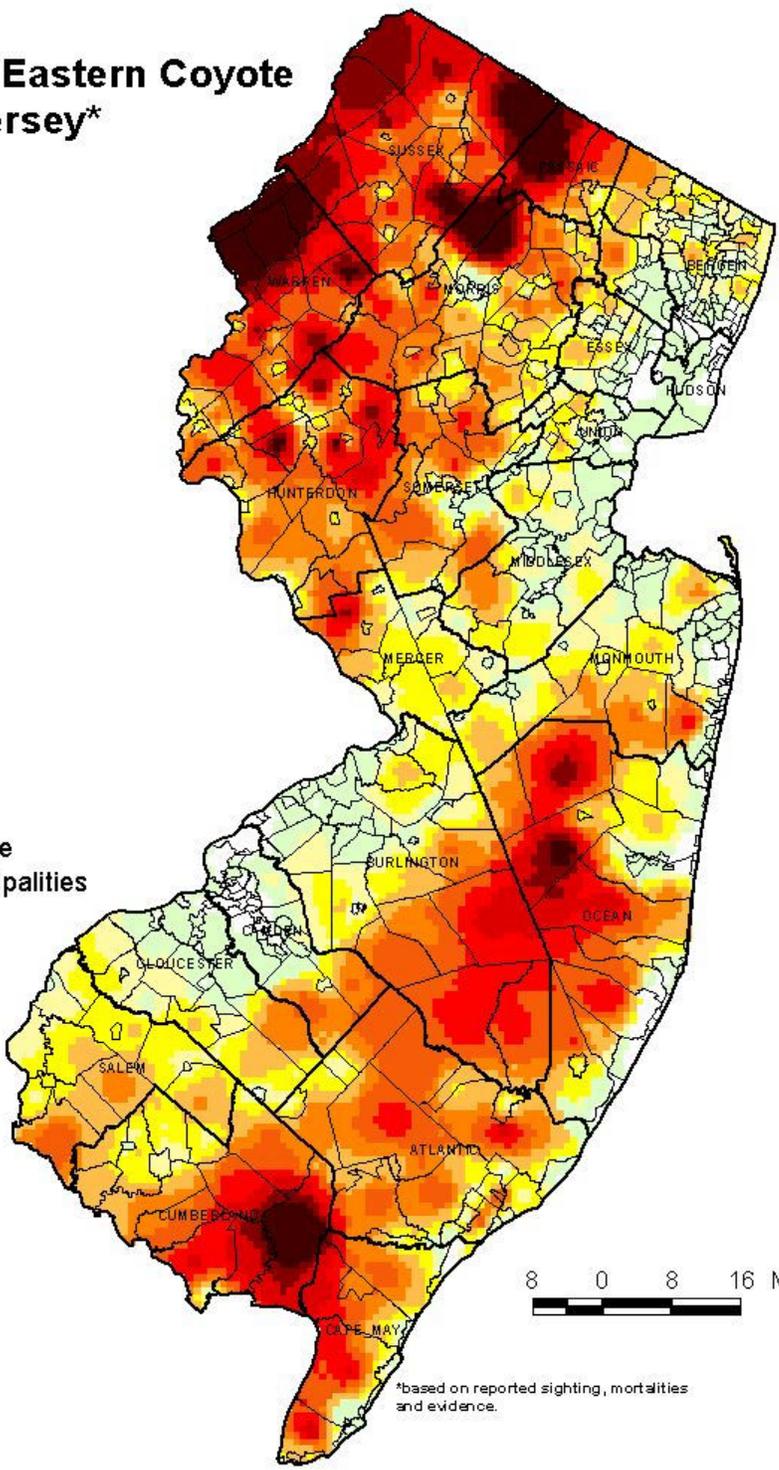
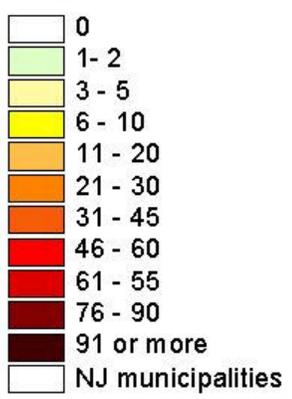
Additional information on the history of the coyote in the northeastern United States is available in: [Eastern Coyote- What is it? Where did it come from?](#) by Dr. Roland Kays, Curator of Mammals, New York State Museum.

History-

- In 1939 the first record of a coyote in New Jersey was documented near Lambertville, Hunterdon County. From 1939 through 1975 there are records for nine specimens from New Jersey.
- In 1975, the Division's Bureau of Wildlife Management recommended that the Eastern Coyote be officially recognized as a resident species and given game animal status. The coyote was listed as a game animal with a closed season in the 1975-76 Game Code.
- In 1980, the Division's Bureau of Wildlife Management recommended that the coyote be listed as a furbearer species. This allowed coyotes to be taken by trappers during the regular trapping season, which ran from November 15 to March 15. There was no daily or season limit imposed.
- On October 27, 1985 it became unlawful for a New Jersey trapper to use a leghold trap. After that date only cable restraints or box traps could be used to trap coyotes. Trappers were required to report all coyotes taken to a Division Law Enforcement office within 24 hours.
- In 1986, it became lawful for a farmer to kill a coyote on his farm when the coyote was found damaging livestock or crops. Farmers were required to report all coyotes taken to a Division Law Enforcement office within 24 hours.
- The Fish and Game Council authorized winter coyote hunting seasons by permit beginning in 1997 (except for 2001 when no permit was required). Coyote hunters were allowed to take two coyotes per day. Weapons allowed included shotgun, bow and muzzleloading rifle. Shotgun hunters were required to use either #2 or #4 fine shot. Bow and muzzleloader weapon and missile requirements were similar to deer hunting requirements. Special coyote hunting permits were required in order to monitor and evaluate the season. A \$2.00 application processing fee was charged per permit. Permits were available through the mail and over the counter.

Range of Eastern Coyote in New Jersey*

Frequency of coyote reports as of 7/1/11



*based on reported sighting, mortalities and evidence.

Some Tips on the Handling of Fox and Coyote Pelts

- Always, always be careful when choosing trap set locations! Try to choose locations that are free of burrs, conifers (pitch) or wire fences.
- Dirt and especially blood in the fur should also be cleaned immediately at the site of capture.
- Trap sets should be checked on a regular basis to minimize the possibility of fur damage.
- Be careful not to pull guard hairs if the fur is frozen to the ground or tangled in shrubs or trees. In below freezing temperatures, wet fur on metal such as in the bed of a pickup truck can also damage the fur.
- Freshly killed animals should not be piled on top of each other. Maintain an air space around each animal so the body has a chance to cool as quickly as possible. This is important with any species of game animal or furbearer.
- Fox and coyote should be skinned as soon as possible to avoid decomposition, or *taint*. If animals cannot be skinned soon, hang them up by the hind legs. This will slow the belly taint process.
- Tainting and hair slippage is one of the main reasons for pelts being downgraded. Whether the taint is small or large, the skin is rotting. This decomposition cannot be reversed.
- Other than on the belly, the greatest potential for hair slip is around the ears. Any portions of the pelt that remain damp/wet will cause hair to slip.
- The tailbone must always be pulled and the tail split completely to the end for it to properly dry. Try not to lose or rip off any portion of the tail.
- After pelting, leave the pelt leather-out until it has noticeably cooled, then turn fur-out until boarding.
- Sprinkle borax in and around the ear and any portion of the damp pelt as well as the skinned tail to hasten drying. Borax is a preservative used extensively in the fur trade. Salt *should not* be used because it attracts moisture. If the fur grader sees that the fur is slipping around the ear, they often assume slippage will occur during dressing and the grader will automatically downgrade the pelt.
- Placing fur in fur bags will greatly reduce the chance of damaging the fur.
- With the exception of gray foxes and some coyotes, there is very little in the way of fat/flesh to remove.

Skinning Foxes and Coyotes: What to leave on or off?

- Paws cut off? Claws on or off? Front legs cut off at the elbow? All these are acceptable. Cutting the legs too high may cause some problems, but usually doesn't result in a downgraded pelt.

Stretching/Boarding-

- Concerns with stretching/boarding include using boards that are too wide and pulling too hard on the hind legs when pinning them.
- Use wooden boards if at all possible. They are far superior than wire stretchers for maximizing pelt size and the appearance of pelts.
- Correct board measurements are very important. Whether split or solid boards, be sure the boards are not overly wide.

- Coyote and Fox are always placed on the stretcher leather side out, and dried until the head is nearly dry, then turned fur out and put back onto the board until thoroughly dry. Pay close attention to the drying pelts especially the ears. It may take some experience to perfect the timing of when to turn the pelt.
- The front legs can remain inside the pelt, when turning, provided they are thoroughly dried (as per the [NAFA Fur Handling Manual](#)). Leaving the legs inside the pelt greatly reduces the chance of the front legs tearing while turning the pelt.
- When the pelt has been removed from the board, wipe any excess grease from the leather side and brush the fur to best appearance.
- Pelts should be always stored in a cool location and where damage by small rodents can be minimized.

Accidental knife cuts occasionally happen and the only way to avoid them is by paying closer attention during pelting. When grading foxes and coyotes please note that snares, tainting, bullet holes, knife cuts and failure to clean the fur are the major reasons for downgrading. To maximize fur values always clean dirt and dried mud or blood from the pelt and sew knife cuts or bullet holes to keep the pelt from being graded into a slightly damaged or damaged category.

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



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



The New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife is a professional, environmental agency dedicated to the protection, management and wise use of the state's fish and wildlife resources.