



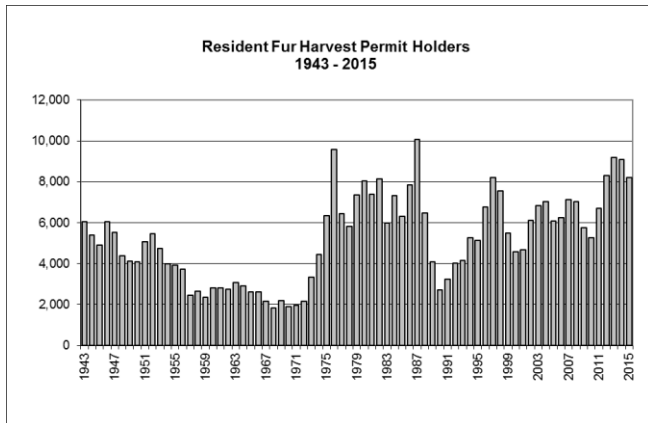
FUR HARVEST SURVEY 2015/2016 SEASON



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Nebraska Game and Parks Commission
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Permits:

A total of 8,204 fur harvest permits were sold to Nebraska residents in 2015 (down from 9,088 in 2014). Twenty-one fur harvest permits were sold to nonresidents from 10 different states (CO, IA, IN, KS, MN, MT, PA, SD, TX, and WY).



Survey:

A fur harvest survey was sent to 7,982 fur harvest permit holders. The response rate to the survey was 16% yielding a total of 1,277 responses. In addition, surveys were sent to 43 licensed fur buyers, of which 26% (11) responded to the survey.

Seasons:

Species	Trap and Hunt	Trap Only	Hunt only
Muskrat	N/A	Nov 1 – Mar. 31	N/A
Beaver	N/A	Nov 1 – Mar. 31	N/A
Bobcat	Dec. 1 – end Feb.	N/A	N/A
Raccoon	Nov. 1 – end Feb.	N/A	Sept. 1 – Oct. 31
Opossum	Nov. 1 – end Feb.	N/A	Sept. 1 – Oct. 31
Weasel	Nov. 1 – end Feb.	N/A	N/A
Mink	Nov. 1 – end Feb.	N/A	N/A
Red Fox	Nov. 1 – end Feb.	N/A	N/A
Gray Fox	Nov. 1 – end Feb.	N/A	N/A
Badger	Nov. 1 – end Feb.	N/A	N/A
Skunk	Year-round	N/A	N/A

Harvest:

The estimated harvest during the 2015/2016 season was lower compared with the five-year average, excluding woodchuck. Beaver, raccoon, mink, and muskrat showed the greatest decrease (down 54%, 54%, 53%, and 45% respectively). Only woodchuck showed an increase compared to the five-year average

(up 11%). The total estimated harvest for the 2015/2016 season was lower than the 2014/2015 season with raccoon, badger, and skunk showing the greatest decrease (down 46%, 38% and 29% respectively). No species showed an increase compared to the previous season. Furharvesters reported that 33% of coyotes and 29% of red foxes harvested showed symptoms of mange.

	Estimated Harvest		Total harvest	Previous Season	5-Yr Average 2010-2014
	Hunt	Trap			
Raccoon	28,100	65,035	93,135	172,486	201,718
Coyote ¹	15,881	15,663	31,544	33,285	32,396
Opossum	5,364	19,447	24,811	30,752	32,266
Muskrat	0	16,755	16,755	19,650	30,405
Striped Skunk	2,024	8,082	10,106	14,250	14,674
Beaver	0	5,846	5,846	7,920	12,716
Badger	912	2,126	3,039	4,915	4,360
Red Fox	842	2,011	2,852	3,416	3,519
Mink	64	1,285	1,349	1,583	2,873
Woodchuck	366	720	1,086	1,374	974
Bobcat ²	245	598	843	994	1,565

¹ Includes only harvest numbers provided by harvesters

² Total harvest based on pelt tagging, hunt column includes harvested road kills

Nonresponder Bias:

The results of a 2003 phone survey indicate that active harvesters were 4.7 times more likely to respond to the fur harvest survey than those that did not participate in the 2002/2003 season. As a result, the proportion of inactive harvesters is greater in the population of nonresponders, likely resulting in an overestimation of total harvest estimates if simple extrapolation is used. Adjusting the 2015/2016 harvest data, based on the findings of the 2002/2003 follow up phone survey yields substantially lower total harvest estimates than the non-adjusted extrapolation.

Species	Harvest not adjusted	Estimated total harvest adjusted for nonresponder bias
Raccoon	93,135	71,640
Coyote	31,544	23,833
Opossum	24,811	19,892
Muskrat	16,755	12,179
Striped Skunk	10,106	8,984
Beaver	5,846	5,860
Badger	3,039	2,665
Red Fox	2,852	2,096
Mink	1,349	940

Fur Harvesters:

Seventy-one percent of fur harvest survey responders indicated that they participated in the 2015/2016 fur harvest. Of those that were successful, 32% only trapped, 31% only hunted and 37% both trapped and hunted furbearers. The number of participants was lower than the previous year (900 compared to 1,173 in 2014/2015). The average successful trapper harvested 74% more furbearers than the average hunter (33 vs. 19). According to the fur harvest survey, each fur harvester received permission from an average three landowners to harvest fur on their lands.

Depredation:

The species most commonly harvested for depredation control purposes were raccoon, opossum and beaver.

Raccoon	\$5.17	\$9.06	\$9.87
Striped Skunk	\$4.68	\$4.77	\$2.03
Muskrat	\$1.98	\$4.08	\$4.68
Opossum	\$1.16	\$0.50	\$0.93

Early Raccoon Hunting-Only Season:

Estimates from the fur harvest survey indicate that harvesters who participated in the early raccoon season killed an estimated 3,553 raccoons (compared with 5,321 in 2014). The early raccoon-hunting season accounted for 4% of all raccoons taken during the entire 2015/2016 season. Concerns with the season have been voiced by raccoon trappers fearing reduced trapping success due to localized population reduction by hunters prior to the trapping season. Fur buyers are concerned with the influx of valueless pelts on the market (raccoon pelts usually do not prime up until the middle of November).

Gray Fox Tagging:

In 2002, a tagging requirement was implemented for all gray fox taken in Nebraska. Three gray foxes were harvested during the 2015/2016 season, two females and one male. All were harvested in Merrick County.

River Otter Distribution:

Information from fur harvesters regarding river otter distribution has been collected through fur harvest surveys since the 2010/2011 season. This information will be used to focus survey efforts and determine the current distribution of this threatened species.

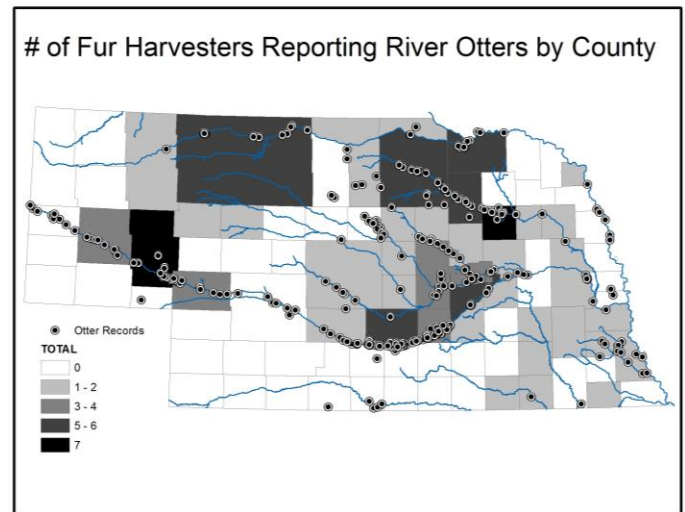
Species	Number harvested for depredation	Percent of total harvest
Raccoon	11,166	12%
Opossum	4,150	17%
Beaver	2,685	46%
Coyote	3,154	10%
Striped Skunk	2,975	29%
Muskrat	977	6%
Badger	842	28%
Woodchuck	662	61%
Red Fox	199	7%
Bobcat	39	5%
Mink	19	1%

Pelts:

Based on results from the annual fur buyer survey, overall prices for wild pelts of most furbearing species have decreased compared with the previous season excluding opossum. Compared with the five-year average six species have decreased in price and four species have increased in price. Opossum pelt prices experienced the greatest increase with average prices 132% higher than during the 2014/2015 season. Raccoon, beaver, and bobcat prices showed the greatest decreases with average prices 43%, 35%, and 33% lower than the 2014/2015 season. Bobcat pelts remain the most valuable with average prices \$49 higher than any other furbearer.

Pelt Prices:

Species	2015-2016	Previous Season	5 Year Average
Bobcat	\$71.58	\$106.82	\$147.48
Coyote	\$23.04	\$25.40	\$17.10
Red Fox	\$14.31	\$20.83	\$17.02
Badger	\$8.95	\$10.87	\$7.93
Mink	\$5.65	\$7.92	\$10.21
Beaver	\$5.48	\$8.36	\$7.78



Special thanks to all fur harvesters and fur buyers that made this analysis possible by responding to the fur harvest and fur buyer survey!