



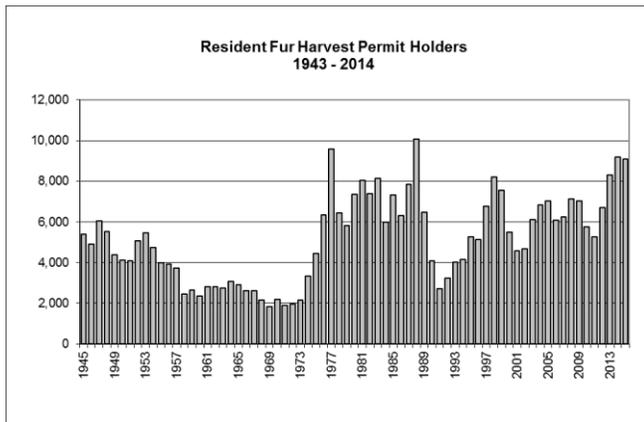
## FUR HARVEST SURVEY 2014/2015 SEASON



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Nebraska Game and Parks Commission  
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### Permits:

A total of 9,088 fur harvest permits were sold to Nebraska residents in 2014 (down from 9,190 in 2013). This is the fourth highest number on record. Thirty-two fur harvest permits were sold to nonresidents from 11 different states (CO, IA, KS, MN, MO, ND, OH, PA, SD, TX, and WY).



### Survey:

A fur harvest survey was sent to 9,120 fur harvest permit holders. The response rate to the survey was 17% yielding a total of 1,527 responses. In addition, surveys were sent to 52 licensed fur buyers, of which 27% (14) 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 2014/2015 season was higher compared with the five-year average, excluding raccoon, beaver, mink, muskrat, and bobcat. Woodchuck, badger and coyote showed the greatest increase (56%, 28% and 15% higher respectively).

Mink, bobcat, beaver and muskrat showed the greatest decrease compared to the five-year average (down 46%, 38%, 37% and 37% respectively). The total estimated harvest for the 2014/2015 season was lower than the 2013/2014 season with bobcat, beaver, raccoon showing the greatest decrease (down 44%, 25% and 25% respectively). Woodchuck and badger showed the greatest increase (61% and 16% respectively). Furharvesters reported that 33% of coyotes and 9% of red foxes harvested showed symptoms of mange.

	Estimated Harvest			Previous Season	5-Yr Average 2009-2013
	Hunt	Trap	Total harvest		
Raccoon	46,502	125,984	<b>172,486</b>	231,525	183,670
Coyote	14,173	19,112	<b>33,285</b>	36,268	28,895
Opossum	5,262	25,491	<b>30,752</b>	38,321	29,119
Muskrat	0	19,650	<b>19,650</b>	21,796	31,157
Striped Skunk	2,491	11,760	<b>14,250</b>	13,913	13,451
Beaver	0	7,920	<b>7,920</b>	10,522	12,557
Badger	1,165	3,751	<b>4,915</b>	4,231	3,854
Red Fox	914	2,502	<b>3,416</b>	4,074	3,301
Mink	113	1,469	<b>1,583</b>	2,124	2,909
Woodchuck	328	1,045	<b>1,374</b>	851	882
Bobcat <sup>2</sup>	239	755	<b>994</b>	1,677	1,516

<sup>1</sup> Includes only harvest numbers provided by harvesters

<sup>2</sup> 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 2014/2015 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	<b>172,486</b>	<b>123,089</b>
Coyote	<b>33,285</b>	<b>23,139</b>
Opossum	<b>30,752</b>	<b>22,652</b>
Muskrat	<b>19,650</b>	<b>13,808</b>
Striped Skunk	<b>14,250</b>	<b>10,641</b>
Beaver	<b>7,920</b>	<b>7,671</b>
Badger	<b>4,915</b>	<b>3,792</b>
Red Fox	<b>3,416</b>	<b>2,402</b>
Mink	<b>1,583</b>	<b>1,028</b>

Fur Harvesters:

Seventy-seven percent of fur harvest survey responders indicated that they participated in the 2014/2015 fur harvest. Of those that were successful, 34% only trapped, 27% only hunted and 39% both trapped and hunted furbearers. The number of participants was lower than the previous year (1,173 compared to 1,331 in 2013/2014). The average successful trapper harvested more than twice as many furbearers as the average hunter (42 vs. 21). 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.

Species	Number harvested for depredation	Percent of total harvest
Raccoon	20,617	12%
Opossum	4,784	16%
Beaver	4,115	52%
Coyote	3,016	9%
Striped Skunk	2,443	17%
Muskrat	2,013	10%
Badger	1,033	21%
Woodchuck	1,051	77%
Red Fox	352	10%
Bobcat	36	4%
Mink	30	2%

Pelts:

Based on results from the annual fur buyer survey, overall prices for wild pelts of most furbearing species have increased compared with the previous season, and increased compared with the five-year average. Coyote and red fox pelt prices have experienced the greatest increases with average prices 90% and 62% higher than during the 2013/2014 season. Bobcat and muskrat prices showed the greatest decreases with average prices 48% and 14% lower than the 2013/2014 season. Bobcat pelts remain the most valuable with average prices \$81 higher than any other furbearer.

Pelt Prices:

Species	2014-2015	Previous Season	5 Year Average
Bobcat	\$106.82	\$204.29	\$135.59
Coyote	\$25.40	\$13.36	\$13.69
Red Fox	\$20.83	\$12.87	\$14.61
Badger	\$10.87	\$8.08	\$7.36
Raccoon	\$9.06	\$9.48	\$9.39
Beaver	\$8.36	\$5.18	\$7.48
Mink	\$7.92	\$6.19	\$9.94

Striped Skunk	\$4.77	None Reported	\$1.53
Muskrat	\$4.08	\$4.73	\$4.72
Opossum	\$0.50	\$0.58	\$1.02

Early Raccoon Hunting-Only Season:

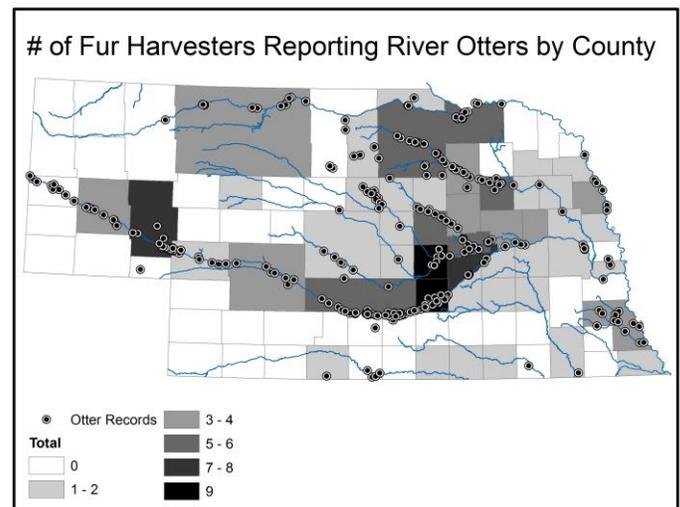
Estimates from the fur harvest survey indicate that harvesters who participated in the early raccoon season killed an estimated 5,321 raccoons (compared with 4,627 in 2013). The early raccoon-hunting season accounted for 3% of all raccoons taken during the entire 2014/2015 season (1% higher than in 2013/2014). 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. One gray fox was tagged during the 2014/2015 season in Colfax 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.



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