

North Carolina Furbearer Management Newsletter



Welcome to the Spring/Summer edition of the North Carolina Furbearer Management Newsletter!

The information in this newsletter has been provided through the cooperative efforts of North Carolina's licensed trappers and licensed fur dealers. The information they provide helps the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission (NCWRC) monitor furbearer harvest levels and track trends in the furbearer populations.

Trapper Education Opportunities



The North Carolina Trappers Association (NCTA), in cooperation with the NCWRC, offers a free 1-day Basic Trapper Education Courses. Courses are offered throughout the year in several wildlife districts and are taught by volunteer instructors, therefore courses are based on instructor availability.



To find out if there is a course offered in your area, please visit www.ncwildlife.org/trapped

Check this website monthly, as new courses are added throughout the year, with most scheduled during the late spring and throughout summer.

In addition, a 3-day Trappers College is offered by the NCTA. The next college will be March 10th-12th, 2017 at the Eastern 4-H Center near Columbia in Tyrrell County. Registration includes meals, drinks, snacks and lodging.



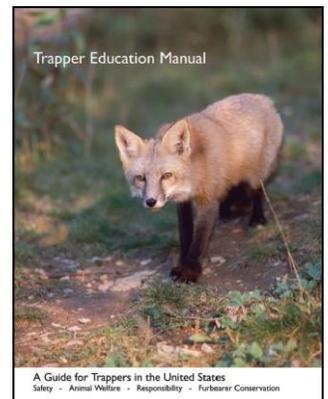
This Trappers College is primarily field-oriented and most of the time is spent in the field setting traps, learning about traps and equipment, learning about habits, and other considerations that will help improve your catches. Additionally, there is time spent addressing trap modification, fur handling, and animal damage control. The college is conducted to give individuals the opportunity to further their knowledge by running an actual live trapline.

For more information on trapper education courses contact:

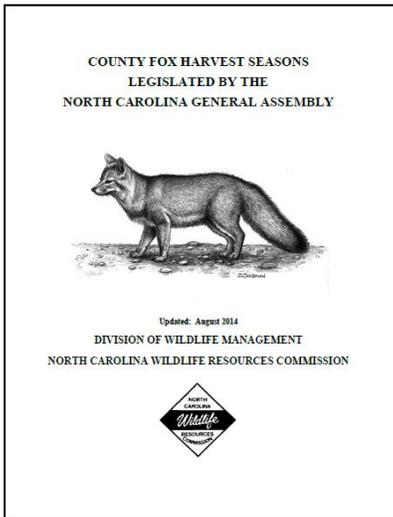
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**You can also download a [Trapper Educational Manual](#) at:

www.ncwildlife.org/trapped



“Why can’t I trap foxes in my county?”



The answer is that our agency has **no** authority to allow fox trapping in a county.

Only the General Assembly has the authority to allow fox trapping in a county through passage of a local law.

There are now 41 counties with fox trapping seasons. Outside these 41 counties, you cannot trap foxes during the regulated trapping season and any fox captured must be released in the 59 counties without a season.

For information on current fox hunting and trapping seasons in North Carolina go to: <http://www.ncwildlife.org/foxseasons> and download our publication on fox hunting and trapping seasons.



The Wildlife Damage Control Agent (WDCA) Program

The WDCA program allows trained and certified individuals to issue wildlife depredation permits to landowners that experience property damage caused by wildlife.

Depredation permits are needed to trap and lethally control wildlife outside the regulated trapping season. Certified WDCA's are authorized to issue permits for controlling certain wildlife species that are causing property damage.



Photo Credit: AAAnimal Control

Training:

In order to become a WDCA, an individual must complete a certification course covering laws, rules, health considerations, and humane handling techniques. In addition, the individual must pass a written examination. Agents are subject to background checks prior to certification.

Contact us at 919-707-0061 to sign up!

Early Registration Due Date	Class Registration Deadline	WDCA Class Date
January 1, 2016	February 1, 2016	March 9-10, 2016 (Wednesday-Thursday)
January 1, 2016	February 1, 2016	March 30-31, 2016 (Wednesday-Thursday)
April 1, 2016	May 1, 2016	June 8-9, 2016 (Wednesday-Thursday)
July 1, 2016	August 1, 2016	September 14-15, 2016 (Wednesday-Thursday)

Monitoring Furbearer Populations

In order for the NCWRC to monitor the furbearer harvest, we have created a confidential voluntary trapper harvest mail survey. Using information from the surveys, coupled with reports from licensed fur dealers, the NCWRC can monitor trends in trapper harvest and effort, which often mirrors trends in the furbearer population. The data gained from these surveys also helps us make management decisions and address questions we receive from sportsmen, the media and the general public.

How you can help!

If you receive a furbearer harvest survey in the mail, please take the time to fill it out as accurately as possible and return it promptly.



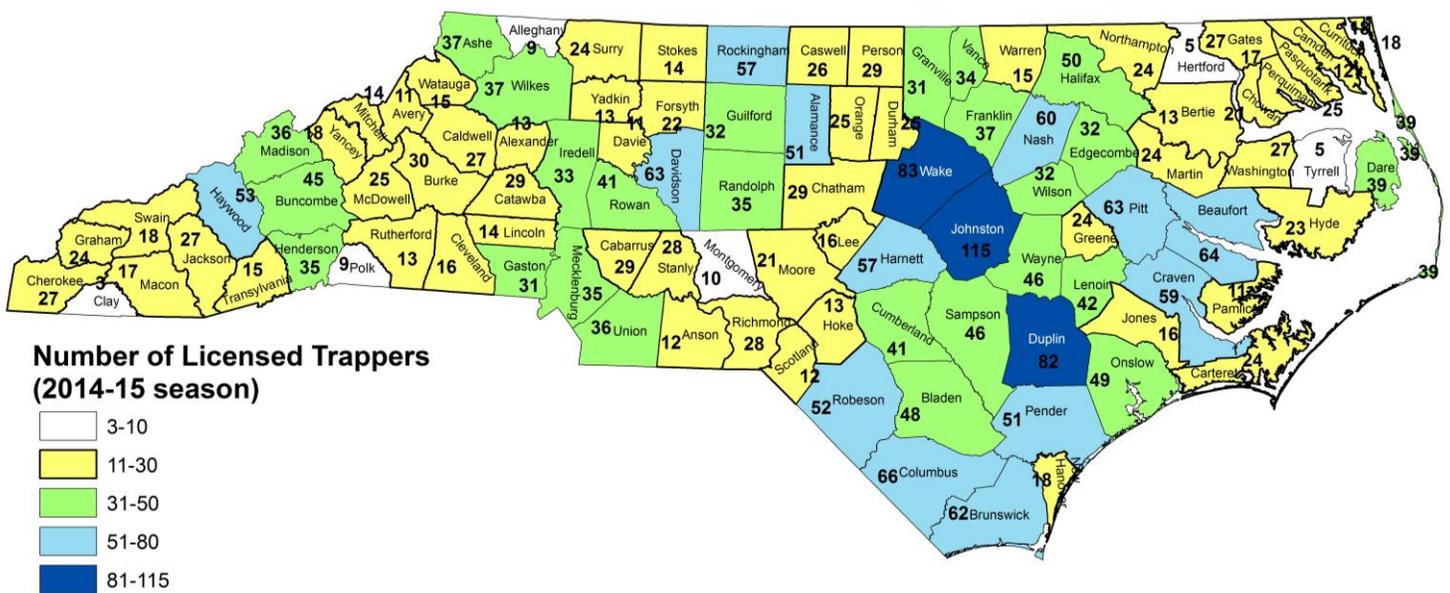
Please return the survey!

Landowner Assistance List

These surveys also provide you with the opportunity to sign up to be on the landowner assistance list, which connects landowners needing help with trappers during the trapping season.

2014-2015 Trapping License Sales

The map below shows the number of residents, by county, who purchased a trapping license for the 2014-2015 trapping season. The highest number of licensed trappers resided in Johnston County (115 trappers), followed by Wake (83 trappers) and Duplin (82 trappers) counties. The lowest number of licensed trappers resided in Clay County (3 trappers), followed by Hertford and Tyrrell counties (5 trappers).



Rabies Statistics

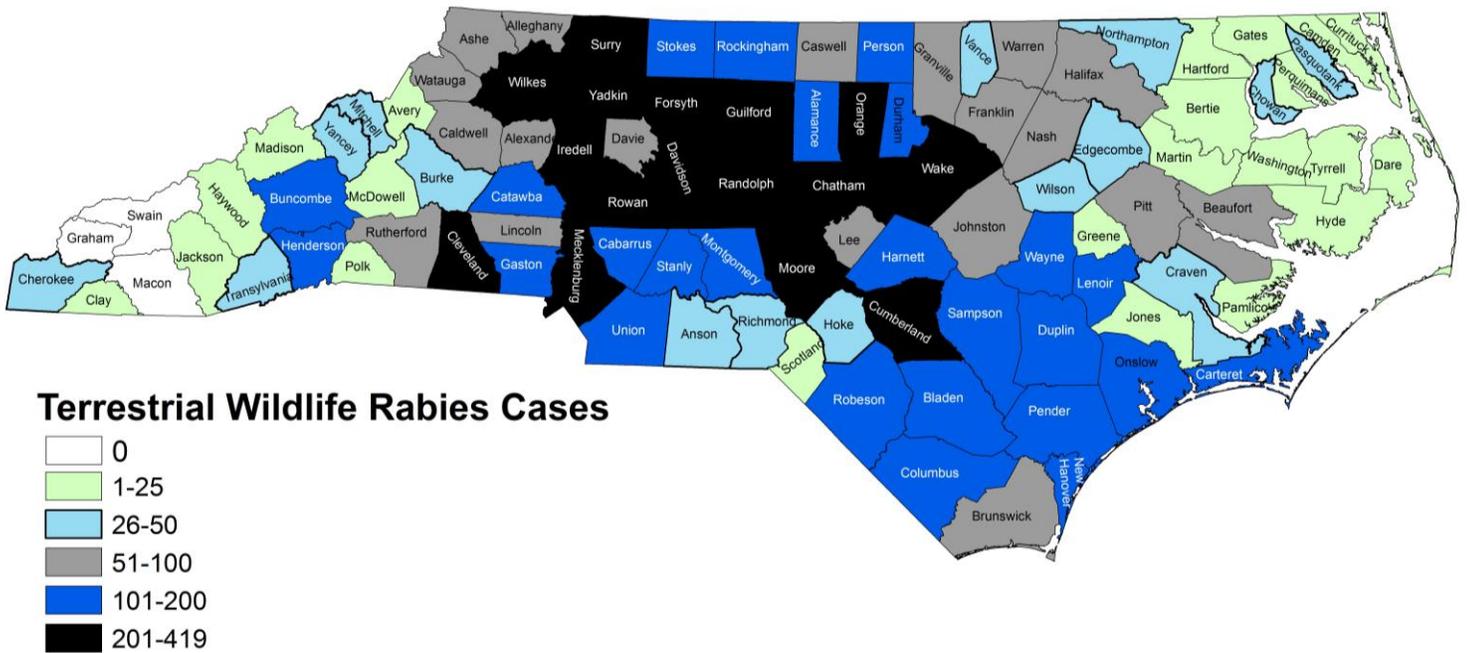


Figure 1. Number of positive rabies cases in terrestrial wildlife by county from 1990-2015. No positive terrestrial wildlife rabies cases in Graham, Macon and Swain counties.

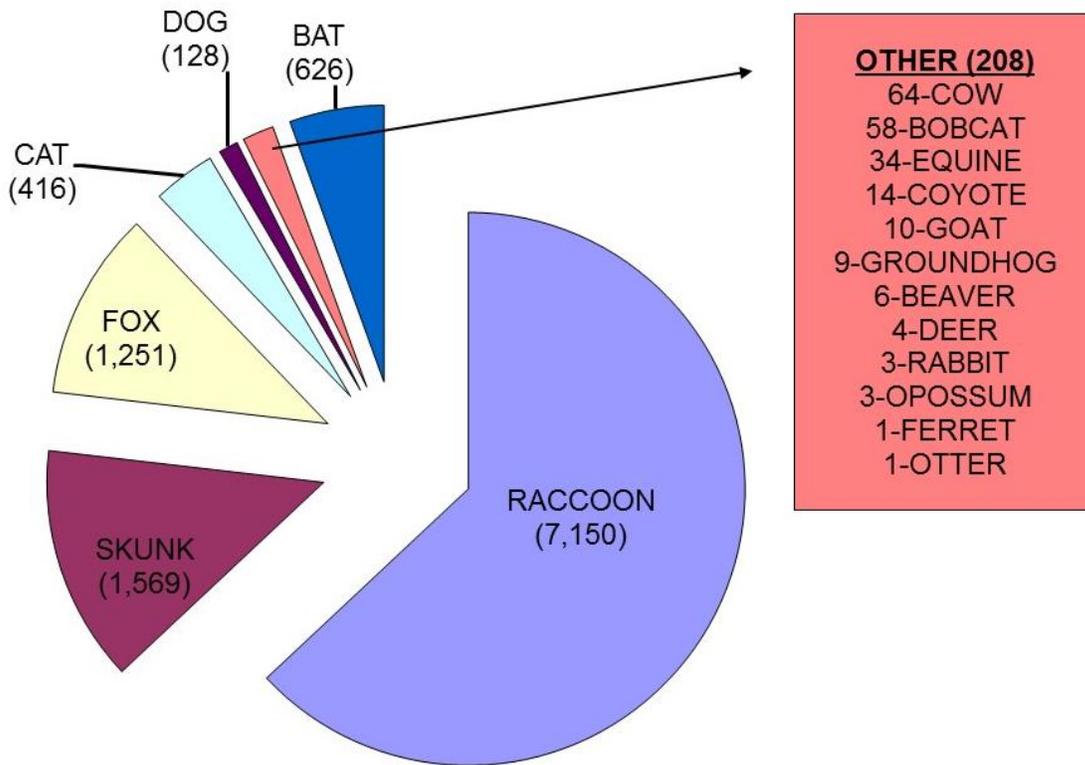


Figure 2. Number of positive rabies cases by species from 1990-2015.

Voluntary Trapper Harvest Mail Survey Results

The response rate for the 2014-2015 mail survey was 48%, which was a decline from the 2013-2014 survey year and the lowest response since the survey was initiated. During the 2014-15 trapping season, 46% of licensed trappers actively trapped during the season (Table 1).

Table 1. Data from the trapper harvest mail survey, 2002-03 through 2014-15.

Survey Year	# of licensed trappers	Response Rate to Survey	% of Licensed Trappers that were active
2003-04	1,286	54%	51%
2004-05	1,547	50%	46%
2005-06	1,744	58%	44%
2006-07	1,867	63%	41%
2007-08	2,027	61%	40%
2008-09	2,233	59%	39%
2009-10	2,120	60%	48%
2010-11	2,186	57%	52%
2011-12	2,638	54%	52%
2012-13	3,125	54%	49%
2013-14	3,695	51%	52%
2014-15	3,547	48%	46%

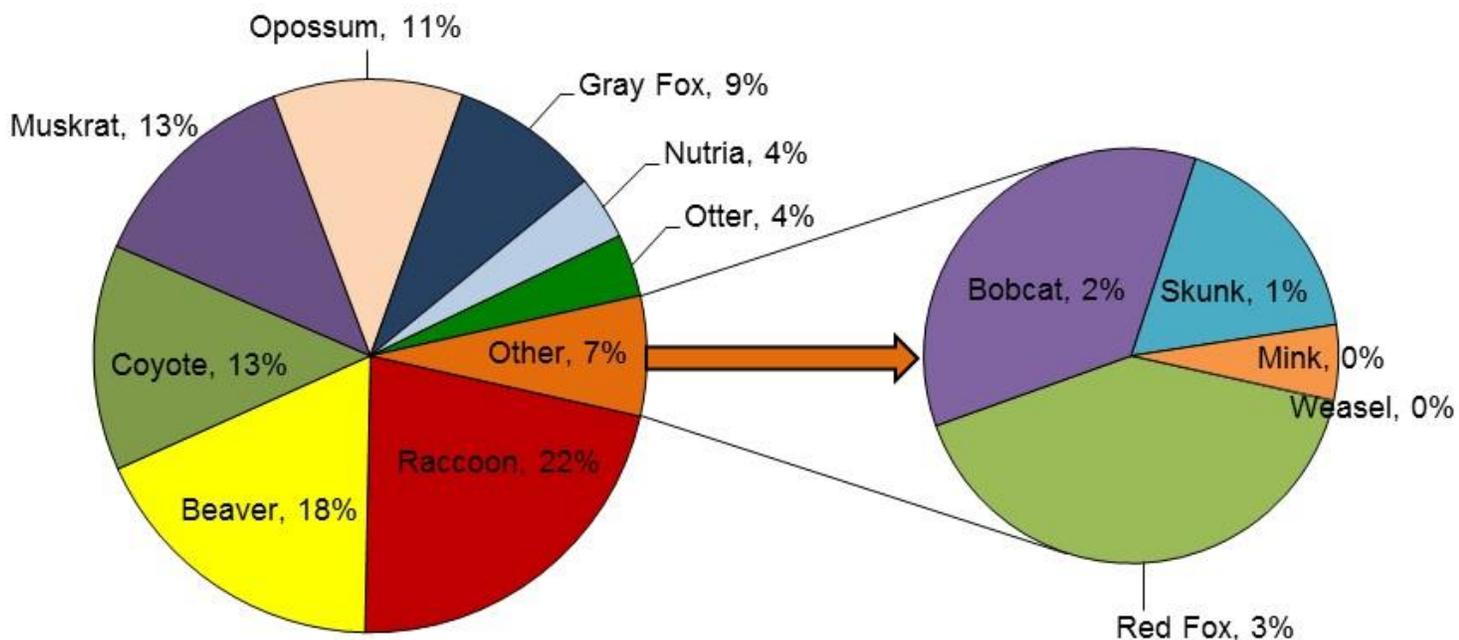


Figure 3. The wildlife species composition of the 2014-15 trapper harvest based on estimates from the voluntary trapper harvest survey.

Overall, the 2014-15 furbearer harvest level was 30% lower than that seen during the prior trapping season, due the decline in the number of licensed trappers and lower pelt prices. Overall, pelt prices declined 33% from the 2013-14 season. The table below presents data obtained from the past four trapping seasons. Prices are based on information from fur dealers and fur auctions.

Table 2. Estimated trapper harvest from the 2011-12 trapping season through the 2014-15 trapping season, based on voluntary trapper harvest surveys.

Species	2011-12		2012-2013		2013-14		2014-15	
	Harvest	Prices	Harvest	Prices	Harvest	Prices	Harvest	Prices
 Beaver	15,564	\$18.17	11,393	\$24.22	13,138	\$12.64	10,382	\$9.82
 Mink	410	\$18.29	444	\$17.90	530	\$15.38	237	\$8.06
 Muskrat	6,497	\$7.73	8,933	\$12.45	10,064	\$10.36	7,392	\$4.48
 Nutria	2,364	N/A	2,167	N/A	3,194	N/A	2,166	N/A
 Otter	3,155	\$56.71	2,787	\$92.48	2,908	\$56.09	2,102	\$35.07
 Bobcat	1,445	\$55.99	1,484	\$67.57	1,448	\$66.00	1,435	\$41.39
 Coyote	5,393	\$13.77	5,419	\$19.95	6,951	\$16.42	7,611	\$8.27
 Gray Fox	7,209	\$24.37	6,827	\$32.20	6,410	\$22.79	5,001	\$15.74
 Red Fox	1,682	\$37.20	1,768	\$49.39	2,186	\$27.91	1,658	\$15.70
 Opossum	9,483	\$0.75	12,320	\$3.08	11,630	\$1.31	6,423	\$1.49
 Raccoon	14,991	\$6.70	16,827	\$12.83	23,075	\$8.50	12,583	\$3.86
 Skunk	779	\$1.26	782	\$3.56	1,163	\$3.48	709	\$3.80
 Weasel	2	N/A	1	N/A	26	\$0.40	2	\$0.25
TOTAL	68,975		71,153		82,722		57,701	

North Carolina Hunter Harvest Survey

In addition to the survey we conduct of licensed trappers, the NCWRC conducts a mail survey of licensed hunters to estimate the numbers of hunters for specific game species, hunter effort and hunter harvest. As you can see in Figure 5, trappers are very effective at harvesting coyotes in comparison to hunters.

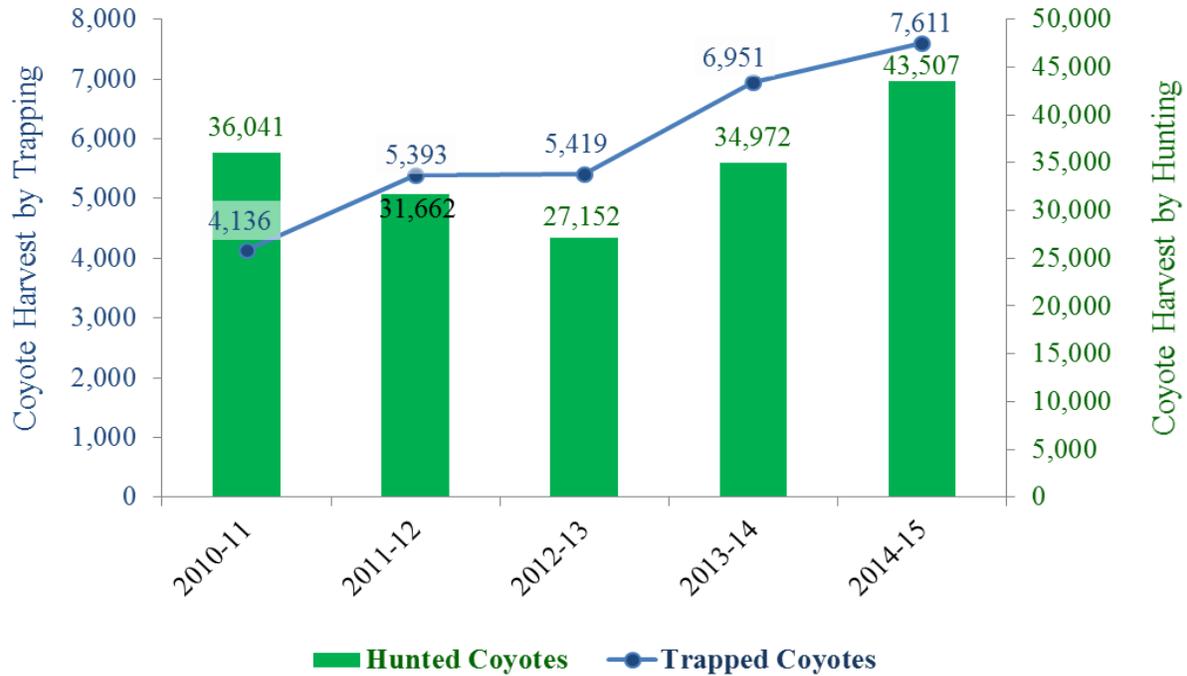


Figure 4. Estimated harvest of coyotes by hunters (green bars) and trappers (blue line).

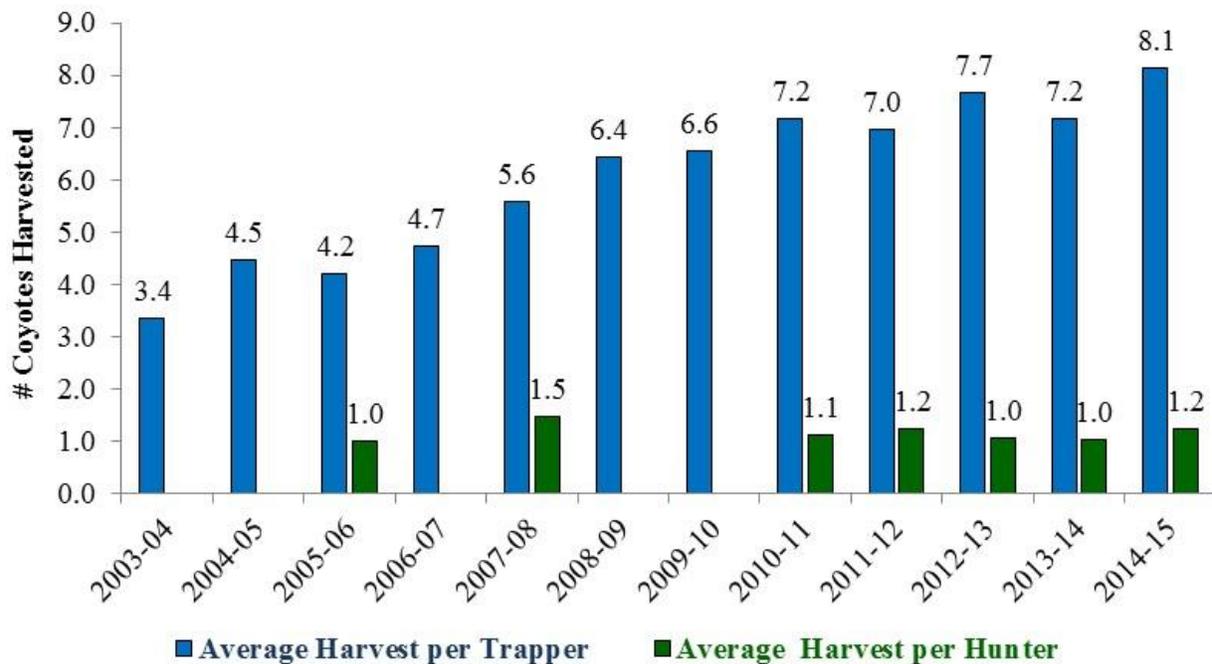


Figure 5. Average number of coyotes harvested by hunters (green bar) and by trappers (blue bar) from 2003 through February 2015.

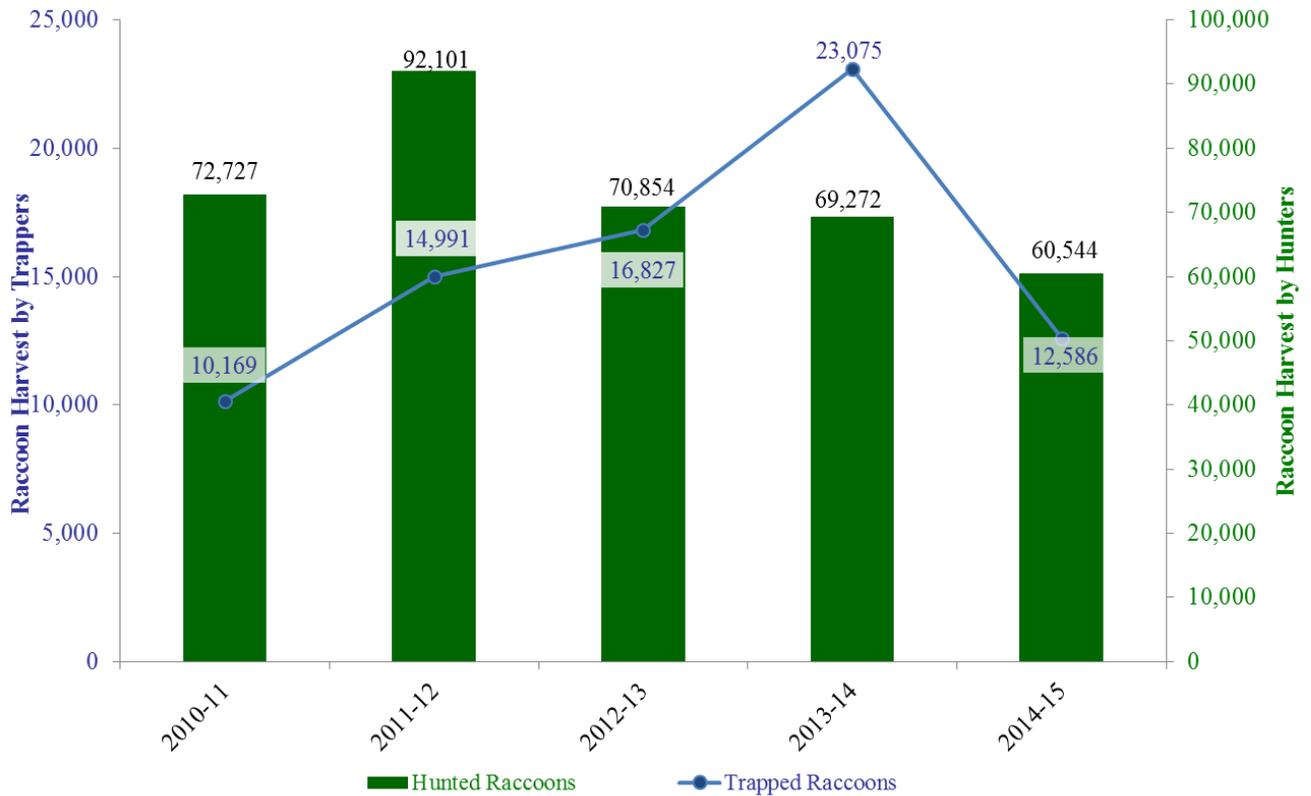


Figure 6. Estimated harvest of raccoons by hunters (green bars) and trappers (blue line).

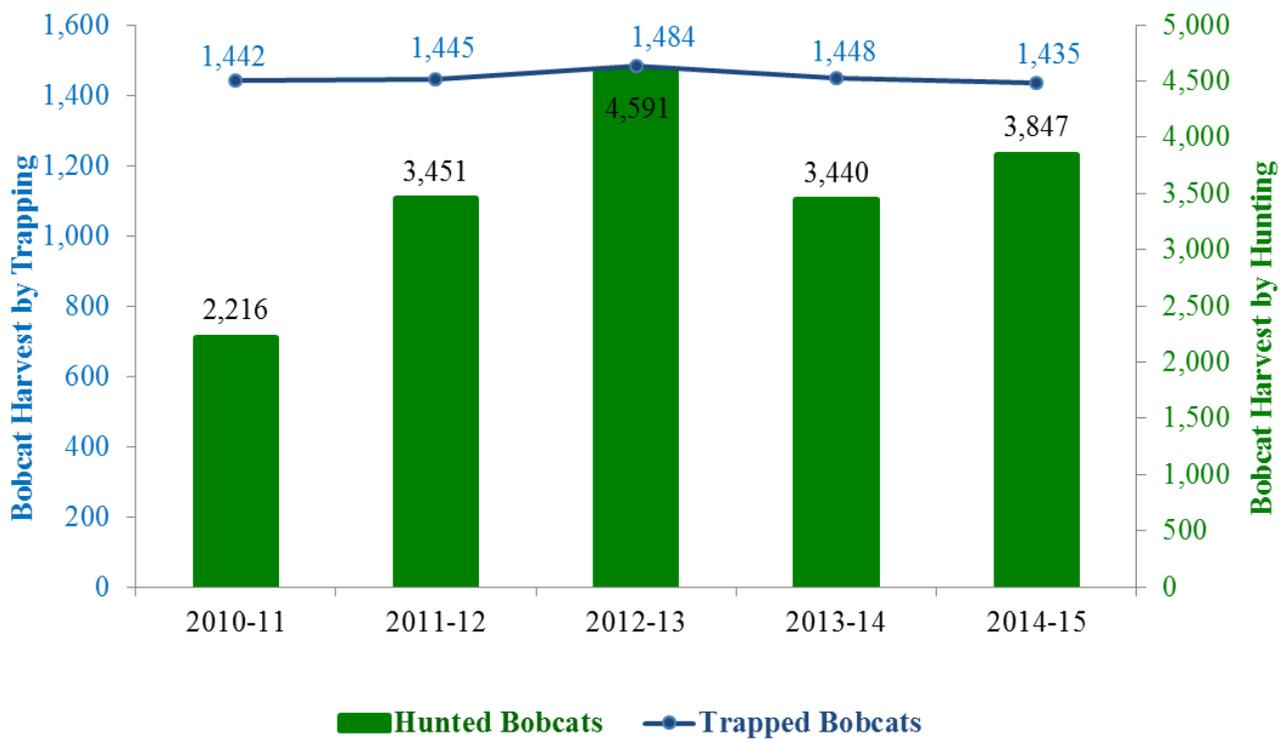


Figure 7. Estimated harvest of bobcats by hunters (green bars) and trappers (blue line).