



New Jersey Furbearer Management Newsletter Winter 2018-19

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



Important Upcoming Dates:

- January 1 – Special Permit Coyote & Fox hunting season begins - call (609) 748-2058 to report harvest. Also, cable restraint can be set on WMAs listed as Pheasant and Quail stocked areas.
- 25 January – 22 February – Application period for Spring Turkey permits.
- Hunter Education registration opens in mid-February for Spring classes. Call 877-2-HUNT NJ for schedule and additional information.
- Thursday, 9 February – Last day of beaver and otter trapping season.
- **Saturday 23 February – Beaver & Otter Check-in 9AM-NOON at Assunpink, Clinton, Flatbrook, Tuckahoe and Winslow WMA as well as Newfoundland Fire Department on Rt. 23 in Newfoundland**
- Friday, 15 March – Last day of the 2018-19 trapping season and Special Permit Coyote/Fox season.
- Saturday 23 March (probable) – NJ Fur Harvesters spring fur collection and meeting at Assunpink WMA.
- Sunday 24 March – NJ Trappers Association annual fur auction at Space Farms, Beemerville (fur will be collected on Saturday 23 March).

Remember:

- To trap with or use cable restraints, a person must have first passed a Fish and Wildlife-approved trapper education course which included use of cable restraints and carry their course completion card while trapping.
- Any person must be at least 12 years of age to obtain a trapping license.
- TAKE A KID TRAPPING OR MENTOR A NEW TRAPPER!



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REMEMBER: Report any incidentally captured fisher or bobcat! (877-927-6337).

Beaver and Otter Check-in

Successful beaver and otter trappers are reminded that the check-in date to register your pelts is **Saturday, 23 February** at the usual locations (Assunpink, Clinton, Flatbrook, Tuckahoe and Winslow WMA, as well as the Newfoundland Fire Department on Rt. 23 if permission is granted). A few things to remember:

- Check station operation hours are **9:00 AM to Noon**
- Have your data forms completed and remember to bring them – this will speed things along. If you didn't go trapping but had a permit, please remember to return your data form by mail, fax or email!
- If you harvested an otter, remember to bring the carcass.
- If you can't get to the check-in station personally, it's OK to have a friend check your pelts provided they have all necessary paperwork (completed data form, transportation tags), pelts and otter carcass.
- If you can't get to the check-in station personally and can't find someone else to do so for you, please call Wildlife Technician Joe Garris at the Northern Region Office (908) 735-7040 or on his cell phone (609) 306-4545 to make alternate arrangements. **Alternate arrangements should be scheduled by Friday, 8 February!**

Remember the Cable Restraint Basics

There are things all of us should be aware of and do without thinking about them. But sometimes, a few words to remind us and to stimulate our memories can be a tremendous help. Many of us have been trapping and using cable restraints for many years and what is written below may seem silly since we all remember what we've been taught and have learned through the years. Right? Maybe not... I find myself going over the necessary legal requirements with both older experienced trappers and the newbies regularly on the telephone. It doesn't hurt to go over those requirements to make sure we're doing the right things! If you are a fox or coyote trapper, it may pay to refresh your memory! Those regulations are outlined in the NJ Fish and Wildlife Digest section regarding trapping, pages 62-64 in the 2018-19 issue.

1. Tag every trap and cable restraint. This is a legal requirement.

All traps must bear a legible tag of durable material containing either your CID (trapping license number) OR your name and address OR (for you older trappers) your Division issued Trapper ID number. The Division of Fish and Wildlife no longer issues Trapper ID numbers, and recommends you use your CID number on all trap tags.

If you're a beaver and/or otter trapper those trapper identification tags **MUST** be placed above the water line and exposed to view. Making sure you do this will save you from having to reset and reposition your trap when a Conservation Police Officer checks your sets.

2. Traps **MUST** be checked and tended once every 24 hours.

Don't ignore this requirement. It's your legal responsibility as well as your responsibility to the furbearer that might be sitting in your trap or cable restraint. Always remember that someone may be watching. Animals in cable restraints are quite visible!

If your setting traps in tidal waters only, the trap check requirement is once per calendar day.

3. Cable Locks.

The type of cable restraint lock is also a legal requirement and is the subject of a lot of discussion. However, the law dictates that the locks used on a New Jersey legal cable restraint must be of a relaxing-type for terrestrial animals or land furbearers (which is what this text is outlining).

Remember, a relaxing lock is one that stops tightening when the animal stops pulling. Several cable restraint/snare materials suppliers, <https://www.snareshop.com/>, for example list online whether a lock is relaxing or non-relaxing. Please remember that any cam-lock or wedge-lock or any spring assisted lock is prohibited.

4. Cable Stops. Deer and Loop Stops.

Remember, a New Jersey legal cable restraint set for land animals (not submerged underwater), must have a deer stop located no less than 6 inches from the beginning of the cable and a loop stop to prevent the average loop diameter from EXCEEDING 12 inches.

The loop stops, and loop sizes listed above do not apply to cable restraints submerged underwater.

5. Cable loop height from ground.

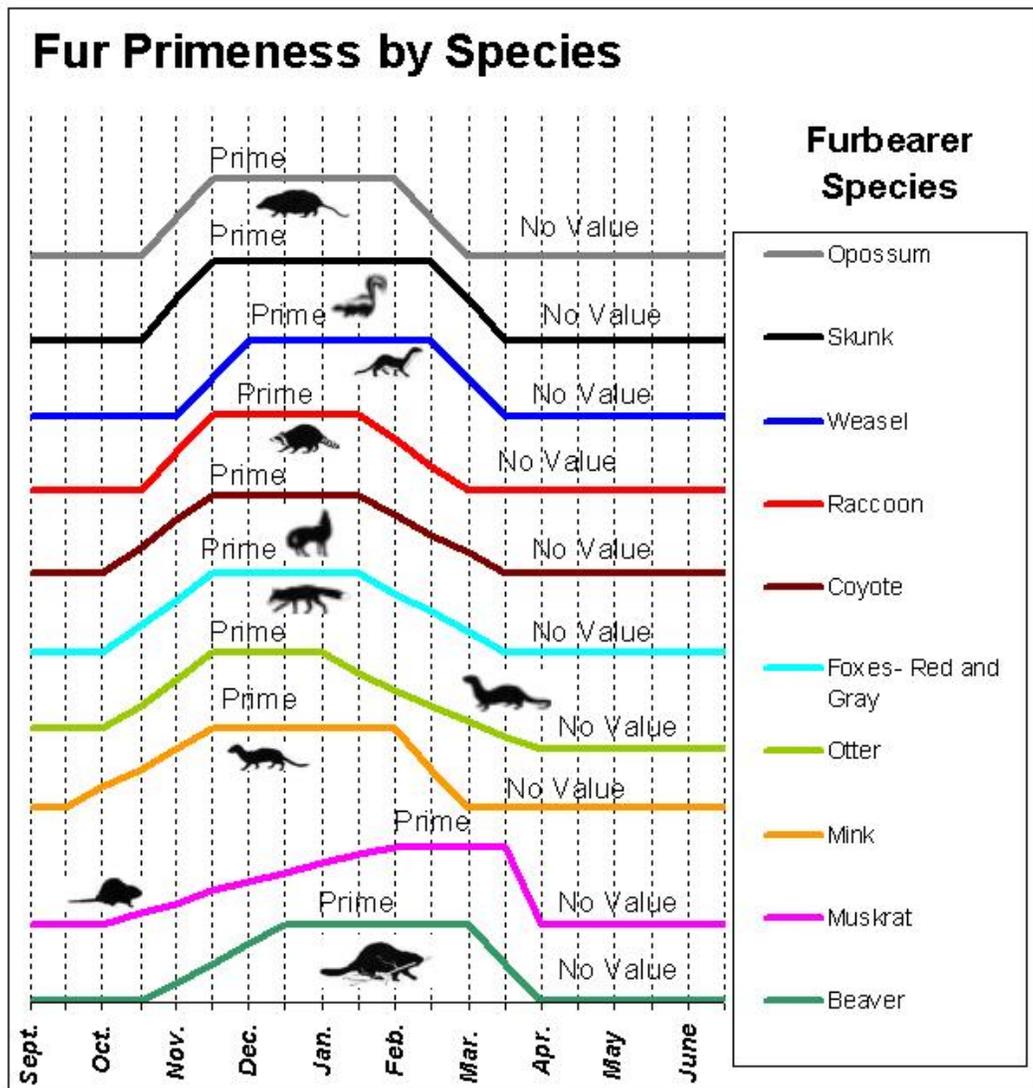
Remember that cable restraints set on land must be set so that the distance between the ground and the top of the loop isn't greater than 24".

6. Exposed natural animal carcasses as bait.

This regulation/law requires that animal carcasses or animal parts used a natural bait be covered/concealed and no cable restraint be set within 30 feet of that bait/carcass. Please note that this regulation's original intent was to prevent the capture of non-target animals and birds. This was back when coil spring and longspring traps were legal. This prevented birds of prey and other non-target animals from stepping into the trap. Although these foot-hold traps are prohibited in New Jersey, this law is still valid and must be observed.

Also, trappers using cable restraints may have been using visual attractants such as feathers or squirrel tails hung from branches near their set locations. At least in the northern portion of the state where bobcats may live trappers should abstain from this practice. The State endangered bobcats key in on visual attractants more so than canines.





Fur Handling Tips: Avoiding Fleas, Mites and Ticks

It's a good idea to think about the possibility of diseases that ticks or fleas may carry before handling any furbearer carcasses.

If a furbearer is dry, simply brush or comb the pelt to remove any burrs or dirt. However, land furbearers may have external parasites such as fleas, ticks, or mites, so keep the carcasses in a place where they won't contaminate your house, clothing, pets or vehicle. Place the trapped animal in a large plastic bag and spray the inside of the bag containing the animals for about 10 seconds with a good insecticide (one that contains Permethrin for instance). Seal the bag for approximately 30 minutes and air the carcass out before skinning.

- Wear protective clothing, particularly disposable rubber or plastic gloves, when skinning furbearers.
- Scrub the work area, knives, other tools, and reusable gloves with soap or detergent followed by disinfecting with diluted household bleach.
- Avoid eating and drinking while handling or skinning animals and wash hands thoroughly when finished.
- Safely dispose of carcasses and tissues as well as any contaminated disposable items like plastic gloves.
- It's a good practice to check yourself over carefully when you shower.

Did You Know?

The ideal temperature for drying your pelt is between 55 - 65 degrees Fahrenheit (14 - 18 degrees Celsius)

They're Back! Fisher in New Jersey

In 1984, Richard G. Van Gelder, Curator of Mammals at the American Museum of Natural History in New York, noted in his paper, *The Mammals of The State of New Jersey: A Preliminary Annotated List*, that fisher (*Martes pennanti*) were historically native to New Jersey and were listed as extirpated.

However, that would change in time.

In the adjacent states of New York and Pennsylvania reintroductions of the fisher were underway. We suspect that all NJ fishers are a direct result of these reintroduction efforts, and that fisher populations have expanded from their original release sites over time as population size grew.

The text below are from quotes from Pennsylvania's *Fisher Wildlife Note* and *New York State Fisher Management Plan, 2015*

Pennsylvania:

"Pennsylvania's present-day fisher population is the direct result of natural expansion from adjacent states and from reintroduction programs here. In 1969, West Virginia reintroduced 23 fishers obtained from New Hampshire. Fisher populations in West Virginia have since expanded throughout that state and into western Maryland, northern Virginia, and southwestern Pennsylvania. Similarly, New York transferred 30 fishers from the Adirondacks into the Catskills Region during 1979, and current populations in northeastern Pennsylvania may have been colonized or enhanced by natural dispersal from New York. Most recently and significantly, during 1994-1998, through a joint project between the Game Commission, the Pennsylvania State University and the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources 190 fishers (87 males, 97 females, 6 of unknown sex) were reintroduced in six sites in northern Pennsylvania."

New York:

"Between 1976 and 1979, 43 fishers were live-trapped in the Adirondacks and Vermont and relocated to suitable habitats in the Catskill Mountains (Wallace and Henry 1985, Lewis et al. 2012). Department staff monitored this newly restored population through track surveys, observation reports by trappers and other members of the public, and reports of road kills and other mortalities of tagged animals. By the mid-1980s, the population was secure enough to sustain limited trapping opportunities and the first season in the Catskills opened in fall 1985 (Wallace and Henry 1985). As populations continued to expand, additional seasons were opened in fall of 1988 in the lower Hudson Valley in an effort to gather biological information such as age and sex composition and harvest densities. By fall of 1989 fisher seasons encompassed much of eastern New York, including all of the Northern Zone, the Taconics, Catskills, and Hudson Valley (except Rockland and Westchester counties). A trapping season in the Mohawk Valley was opened in 1990, and the season has remained consistent across northern and southeastern New York since that time."

And now, New Jersey!

In early 2006 Charles Kontos, a student at Montclair State University captured the first three trail camera images of fishers in Stokes State Forest, Sussex County. Within a few years, several more confirmed sightings were received as reported in the 2008 *Hunting and Trapping Digest*.

As of this writing a total of 6 fisher vehicle mortalities have been reported and recovered and numerous photographs from trail cameras have been recorded and viewed by Division personnel. Of those vehicle mortality specimens, one was an 8-year old lactating female, positive evidence that fishers are reproducing here.

During the winter 2018 Bobcat Hair Snare Study, 14 videos of at least 9 fishers were recorded! All those fishers were from the northern portion of the state, mainly Sussex County. Fisher are back in New Jersey and it appears that their numbers will continue to grow. We'll see what the future brings.

Bobcat Hair Snare Study: Year 2



Division staff will conduct the second year of its bobcat hair snare study in January 2019 with the assistance of trappers from the New Jersey Trappers Association and the New Jersey Fur Harvesters. The purpose of the study is to conduct research on New Jersey's bobcat population to improve New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife's understanding and management of the species.

This research will allow the Division to obtain a reliable status assessment of bobcat density and occurrence and establish and enhance baseline information for future monitoring of the species. The study will benefit the Division's Bureau of Wildlife Management and Endangered and Non-Game Species Program staff by providing science-based, quantitative data to ensure sound and responsible management of bobcats, including protection of their habitats and enhancement of their travel corridors, in northern New Jersey.

New Jersey's Bobcats and Fishers

Bobcats are still classified as endangered in New Jersey, although they are widely distributed across the northern part of the state. Fishers are returning, naturally and through reintroduction efforts in New York and Pennsylvania, to most of their historic range in the northeastern United States. Fishers have been documented in several northern and southern New Jersey counties.

- **There is no open trapping season for either bobcat or fisher in NJ; possession of NJ specimens is prohibited.**
- **If you encounter a live bobcat or fisher captured on your trapline, do not disturb the animal or the set, but immediately notify Fish and Wildlife by calling (877) WARNDP (877-927-6337).**

A Fish and Wildlife technician will provide further instructions. Call the same number for a dead bobcat or fisher on your trapline; a Fish and Wildlife technician will arrange to pick up the animal. Biological samples will be taken from all bobcat and fisher carcasses. The data collected will be instrumental to understand the status of the species populations.



New Jersey's Coyote Hot Spots

Coyotes have been documented in at least 451 municipalities statewide (over 96% of the State's land area). The following map (based on total reports, i.e., sightings, mortalities and scats) will give you a fair idea of your chances of coming across one.

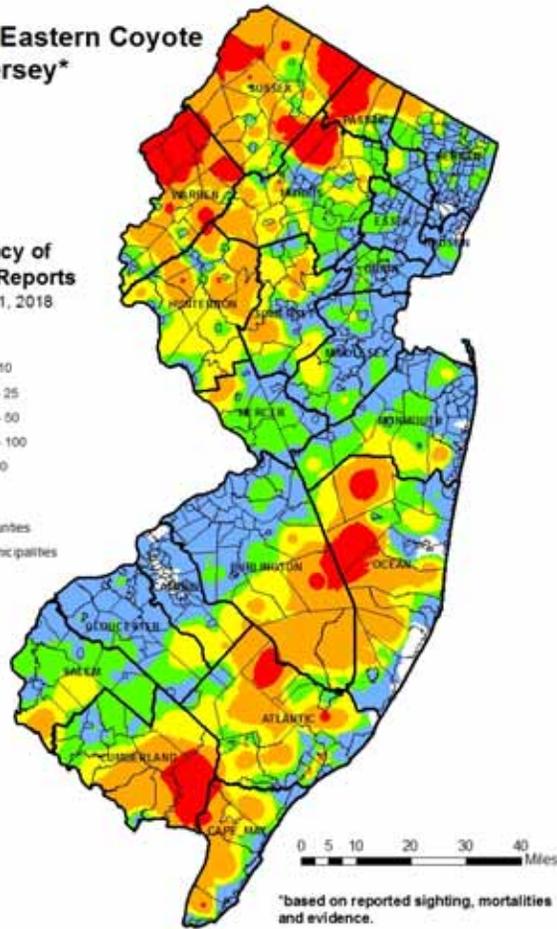
**Range of Eastern Coyote
in New Jersey***



**Frequency of
Coyote Reports
as of July 1, 2018**



Counties
Municipalities



Remember to Report Your Coyotes!

The State Game Code requires all coyote harvesters to report their take to a Division 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

The Upland Project also has a dedicated hotline for successful coyote hunters and trappers at (609) 748-2058.

The New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife is *the* professional, environmental agency overseeing the protection and management of the State’s fish and wildlife to maximize their long-term biological, recreational and economic value for all citizens since 1892!

