



New Jersey Furbearer Management Newsletter Fall 2024

New Jersey DEP Fish & Wildlife
Upland Wildlife and Furbearer Project



2024 Trapper Education courses are scheduled for:

Tuckahoe WMA, Lenape Farms Section (Atlantic County), September 14 and 15
Hackettstown Fish Hatchery (Warren County), September 21 and 22
Hackettstown Fish Hatchery (Warren County), October 19 and 20
Jamesburg Field and Stream (Ocean County), October 24 and 26

Check the NJDEP Fish & Wildlife Hunter Education Website for updates.

Remember:

- To trap or use a snare in NJ, a person must have first passed a NJ Fish and Wildlife-approved trapper education course which included use of snares.
- Any person must be at least 12 years of age to take the NJ Trapper Education course.
- TAKE A KID TRAPPING!

Beaver and Otter Deadlines Beaver and Otter Trapping Season Dates

- Application Period: October 1-31 Dec. 26 – Feb. 9 (Jan. 1 – Feb. 9 on some WMAs) *
- Award Notification: Begins November 2
- Claim Permit by: 11:59 PM December 1
- Mandatory Pelt Registration: Feb. 22, 2025 - 9am-noon

*Please Note: In the event of a trapping season extension, all permit holders will be notified via email, telephone, or first-class mail (in that order).

Please remember:

- Successful applicants must claim their permit between November 2 and prior to 11:59 PM on Sunday, December 1. Unclaimed permit availability will be posted on the website by late afternoon Tuesday, December 3.
- Unclaimed permits will be returned to the quota and made available for over-the-counter sale at participating license agents or online beginning at 10 AM on Wednesday, December 4, 2024.



WANTED:

**PLEASE REPORT SIGHTINGS OR MORTALITIES OF
FISHERS**

IF YOU HAVE TRAIL CAMERA OR OTHER FISHER PICTURES OR VIDEOS
PLEASE ATTACH THEM TO THE REPORT AT THE LINK, BELOW.

**ALSO, REPORT BEAVER, RIVER OTTER, COYOTE, FOXES, NUTRIA,
MUSKRAT, OR WEASEL.**

REPORT AT:

[HTTPS://SURVEY123.ARCGIS.COM/SHARE/AE6C10BDACD94562A25785433F612750](https://survey123.arcgis.com/share/AE6C10BDACD94562A25785433F612750)

2023-24 New Jersey Trapper Harvest Survey

A **2023-24 New Jersey Trapper Harvest Survey** was mailed to 1,371 licensed trappers requesting harvest, recreational and socio-economic information for the 2023-24 trapping season. The mean age of licensed trappers as of November 15, 2023, was 48.86 years. Resident trappers are predominantly male (96.2 percent) and live in every county of the state. During the 2023-24 NJ trapping season trappers spent an estimated 54,898 days trapping.

Summary of participation and harvest:

Species	Number of 2023-24 active respondents	Estimated number of active trappers	Mean days active	Estimated total effort (trap-nights)	Reported (or estimated) harvest
Beaver	78	213	18.22	6,641	773**
Coyote	86	235	36.76	103,354	411**
Gray fox	24	66	28.59	6,090	104
Mink	52	142	26.02	21,743	924
Muskrat	75	205	19.27	39,001	10,302
Nutria	0	0			0
Opossum	51	139	32.13	11,459	565
Raccoon	169	462	27.09	39,293	5,982
Red fox	127	347	33.46	90,248	3,140
River otter	39	107	12.78	1,088	40**
Skunk	31	85	28.65	7,454	161
Weasel	4	11	45.33	136	3
Total					23,313

**Actual harvest total, not estimated

Age class of trappers licensed in New Jersey during the 2023-24 trapping season.

Age Class	Licensed trappers (2023-24)	Percent of licensed trappers (2023-24)
<16	62	4.52%
16 to 19	86	6.27%
20 to 24	76	5.54%
25 to 29	93	6.78%
30 to 34	111	8.10%
35 to 39	107	7.80%
40 to 44	111	8.10%
45 to 49	160	11.67%
50 to 54	139	10.14%
55 to 59	152	11.09%
60 to 64	274	19.99%
65+	62	4.52%
Total	1,371	100.00%

All license buyers-County of Residence, State of Residence.

County	TRAPPING, RES*	TRAPPING, NR	TRAPPING, YOUTH	TOTAL	Percent of 2023-24 database
Atlantic	81	0	3	84	6.13%
Bergen	20	0	0	20	1.46%
Burlington	92	0	12	104	7.59%
Camden	50	0	2	52	3.79%
Cape May	40	0	1	41	2.99%
Cumberland	116	0	2	118	8.61%
Essex	5	0	0	5	0.36%
Gloucester	107	1	6	114	8.32%
Hudson	8	0	0	8	0.58%
Hunterdon	72	0	4	76	5.54%
Mercer	33	0	4	37	2.70%
Middlesex	42	0	2	44	3.21%
Monmouth	76	1	6	83	6.05%
Morris	65	0	3	68	4.96%
Ocean	120	0	4	124	9.04%
Passaic	37	0	5	42	3.06%
Salem	100	0	2	102	7.44%
Somerset	29	0	0	29	2.12%
Sussex	108	0	3	111	8.10%
Union	12	0	1	13	0.95%
Warren	76	0	2	78	5.69%
ALASKA	0	1	0	1	0.07%
DELAWARE	0	1	0	1	0.07%
MONTANA	1	0	0	1	0.07%
NEW HAMPSHIRE	0	1	0	1	0.07%
NEW YORK	0	2	3	5	0.36%
PENNSYLVANIA	0	6	3	9	0.66%
Total	1290	13	68	1371	100.00%

What Makes a Pelt “Prime”?

The fur industry definition of *primeness* includes many terms familiar only to a professional fur grader but to many of us, primeness is simply the condition of the fur at the coldest and driest time of the year. A more complete laymen’s definition of primeness, is the chronological period when “the fur has reached its maximum length, density and finest texture; when the hairs have matured with seemingly no pigment being produced, and as a consequence, the flesh surface of the pelt appears devoid of hair root pigmentation.”. Depending on the end use of the pelt, primeness could refer to either side of the pelt.

Prime winter fur is attained when the guard hairs and underfur have just reached the *telogen* phase of the hair cycle. The *telogen* phase or stage can be defined as the “resting stage” of the hair growth cycle and is attained when all growth ceases and the fully grown hair is anchored deep within the skin. The increased density of a mink’s winter pelage is primarily the result of a greater number of hairs, especially of the underfur. For example, the number of hairs in the summer pelage of mink is approximately 12–14 per follicle, whereas the winter fur attains 17–20 per follicle. The skin and the leather side of prime pelts should appear creamy white. The creamy white color occurs when the hair follicles enter this resting stage.

Even though most of the hair length is attained during the *anagen* or active growth stage, fur in the *anagen* stage is not yet in prime condition. During this stage hair follicles are still situated deep within the skin and active growth causes the leather and skin to appear dark. Pelts from animals in the growth stage are referred to as “blue pelts”. If “blue pelts” are sanded or shaved or otherwise processed to reduce their thickness and weight, many of the deeper hair roots will be cut off. This causes hair to fall out. The growth of underfur of mink was found to lag development of guard hairs by approximately 2 weeks. This indicates that guard hairs develop first, followed later by underfur.

Primeness is not the only way to determine a pelt’s value. Peak fur color is often attained during the growth stage shortly before the pelt is in prime condition. So, it is very possible that in some instances slightly unprime pelts can command higher prices than prime pelts. Fur begins to lose much of its luster through natural fading of pigments and becomes subject to damage from sunlight if the animal is not caught and the pelt removed soon after the fur becomes prime. This especially applies to mink fur that turns off-color within a few weeks of becoming prime. The tips of the guard hairs of some species begin to curl, resulting in a “singed” pelage; this is common in mink and river otter pelts. Animals may also damage their own fur through a variety of chewing and rubbing actions. A “rubbed” pelt is one that has large patches of fur missing, often from the shoulders, flanks, or hips. Many trappers are familiar with these areas of rubbed fur on the pelts of foxes or coyotes, which is often more common and visible by the mid to late winter breeding season.

A graphic, following on page 5, illustrates the general chronological timing for pelt primeness by species.



Please Remember to Report Your Coyotes and Gray Fox!

Coyotes harvested by any method must be reported to a New Jersey DEP Fish & Wildlife. So, regardless of whether you are trapping, hunting canines, deer or turkey, all coyote harvests must be reported by 8:00p.m. on the day of harvest via the Automated Harvest Report System (AHRS).

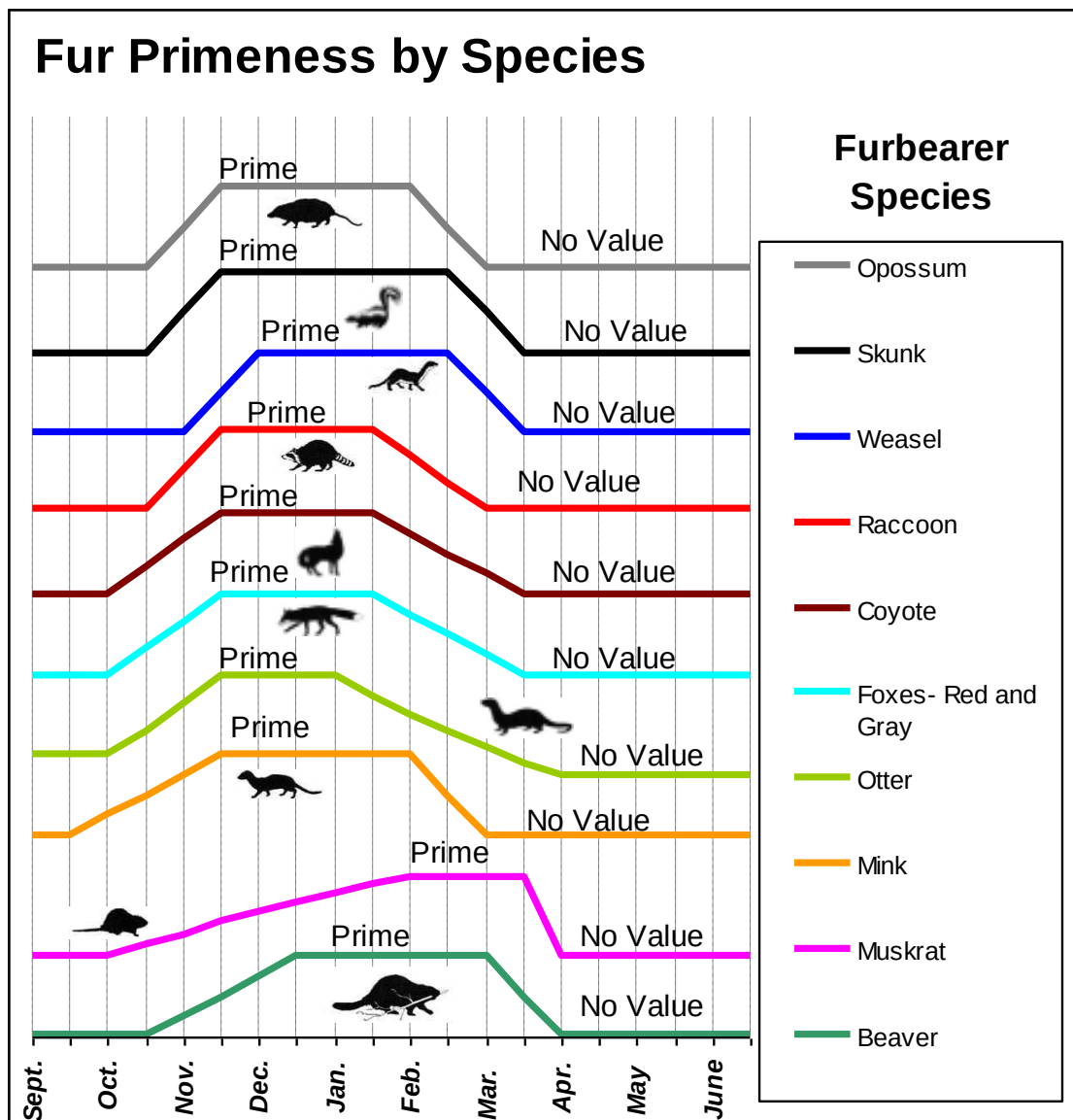
Be prepared to provide the harvest location details which are identical to those for reporting a deer harvest.

Although it is not required, please report any harvest by trapping or hunting of gray fox.

By phone: by calling (855) 448-6865

Via mobile phone or computer at: <https://nj.aspirafocus.com/internetsales>

Red Fox harvests do not need to be reported.



Incidentally caught fishers or bobcats-



If you find a bobcat or fisher in your trap, do not disturb the set, immediately call 877-WARNDEP (877-927-6337) to report the capture, and await a return call from Fish and Wildlife's Response Team.



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

