

North Carolina Furbearer Management Newsletter



Preliminary Results from the 2025-2026 Furbearer Trapping Season

Species	2024-25 Harvest	2025-26 Harvest	% Harvest Change from 24-25 to 25-26
Beaver	11,226	12,247	9%
Mink	65	86	32%
Muskrat	1,626	1,252	-23%
Nutria	2,943	1,157	-61%
Otter	1,970	2,448	24%
Bobcat	1,550	1,913	23%
Coyote	7,248	7,012	-3%
Gray Fox	2,163	2,346	8%
Red Fox	1,248	1,556	25%
Opossum	8,288	9,737	17%
Raccoon	12,002	18,009	50%
Skunk	1,017	1,347	2%
Weasel	0	7	N/A

See us at the NC Trappers Association Convention!

Come visit the NC Wildlife table at the 2026 NC Trappers Convention to get information on our furbearer cooperator program, transportation permits for selling live foxes and coyotes, furbearer species, regulations, research, and much more!

When: September 25th and 26th, 2026
building opens at 7:00 am

Where: Smithfield Livestock Auction Arena,
526 County Home Rd., Smithfield NC 27577

This is one of the largest state trapper's conventions in the Southeast and is open to the public! In addition to our educational table, there will be trapping demonstrations, fur skinning demonstrations, trapping supply vendors, games for kids, and trap setting contests for all.

For schedule, vendors, and event information, visit:
nctrapper.org/2026-convention



Credit: Jonathon Greunke NCWRC

Please don't hesitate to contact us with questions, comments, or to participate in our cooperator programs!

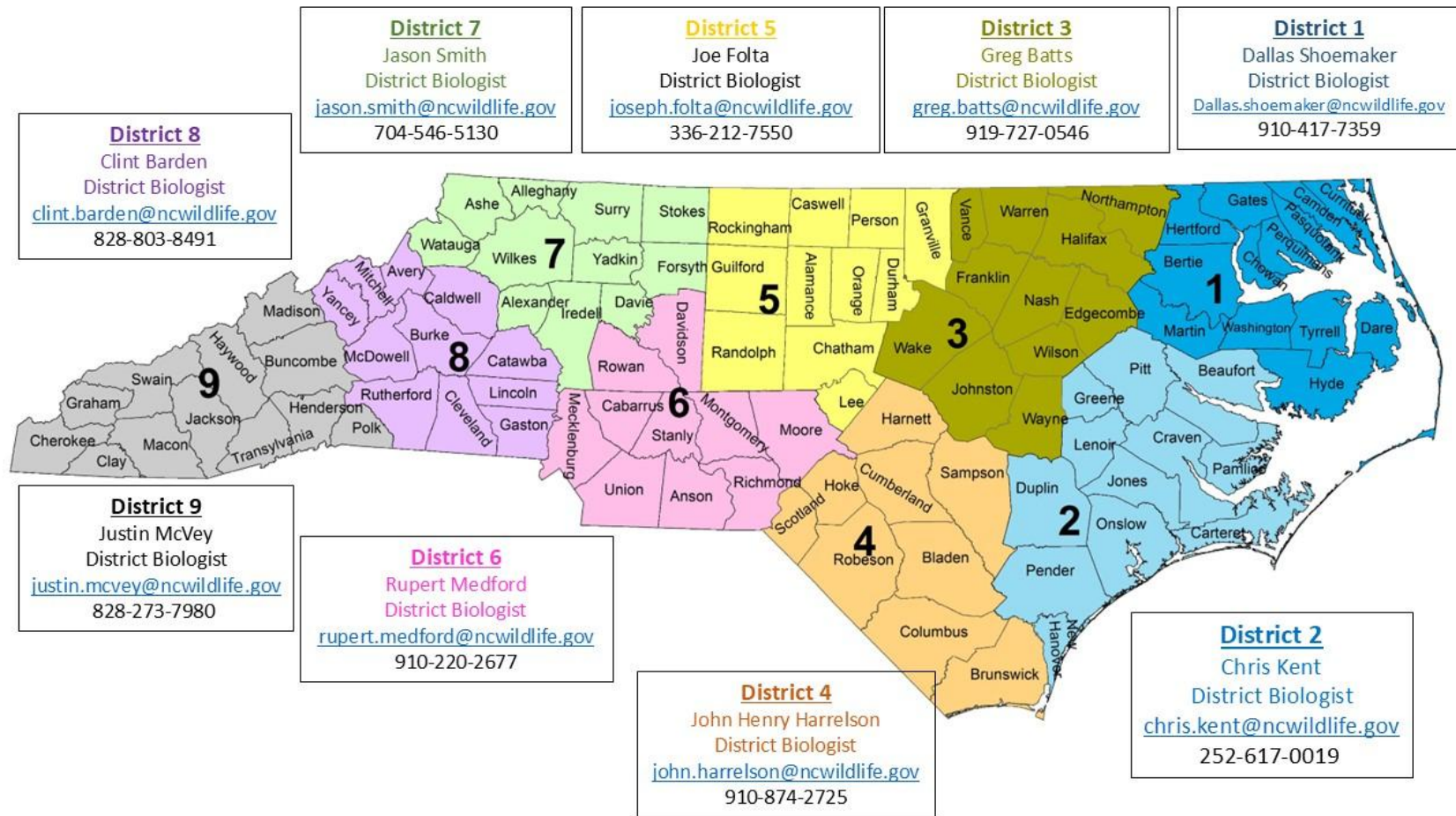


Colleen Olfenbuttel
Certified Wildlife Biologist®
Game Mammals Supervisor
colleen.olfenbuttel@ncwildlife.gov
919-920-6302



Caitlin Brett
Furbearer Biologist
caitlin.brett@ncwildlife.gov
919-609-3392

Credit: Beth Hakala



For updated map of wildlife district contacts, go to www.ncwildlife.gov/trapping-district-biologist-contacts

2026-27 Furbearer Cooperator Program



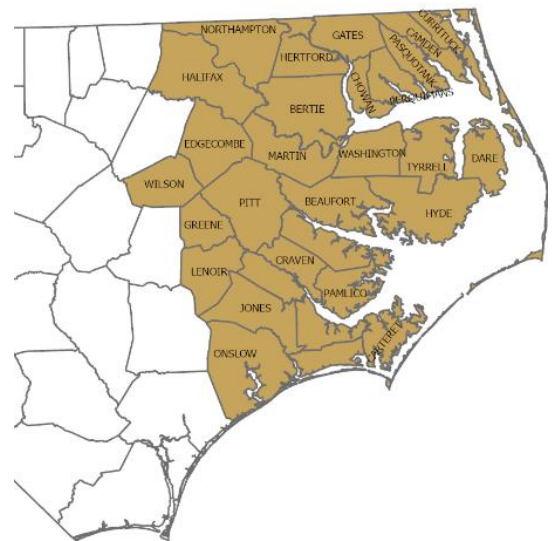
The NC Wildlife Resources Commission is interested in collecting a variety of furbearer samples and carcasses annually, which allows us to monitor populations, screen for pathogens, and conduct research to better understand furbearer species throughout the state. See below for details on this year's collection priorities, and instructions on how to participate by submitting samples.

Participants will receive a Furbearer Cooperator patch. We appreciate your support and commitment to continuing sustainable, regulated trapping in North Carolina!

Coastal Coyote Samples

Samples will be used to study canid interactions and genetic structure in Eastern NC. Hair samples can be collected from live or dead coyotes (trapped, hunted, roadkill, etc), and are still needed from the following counties:

Beaufort, Bertie, Edgecombe, Gates, Halifax, Hertford, Hyde, Jones, Martin, Northampton, Pamlico, Pitt, Pasquotank, Perquimans, Tyrrell, Washington, Wilson

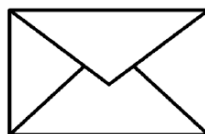


HOW TO SUBMIT:

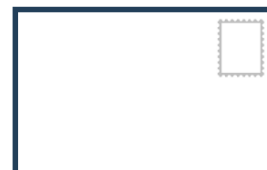
1. Approximately 20 hairs with follicles should be collected by pulling (NOT cutting) hairs using tweezers and/or gloves
2. Place hair inside an envelope (one envelope per individual animal) and write on the envelope:
 - a. Your name
 - b. Date of harvest
 - c. Location of harvest (latitude/longitude, or nearest crossroads)
3. Place sample envelope inside a separate mailing envelope and send it to:
Dr. Heather Evans at 11 W. Jones St., Raleigh, NC 27601



Pull, don't cut!
20+ hair follicles
from coyote



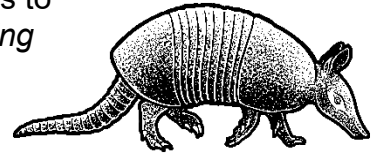
Place in envelope
with your name,
harvest date and
location.



Place in mailing envelope,
send to Dr. Heather Evans
11 W. Jones St.
Raleigh, NC 27601

Entire Carcasses (skinned or not): **Armadillo, Foxes, Bobcat, Skunks, Weasels, Mink, Muskrat**

Carcasses are used for a variety of wildlife health studies, which typically involve taking organ samples to screen for toxins or pathogens. Pelts and other parts (e.g. scent glands, skulls, feet, etc.) may be removed if the trapper wishes to keep these before submitting. *This season we are only planning on collecting the above-listed species.*



HOW TO SUBMIT:

1. **Record the species, location and date of harvest** or collection on a waterproof tag or paper inside a ziploc bag; keep this information with each carcass
2. Bag and preserve carcass(es) in freezer.
3. Contact Caitlin Brett at 919-609-3392 or caitlin.brett@ncwildlife.gov to coordinate a drop-off or pick-up details.

Bobcat and Otter Jaws

Jawbones must come from harvested bobcats and otters. The lower canine teeth will be extracted and used to assess the age structure of the harvest for each species. In addition to the Furbearer Cooperator patch, participants will receive the age report for their harvested animal(s).

HOW TO SUBMIT:

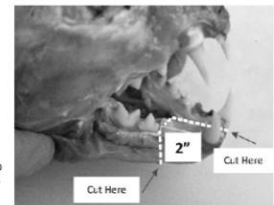
1. Request your pre-paid envelopes (one per animal) to be mailed to you by contacting Caitlin Brett at caitlin.brett@ncwildlife.gov or 919-609-3392.
2. Cut and completely dry the portion of the lower jaw containing the canine tooth and its root. To ensure you include the root, cut the jawbone at least 2" away from the canine (see diagram on envelope).
3. Follow instructions on pre-paid envelope to ship - **please mail by April 30th!**



NCWRC – BOBCAT & OTTER JAW SAMPLE ENVELOPE



1. **USE ONLY ONE (1) ENVELOPE PER ANIMAL.** Only submit animals trapped during the regulated trapping season (no road killed or hunted animals please). If you need additional envelopes, please contact 919-609-3392.
2. We need the two (2) bottom canines from each animal; cut the jaw bone with loppers or hacksaw between the lower canines and 2 inches back from canine (see photo). Be careful not to cut too close to the canine tooth, so it is not damaged. The root of the tooth is needed to determine age of the animal. **DO NOT** attempt to pull the canine tooth from the jaw because it will break in half.
3. Clean away as much flesh as possible from the sample to avoid spoilage. **Allow the jaw section to completely dry** before enclosing the sample within this pre-paid sample envelope and mail.



7-DIGIT WRC CUSTOMER # (found on your license, if applicable): _____	
NAME: _____	
ADDRESS: _____	
CITY: _____	STATE: _____
ZIP CODE: _____	PHONE: _____
EMAIL: _____	
DATE HARVESTED: _____ COUNTY OF HARVEST: _____ (If exact date unknown, please provide month and year)	
SPECIES (Check one): ☐ BOBCAT ☐ RIVER OTTER	
SEX OF ANIMAL* (Check one): ☐ MALE ☐ FEMALE ☐ UNKNOWN	
*Note - The sex of otters and bobcats can be difficult to determine. If testicles are not visible, make an incision in the abdomen of the carcass and examine for presence of uterus and ovaries, which can be found behind the bladder and below the kidneys.	
You will receive a cooperators patch and age report for your harvested animals.	

For more information on the Furbearer Cooperator Program, visit:
ncwildlife.gov/furcooperator

Number of Licensed Trappers

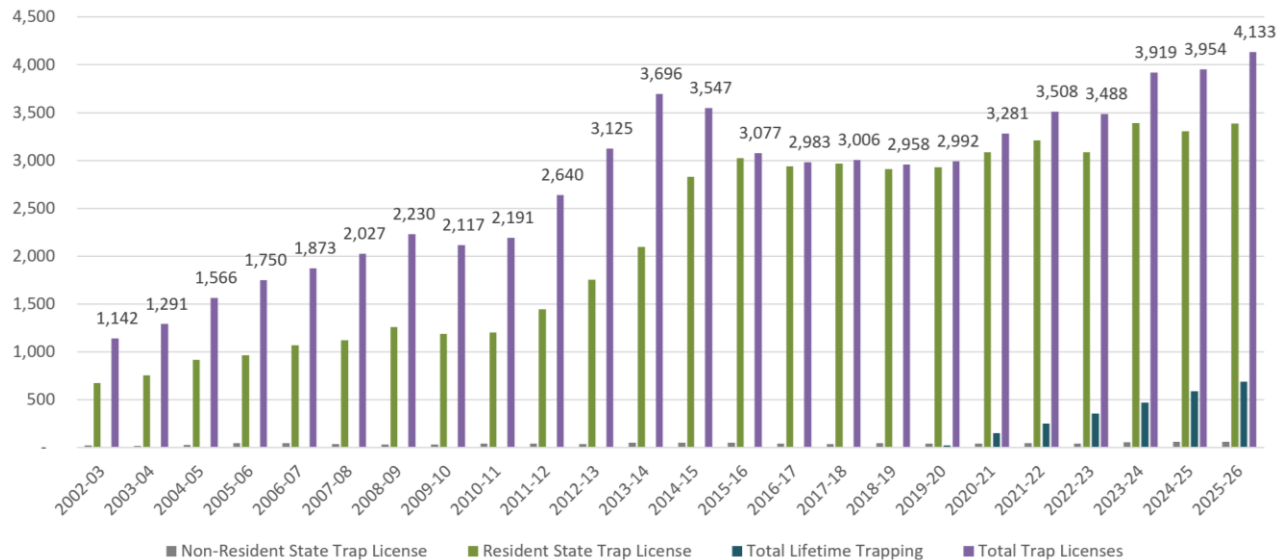


Figure 1. The number of licensed trappers in North Carolina from the 2002-03 trapping season through the 2025-26 trapping season.

During the 2025-26 season, there were 4,133 licensed trappers, a 4.5% increase in license sales compared to the 2024-25 season (see Figure 1). This was the highest number of licensed trappers since the 1986-87 season.

Trapper Education Opportunities

The Commission and the NC Trappers Association offer free Trapper Education Courses to teach trapping regulations and the basics of trapping techniques, fur handling, and safety.

To search for trapper education courses, go to:

<https://license.gooutdoorsnorthcarolina.com/Event/EventsHome.aspx>

Use keyword "trapper" to search for upcoming courses near you.

Courses are often added throughout the year, based on availability of our volunteer trapper educational instructors.



credit Colleen Olfenbuttel



credit Colleen Olfenbuttel

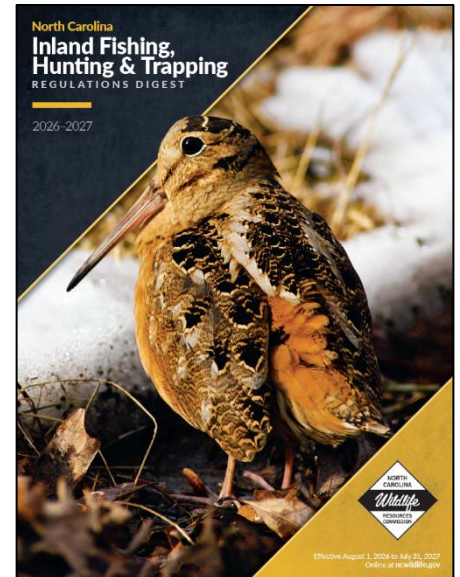
2026-2027 Regulations Digest

Know before you go! Be sure you are aware and understand the rules, regulations, and other guidelines for hunting, trapping and fishing in North Carolina. The 2026-2027 Regulations Digest also has information on game lands and county local laws.

Visit ncwildlife.gov/regulations to:

- View the digest on-line;
- Download a pdf version of the Regulations Digest to your computer or smartphone;
- Or request a paper copy by mail.

[Click here](#) for direct link to trapping regulations.



Trapping Season Reminders

There is a uniform statewide trapping season for all 100 counties from October 1, 2026 through February 28, 2027 for the following species:

- Armadillo
- Beaver
- Bobcat
- Coyote
- Groundhog
- Mink
- Muskrat
- Nutria
- Opossum
- Otter
- Raccoon
- Skunk
- Weasel
- See next page for trapping foxes

Outside the applicable trapping season, animals can only be trapped under a Depredation Permit. This is a free permit obtained from a Wildlife Enforcement Officer, Wildlife District Biologist, or a Licensed Wildlife Control Agent.

***Nutria Note:** There is no closed season on nutria east of I-77; A depredation permit is not required to trap nutria in this part of the state.



Beaver Note: Landowners whose property is or has been damaged by beavers may take beaver on their property anytime by any lawful method without obtaining a depredation permit. The landowner may obtain assistance from other persons, including licensed trappers, by giving those persons permission to take beaver on the landowner's property. The beaver pelt, carcass, and parts can be sold by licensed trappers.



Resident Lifetime Trapping License

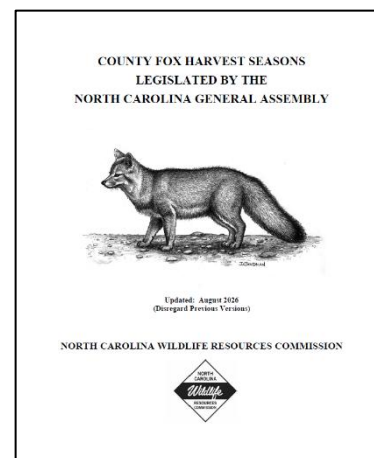
North Carolina residents can purchase a Lifetime Trapping License. The cost is \$370 and all proceeds from the sale of this license go to the Wildlife Endowment Fund.

Fox Trapping Seasons

As of September 1st, 2026, the NC General Assembly did not pass any local laws that opened up any new counties to fox trapping.

As a reminder, the NC Wildlife Resources Commission does not have the authority to create fox trapping seasons; only the NC General Assembly has that authority.

There are 55 counties with fox trapping seasons in North Carolina. Outside these 55 counties, you cannot trap foxes during the regulated trapping season and any fox captured must be released in those 45 counties without a fox trapping season.



For more information on fox hunting and trapping seasons, including county-specific restrictions and season dates please go to: ncwildlife.gov/foxseasons

Selling your Furs

To find where you can sell your fur, we have a “[Selling Fur](http://ncwildlife.gov/sellingfur)” section on our website. It has information on local fur dealers, fur pick-up schedules & locations, and fur auctions. This information is updated throughout the trapping season at ncwildlife.gov/sellingfur



Fur dealer inspecting furs at the Virginia State Fur Sale in Wytheville, VA held every March.



Trappers waiting to sell their fur to Groenewold Fur & Wool Co., which has pick-up sites throughout North Carolina every March-April.



NC fur buyer, Kevin Myers, inspects otter pelts at the Marshall Fur Sale in March.

Trapping Live Foxes and Coyote

- A [transportation permit](#) is required prior to taking possession of live foxes and coyotes for live sale to licensed fox preserve.
- Licensed trappers and any individual(s) transporting foxes and coyotes for live sale shall have a current and valid transportation permit prior to taking possession of the live foxes and coyotes, including removing the animal from the trap.
- This free permit can be found in the same place as fur tags. Go to <http://www.gooutdoorsnorthcarolina.com>
 1. Then click the square that says “Buy Licenses or Obtain Lifetime License”
 2. Then click the green “Regulated Activity Permits” tab
 3. Then scroll down to Fox-Coyote Transport Application.



Reporting Live Foxes and Coyotes

- Licensed trappers shall keep accurate written records, on a form provided by the NC Wildlife Resources Commission, for each fox or coyote sold or transferred to licensed fox preserve.
- Click [here](#) for the report form, or you can use your account in [Go Outdoors](#).
- Live-trapped foxes and coyotes shall not be held for more than 30 days after capture and shall be provided drinking water, food of a type and quantity appropriate for the species, and shelter that protects the foxes and coyotes from direct sunlight and precipitation.



Need to obtain or renew your Fox-Coyote Transport Permit?

Come visit Wildlife Commission's RAPS supervisor Christina Stylianios at the NC Trappers Convention on Friday, September 25^h to submit your reports and renew your permit!

Trapper Identification Number (TIN)

The Commission issues each trapper a Trapper Identification Number (TIN) at the time they purchase or renew their trapping license. This TIN is printed on your license (see picture on next page for example).

Either the TIN or Wildlife Control Agent (WCA) license number and Commission telephone number (800-662-7137), or the trapper's name and address can be used on trap tags. The license number issued to licensed WCAs is equivalent to a TIN and can be used on the trap tags. See trap tag examples below.

If a trapper places a trap on the property of another, the Commission is required to disclose the identity of the trapper to the landowner where the trap is located at the landowner's request.



**North Carolina
Wildlife Resources Commission**
Transaction Date: 07/24/2023

WRC Customer Number: 1234567
Wile E. Coyote
123 Canid Lane
COYOTE CITY, NC 27777-1234

Date of Birth: 04/18/1949
Hunter Education #: Pre July 2013 LH
Trapper ID #: 12345678

Current NCWRC License	Effective	Expiration
Lifetime Comprehensive Hunt	09/08/2010	N/A
HIP Certification	07/24/2023	06/30/2024
Big Game Harvest Report Card	07/24/2023	06/30/2024
Resident Lifetime Trapping	07/24/2023	N/A

Providing false, fraudulent, or misleading information for the purpose of obtaining these licenses or the use of a fraudulently obtained license is a Class 1 Misdemeanor. (G.S. 113-275 (j))

3 Easy Ways to Report A Big Game Harvest

-  Go Outdoors North Carolina Mobile App, even in outdoor locations that do not have access to internet or cell service!
-  GoOutdoorsNorthCarolina.com. Internet connection required.
-  800-I-GOT-ONE (800-446-8663) to report harvest through automated messaging. Cell service required.
-  Contact 833-950-0575 or biggameregistration@ncwildlife.org

Download the free Go Outdoors North Carolina App




- Purchase or renew a license
- Report a harvest even without cell service
- Store licenses for yourself and others
- Use geolocation features and other cool tools

Violations Reporting

- Wildlife, Inland Fishing, or Boating Violations: 800-662-7137
- Coastal Fishing Violations: 800-682-2632
- Poaching Hotline: 855-WILDTIP

The trapper identification number (TIN) is located below your date of birth on your license card (red arrow), which you can print yourself as a pdf.



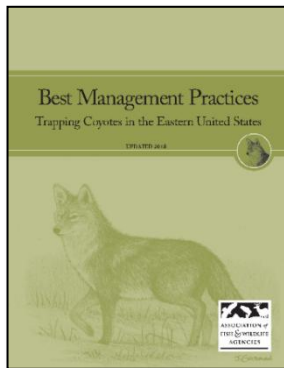
Option 1: Trapper's name and address



Option 2: Trapper Identification Number (TIN) and Commission telephone number (800-662-7137). Note that a WCA license number can also be used on the trap tag.

Trapping Best Management Practices (BMPs)

Trapping BMPs are carefully researched **recommendations** designed to ensure animals are **humanely captured**. Developed as part of the **largest trap research effort** ever conducted, BMPs feature the **latest scientific information** about trapping techniques and equipment, along with practical advice from *experienced trappers* and wildlife biologists.



BMPs are intended to inform people about traps and trapping systems considered to be state-of-the-art in animal welfare, efficiency, selectivity, and practicality.

The BMPs serve as a guide to inform trappers about trap-types they should consider using for capturing a specific furbearer, including bobcats, coyotes, beaver, and raccoons!

Trapping BMPs exist for 22 species of furbearers:
furbearermanagement.com/species-bmp-reports/

To make it easy to find a BMP-approved trap, this website has a trap [search portal](#), where you can search for BMP-approved traps by trap-type (e.g., foothold, bodygrip), species, or trap brand.

BMP Trap & Species Search Portal

The database below provides information on traps and species that meet the Best Management Practices criteria. Specific traps, trap type, and species can be searched in the database.

To only view the results of a specific trap, trap type, or species, type the name into the search bar below. You can select which fields to search (trap, trap type, or species) in the drop down menu next to the search icon to further filter your results.

Search

Trapping BMPs, combined with Trapper Education Programs, are intended to maintain the integrity of furbearer management programs throughout the nation and to sustain trapping methods now and in the future.