

2005-06 New Jersey Trapper Harvest, Recreational and Economic Survey

Summary

Mail questionnaires were sent to 481 trappers requesting harvest, recreational and socio-economic information for the 2005-06 trapping season. The mean age of licensed trappers sampled was 45.9 years. Resident trappers live in every county of the state and have a tendency to reside in rural areas. The majority of licensed NJ trappers (65.4 percent) are affiliated with one or both statewide trapping organizations, although a substantial percentage (34.6) remains unaffiliated. Trapping is a lifelong activity and respondents had a mean 24.9 years of overall experience. Annual expenditures on trapping equipment and supplies are usually low, however overall investment is likely to be substantial. An estimated 10,511 Conibear™ traps, 4,087 cable restraints, 613 box traps and 49 diver traps were in use during the 2005-06 season. The number of active trappers was estimated at 445, with most trappers targeting muskrat (64.0 percent), raccoon (58.9 percent), red fox (46.3 percent) and beaver (42.0 percent). Based on the survey results, mandatory coyote reports and beaver-otter check station reports, trappers harvested 34,465 muskrat, 4,041 raccoons, 3,144 red fox, 232 gray fox, 234 opossum, 366 skunk, 1,656 mink, 632 beaver, 51 river otter, 85 coyote and 23 weasels. Active trappers expended an average of 48.0 days a-field representing an estimated 21,381 recreation-days. The total estimated value of the 2005-06 fur harvest was \$317,761 at the local level. Regulatory changes instituted during the 2005-06 season had the desired effect of increasing recreational trapping opportunity and enhancing harvest levels with minimal or no impact to non-target species or other resource user groups, respectively.

This survey was conducted as part of **Job III-B. Hunter and Trapper Harvest, Recreational and Economic Survey**. This job is included within **Grant Number W-68-R-10, New Jersey Wildlife Research and Management: Project III. Upland Wildlife and Furbearers**.

Methods

A total of 600 resident and 9 non-resident, trapping licenses were sold during calendar year 2004, however all licenses sold for that year were not available for use in constructing the survey database. Therefore an address corrected and edited 2004 Trapper Licenses database along with additions from the 2005-06 Beaver and Otter winner/losers list was used to generate the 2005-06 mailing list. A survey packet was mailed to 481 trappers by April 5, 2006. Twenty questionnaires (4.2 percent) were returned by the postal authorities as undeliverable and 461 were presumed delivered. Demographic and economic analyses are based on the 182 (40.8 percent) responses that were correctly completed and returned by May 15, 2006.

One hundred sixty-six respondents (36.0 percent) purchased a 2005 license, a 2006 license or both. Harvest data analysis is based on the one hundred thirty-six respondents (29.5 percent) that participated in the 2005-06 trapping season.

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Results

Age

The age class of licensed trappers is presented in Table 1. Ages ranged from 12 to 92 years, with a mean age of 45.9 years (n = 481) in 2005-06. The simple majority of the 2005-06 sample (16.8 percent) was between 45 and 49 years of age. Estimates of trapper numbers by age class for 2004-05 and 2003-04 are presented for comparison purposes.

Table 1. Age class of licensed trappers sampled during the 2005-06 New Jersey Trapper Harvest Survey

Age Class	2005-06 Sample size	Percent of 2005-06 sample	Estimated number of trappers (2005-06)	Estimated number of trappers (2004-05)	Estimated number of trappers (2003-04)
<16	17	3.5%	21	6	0
16 to 19	6	1.2%	7	3	6
20 to 24	13	2.7%	16	18	17
25 to 29	24	5.0%	30	12	12
30 to 34	27	5.6%	33	21	35
35 to 39	55	11.4%	68	65	86
40 to 44	74	15.4%	92	107	81
45 to 49	81	16.8%	100	83	101
50 to 54	57	11.9%	71	68	63
55 to 59	46	9.6%	57	86	81
60 to 64	32	6.7%	40	56	49
65+	48	10.0%	59	80	78
Unknown	1	0.2%	1	3	3
Total	481	100.0%	596	609	610

Gender

Information on trapper gender was not solicited during the current survey. Prior surveys have indicated that trappers are overwhelmingly male (over 95 percent). Based on prior survey results, an estimated 586 males and 24 females were licensed trappers in 2004, compared to 593 males and 17 females licensed in 2003.

Occupation

Information on trapper occupation was not solicited during the current survey. Occupations for 77.1 percent of 2004-05 respondents could be categorized into three of the nine groupings: Trade (33.7 percent); Professional (22.9 percent) and Retired (20.5 percent). These three groups constituted 68.2 percent of the 2003-04 responses.

Residency

The estimated number of resident trappers by county (2005 v. 2004 and 2003) is presented in Table 2. Resident trappers live in every county of the state and have a tendency to reside in predominantly rural areas. The majority (54.2 percent) of New Jersey's 2005 resident trappers live in Cumberland,

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Gloucester and Salem Counties (27.4 percent) or Morris, Sussex and Warren Counties (26.8 percent).

Table 2. Estimated number of resident trappers in New Jersey, by county

County	2005-06 database	Percent of 2005-06 database	Estimated number of trappers (2005-06)	Estimated number of trappers (2004-05)	Estimated number of trappers (2003-04)
Atlantic	20	4.2%	25	18	25
Bergen	21	4.4%	26	24	23
Burlington	27	5.6%	33	33	33
Camden	16	3.3%	20	23	24
Cape May	21	4.4%	26	24	27
Cumberland	34	7.1%	42	61	57
Essex	4	0.8%	5	2	7
Gloucester	36	7.5%	44	36	42
Hudson	2	0.4%	2	1	4
Hunterdon	24	5.0%	29	33	30
Mercer	13	2.7%	16	20	20
Middlesex	19	4.0%	23	23	15
Monmouth	13	2.7%	16	16	11
Morris	31	6.5%	38	36	36
Ocean	16	3.3%	20	20	21
Passaic	14	2.9%	17	19	19
Salem	61	12.8%	75	74	73
Somerset	8	1.7%	10	9	8
Sussex	69	14.4%	85	76	74
Union	1	0.2%	1	2	4
Warren	28	5.9%	34	48	52
Total	478	100.0%	587	600	604

Affiliation

New Jersey has two statewide trapping organizations, the New Jersey Fur Harvesters (NJFH) and the New Jersey Trappers Association (NJTA). Affiliation of respondents in either organization is presented in Table 3. The majority (65.4 percent) of survey respondents is affiliated with one (35.1 percent NJTA, 16.5 percent NJFH) or both (13.7 percent) of these organizations. A large percentage (33.5) of respondents is unaffiliated or only affiliated with a national organization (National Trappers Association) (1.1 percent). Based on survey results, an estimated 292 trappers were NJTA members, 180 trappers were NJFH members and 206 trappers were unaffiliated in 2005. The reported 2006 membership of the NJTA is 317 (New Jersey Trappers Association 2006) and 166 for the NJFH (Mounier 2006). It should be noted that each organization lists members who may not be licensed to trap in New Jersey or family memberships that include more than one licensed trapper.

Table 3. Affiliation in New Jersey trapping organizations

Affiliation	Percent survey respondents (2006)	Estimated number of trappers (2005)	Estimated number of trappers (2004)	Estimated number of trappers (2003)
NJ Fur Harvesters	16.5 %	98	62	77

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NJ Trappers Association	35.1 %	210	255	233
Both NJFH and NJTA	13.7 %	82	68	52
Subtotal	65.4 %	390	386	362
Unaffiliated in NJ	34.6 %	206	217	236
Subtotal	100.0 %	596	603	598
Unknown	0.0 %	0	6	12
Total	N = 182	596 licensees	609 licensees	610 licensees

Prior Experience

Prior to the 1972-73 season, it was unlawful to trap any fur-bearing animal without possessing a Trapping and Firearm Hunting License. This requirement did not apply to occupant farmers and their immediate family members and to bona fide residents of the State under 14 years that required no license to trap according to state law. A separate Trapping License was provided for residents (age 12 and older) and non-residents (age 14 and older) in 1972. A previous year's license or a certificate showing successful completion in a trapper education course has been required since 1978. Junior Trapping Licenses were required for residents between the ages of 12 and 15, inclusive, from 1980 through 1999. Since 2000, trapping licenses are required for all persons age 16 year or older. Survey respondents indicated years of trapping experience prior to the 2005-06 season ranging from 0 to 72 years, with a mean 24.9 years of experience (n = 177, SD = 18.5). Two respondents were new to the sport in 2005-06.

License Buyers

Survey recipients, who were licensed to trap in 2004, were asked whether they purchased a trapping license for the current season. The majority of 2006 survey respondents purchased trapping licenses for 2005 (89.6 percent) and 2006 (79.7 percent). Fourteen of the 182 respondents (7.7 percent) indicated not purchasing either a 2005 or 2006 trapping license. Reasons given for non-purchase included no time (28.6 percent), moved out of state (21.4 percent), low fur values (14.3 percent) and farmer-exempt, active military service, quit trapping, lack of funds and poor health (7.1 percent each, respectively).

Active Trappers

One hundred thirty-six (81.9 percent) of the licensed respondents participated in trapping activities during the 121-day, 2005-06 season that began November 15, 2005 and concluded March 15, 2006. Active 2006 respondents had slightly more experience trapping (mean 26.6 years, SD = 18.7) compared to all respondents (mean 24.9, SD = 18.5 years). Based on active respondents (136), 445 trappers expended 21,381 recreation-days with a mean expenditure of 48.0 days afield during 2005-06 compared to 478 trappers, 21,217 recreation-days and a mean 44.4 days afield during 2004-05.

Trap Types

Steel-jawed leghold type traps, such as coil springs and long springs, have been prohibited in New Jersey since 1985. Box traps, Conibear™ traps, diver traps and body-gripping cable restraints are currently legal for use, and active trappers seldom utilize one trap type to the exclusion of all others (Table 4). Conibear™ traps were used by the majority of active respondents (86.0 percent), followed by cable restraints (57.4 percent), box traps (48.5 percent) and diver traps (16.9 percent).

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Table 4. Trap types utilized by active respondents in New Jersey during 2005-06.

Trap Type	Number of 2005-06 active respondents	Percent 2005-06 active respondents	Estimated number of active trappers (2005-06)	Estimated number of active trappers (2004-05)	Estimated number of active trappers (2003-04)
Box only	3	2.2 %	10	6	12
Box and Conibear	13	9.6 %	43	42	52
Box, Conibear and diver	4	2.9 %	13	3	3
Box, Conibear, diver and cable restraint	10	7.4%	33	68	83
Box and cable restraint	7	5.1 %	23	18	35
Conibear only	32	23.5 %	105	74	78
Conibear and diver	3	2.2 %	10	15	14
Conibear, diver and cable restraint	4	2.9 %	13	9	29
Conibear and cable restraint	22	16.2 %	72	71	63
Conibear, cable restraint and other	0	0.0%	0	3	0
Diver only	1	0.7 %	3	3	3
Diver and cable restraint	1	0.7 %	3	0	3
Cable restraint only	5	3.7 %	16	42	29
Other only	1	0.7 %	3	0	0
No response	1	0.7 %	3	3	6
Total	136	100.0 %	445	478	498

Expenditures and Investment

Information on expenditures (excluding license and permit fees) by active 2006 respondents is presented in Tables 5 and 6. The majority of active respondents (58.8 percent) spent less than \$300 on trapping equipment and supplies during 2004-05. Over one-half (55.9 percent) have an overall investment exceeding \$1,000. Based on survey responses, there were an estimated 613 box, 10,511 Conibear™, 49 diver and 4,087 cable restraints in operation during the 2005-06 season. The NJDFW received \$20,882 in revenue from license sales in calendar year 2005.

Table 5. Expenditures on trapping equipment and supplies by active respondents, 2005-06

2005-06 Expenditures (US\$)	Number of active 2005-06 respondents	Percent 2005- 06 active respondents	Estimated number of active trappers (2005-06)	Estimated number of active trappers (2004-05)	Estimated number of active trappers (2003-04)
\$1-100	25	18.4 %	82	160	176
\$101-200	30	22.1 %	98	151	115
\$200-300	25	18.4 %	82	74	95
\$301-400	14	10.3 %	46	50	40
\$401-500	18	13.2 %	59	9	20
\$501+	23	16.9 %	75	27	43
No response	1	0.7 %	3	6	9
Total	136	100.0 %	445	478	498

Table 6. Total investment in trapping equipment and supplies by active respondents, 2005-06

2005-06 Expenditures (US\$)	Number of active 2005-06 respondents	Percent 2005- 06 active respondents	Estimated number of active trappers (2005-06)	Estimated number of active trappers (2004-05)	Estimated number of active trappers (2003-04)
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\$1-500	32	23.5 %	105	128	121
\$501-1,000	26	19.1 %	85	107	89
\$1,001-1,500	26	19.1 %	85	42	81
\$1,501-2,000	14	10.3 %	46	71	55
\$2,001-2,500	9	6.6 %	29	24	26
\$2,501+	27	19.9 %	88	101	115
No response	2	1.5 %	7	6	11
Total	136	100.0 %	445	478	498

2005-06 Fur Harvest

A summary of the 2005-06 fur harvest is presented in Table 7. An estimated 44,929 animals from eleven game species open for trapping were harvested. No nutrias were reported by survey respondents. Nearly all (92.7 percent) of the animals harvested consisted of muskrat (76.7 percent), raccoon (9.0 percent) and red fox (7.0 percent). The fur value of these three species represents 81.4 percent of the total fur value, estimated at \$317,761 at the local level. Information by species is also presented.

Table 7. New Jersey fur harvest results for 2005-06

Species	Number of 2005-06 active respondents	Estimated number of active trappers (2005-06)	Mean experience (years)	Mean days trapped (2005-06)	Mean effort (traps / day)	Estimated harvest	Estimated value (US\$)
Beaver	57	187	12.9	18.3	4.6	632	14,255
Coyote	39	128	5.4	41.2	13.0	85	2,146
Gray fox	25	82	15.3	40.3	17.8	232	5,058
Mink	46	151	17.0	42.7	20.4	1,656	30,522
Muskrat	87	285	28.2	34.2	40.5	34,465	156,390
Nutria	0	Unknown	0.0	0.0	0.0	0	0
Opossum	11	36	29.1	29.4	4.9	234	465
Raccoon	80	262	19.8	31.9	12.1	4,041	46,058
Red fox	63	206	14.5	38.1	20.7	3,144	56,196
River otter	43	141	11.2	13.8	2.6	51	5,113
Skunk	9	29	23.4	36.4	8.1	336	1,489
Weasel	4	13	6.0	30.0	6.0	23	69
Total	136	445	26.6	48.0		44,929	317,761

Beaver (*Castor canadensis*)

The beaver trapping season was December 26, 2005 – February 9, 2006 (46 days), except on the 23 State Wildlife Management Areas that received game bird releases where beaver trapping was permitted from January 1 – February 9, 2006 (40 days). A special, beaver trapping permit was required in addition to a trapping license. Two hundred ten applications were received for the 186 available permits and 181 permits were issued. One hundred five trappers (58.0 percent) were successful in harvesting at least one beaver and 49 trappers (27.1 percent) were successful in harvesting the permit bag limit of eight beavers. Successful trappers were required to present their beaver pelts for examination at regional check stations on Saturday, February 11, 2006. Permit holders harvested 612 beavers. Four site-specific permits were issued and resulted in the harvest of 20 beavers, bringing the total 2005-06 harvest to 632. Additional information on the 2005-06 beaver

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harvest may be found in Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Report W-68-R-10 Job III-C entitled Beaver Distribution and Population Trends and River Otter Harvest.

Based on active survey respondents (n = 57), there are 187 active beaver trappers in New Jersey. Active respondents had 22.0 years of overall trapping experience and 12.9 years experience trapping beaver. Active respondents trapped a mean 18.3 days using a mean 4.6 traps per day. The reported mean price per pelt received by active respondents was \$22.55 and the estimated value of the 2005-06 beaver harvest was \$14,255 at the local level.

Coyote (*Canis latrans*)

The eastern coyote trapping season was November 15, 2005 – March 15, 2006 (121 days), except on the 23 State Fish and Wildlife Management Areas that received game bird releases where trapping was permitted January 1 – March 15, 2006 (74 days). State regulations require successful trappers to report their harvest to a regional, Division Law Enforcement office within 24 hours. Eighty-five coyotes were reported by trappers in 2005-06. Additional information on coyotes may be found in Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Report W-68-R-10 Job III-D entitled Occurrence and Distribution of the Eastern Coyote in New Jersey.

Based on active survey respondents (n = 39), there are 128 active coyote trappers in New Jersey. Active respondents had 17.8 years of overall trapping experience and 5.4 years experience trapping coyote. Active respondents trapped a mean 41.2 days using a mean 13.0 traps per day. The reported mean price per pelt received by active respondents was \$25.24 and the estimated value of the 2005-06 coyote harvest was \$2,146 at the local level.

Gray fox (*Urocyon cinereoargenteus*)

The gray fox trapping season was November 15, 2005 – March 15, 2006 (121 days), except on the 23 State Fish and Wildlife Management Areas that received game bird releases where trapping was permitted January 1 – March 15, 2006 (74 days). Based on active survey respondents (n = 25), there are 82 active gray fox trappers in New Jersey. Active respondents had 18.4 years of overall trapping experience and 15.3 years experience trapping gray fox. Active respondents trapped a mean 40.3 days using a mean 17.8 traps per day. An estimated 232 gray fox were taken by trappers, the reported mean price per pelt received was \$21.83 and the estimated value of the 2005-06 gray fox harvest was \$5,058 at the local level.

Mink (*Mustela vison*)

The mink trapping season was November 15, 2005 – March 15, 2006 (121 days) in the Northern Zone, December 1, 2005 – March 15, 2006 (105 days) in the Southern Zone, and January 1 – March 15, 2006 (74 days) on the 23 State Fish and Wildlife Management Areas that received game bird releases. Based on active survey respondents (n = 46), there are 151 active mink trappers in New Jersey. Active respondents had 24.3 years of overall trapping experience and 17.0 years experience trapping mink. Active respondents trapped a mean 42.7 days using a mean 20.4 traps per day. An estimated 1,656 mink were taken by trappers, the reported mean price per pelt received was \$18.44 and the estimated value of the 2005-06 mink harvest was \$30,522 at the local level.

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Muskrat (*Ondatra zibethicus*)

The muskrat trapping season was November 15, 2005 – March 15, 2006 (121 days) in the Northern Zone, December 1, 2005 – March 15, 2006 (105 days) in the Southern Zone, and January 1 – March 15, 2006 (74 days) on the 23 State Fish and Wildlife Management Areas that received game bird releases. Based on active survey respondents (n = 87), there are 285 active muskrat trappers in New Jersey. Active respondents had 29.0 year of overall trapping experience and 28.2 years experience trapping muskrat. Active respondents trapped a mean 34.2 days using a mean 40.5 traps per day. An estimated 34,465 muskrat were taken by trappers, the reported mean price per pelt received was \$4.54 and the estimated value of the 2005-06 mink harvest was \$156,390 at the local level.

Virginia opossum (*Didelphis virginianus*)

The Virginia opossum trapping season was November 15, 2005 – March 15, 2006 (121 days), except on the 23 State Fish and Wildlife Management Areas that received game bird releases where trapping was permitted January 1 – March 15, 2006 (74 days). Based on active survey respondents (n = 11), there are 36 active opossum trappers in New Jersey. Active respondents had 30.5 years of overall trapping experience and 29.1 years experience trapping opossum. Active respondents trapped a mean 29.4 days using a mean 4.9 traps per day. An estimated 234 opossum were taken by trappers, the reported mean price per pelt received was \$1.99 and the estimated value of the 2005-06 opossum harvest was \$465 at the local level.

Raccoon (*Procyon lotor*)

The raccoon trapping season was November 15, 2005 – March 15, 2006 (121 days), except on the 23 State Fish and Wildlife Management Areas that received game bird releases where trapping was permitted January 1 – March 15, 2006 (74 days). Based on active survey respondents (n = 80), there are 262 active raccoon trappers in New Jersey. Active respondents had 22.1 years of overall trapping experience and 19.8 years experience trapping raccoon. Active respondents trapped a mean 31.9 days using a mean 12.1 traps per day. An estimated 4,041 raccoons were taken by trappers, the reported mean price per pelt received was \$11,40 and the estimated value of the 2005-06 raccoon harvest was \$46,058 at the local level.

Red fox (*Vulpes vulpes*)

The red fox trapping season was November 15, 2005 – March 15, 2006 (121 days), except on the 23 State Fish and Wildlife Management Areas that received game bird releases where trapping was permitted January 1 – March 15, 2006 (74 days). Based on active survey respondents (n = 63), there are 206 active red fox trappers in New Jersey. Active respondents had 18.9 years of overall trapping experience and 14.5 years experience trapping red fox. Active respondents trapped a mean 38.1 days using a mean 20.7 traps per day. An estimated 3,144 red fox were taken by trappers, the reported mean price per pelt received was \$17.87 and the estimated value of the 2005-06 red fox harvest was \$56,196 at the local level.

River otter (*Lontra canadensis*)

The river otter trapping season was December 26, 2005 – February 9, 2006 (46 days), except on the 23 State Wildlife Management Areas that received game bird releases where beaver trapping was permitted from January 1 – February 9, 2006 (40 days). A special, river otter trapping permit was required in addition to a trapping license. One hundred ninety-eight applications were received for

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the 106 available permits and all permits were issued. Fifty-one trappers (48.1 percent) were successful in harvesting the season bag limit of one otter. Successful trappers were required to present their otter pelts for examination at regional check stations on Saturday, February 11, 2006. Additional information on the 2005-06 river otter harvest may be found in Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Report W-68-R-10 Job III-C entitled Beaver Distribution and Population Trends and River Otter Harvest.

Based on active survey respondents (n = 43), there are 141 active otter trappers in New Jersey. Active respondents had 22.3 years of overall trapping experience and 11.2 years experience trapping river otter. Active respondents trapped a mean 13.8 days using a mean 2.6 traps per day. The reported mean price per pelt received by active respondents was \$100.25 and the estimated value of the 2005-06 otter harvest was \$5,113 at the local level.

Striped skunk (*Mephitis mephitis*)

The striped skunk trapping season was November 15, 2005 – March 15, 2006 (121 days), except on the 23 State Fish and Wildlife Management Areas that received game bird releases where trapping was permitted January 1 – March 15, 2006 (74 days). Based on active survey respondents (n = 9), there are 29 active skunk trappers in New Jersey. Active respondents had 26.6 years of overall trapping experience and 23.4 years experience trapping skunk. Active respondents trapped a mean 36.4 days using a mean 8.1 traps per day. An estimated 366 skunks were taken by trappers, the reported mean price per pelt received was \$4.06 and the estimated value of the 2005-06 skunk harvest was \$1,489 at the local level.

Long-tail (*Mustela frenata*) and Short-tail (*M. erminea*) weasel

The weasel trapping season was November 15, 2005 – March 15, 2006 (121 days), except on the 23 State Fish and Wildlife Management Areas that received game bird releases where trapping was permitted January 1 – March 15, 2006 (74 days). Based on active survey respondents (n = 4), there are 13 active weasel trappers in New Jersey. Active respondents had 36.3 years of overall trapping experience and 6.0 years experience trapping weasel. Active respondents trapped a mean 30.0 days using a mean 6.0 traps per day. An estimated 23 weasels were taken by trappers, the reported mean price per pelt received was \$3.00 and the estimated value of the 2005-06 weasel harvest was \$69 at the local level.

Changes in Trapping Season Lengths and Regulations

Several changes in season lengths and regulations were enacted for the 2005-06 season based on field investigations, complaint data, scientific studies conducted in other states and in response to comments received from previous harvest surveys.

The opening date for trapping in areas outside of State WMA is November 15. In previous years, the opening date for trapping on State WMA was delayed until January 1 to avoid possible conflicts between pheasant and waterfowl hunters, and trappers. The delayed opening for trapping on all State WMA was no longer warranted since many new State WMA that are not stocked with pheasants have been added to the system and waterfowl season dates now vary over a wide range of dates by zone and season. Accordingly, the opening date for trapping in those WMA not stocked with pheasants was the same as the regular opening dates for trapping in other areas. The opening date for trapping on pheasant or quail stocked WMA remained January 1. This change increased recreational trapping opportunity on approximately 147,000 acres within the WMA system (49

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percent) with minimal impact on the furbearer resource. A higher percentage of resource users trapped on public lands in 2005-06 (67.0 percent) than in 2004-05 (60.3 percent) or in 2003-04 (61.8 percent) (Table 8).

Table 8. Percentage of trappers utilizing private and public land in New Jersey, 2005-06

Land type	Percent of active trappers		
	2005-06	2004-05	2003-04
Private land only	32.4 %	38.5 %	36.4 %
Public land only	16.2 %	14.9 %	12.1 %
Both private and public	50.7 %	45.3 %	49.7 %
No response	0.7 %	1.2 %	1.7 %
Number of active trappers	445	478	498

At the request of trappers, the opening date for the beaver and otter trapping seasons was moved from January 1 to December 26. This change increased recreational trapping opportunity with minimal impact on the beaver and otter resource. The number of trappers successful in harvesting at least one beaver during 2005-06 was similar to that of 2004-05 (105 v. 104). However, mild weather and open water conditions permitted 29 percent more trappers to successfully harvest the permit bag limit of eight beavers, which contributed to the record harvest of 612 beavers by regular permit holders. The river otter harvest (n = 51) was just slightly above the average for the previous eight seasons (n = 48).

Minor adjustments were made in beaver permit quotas based on field surveys, nuisance/damage complaint reports and demand for permits. Beaver permit quotas were increased by four permits in management zones 8, 28 and 29 by reductions in management zones 12, 19 and 27 in order to enhance efforts aimed at managing the beaver population. The total, regular permit quota remained at 186 permits. This reallocation resulted in an increased harvest (40 percent), an increased number of trappers (55 percent) harvesting at least one beaver and, an increased number of trappers (40 percent) harvesting the permit bag limit in zones 8, 28 and 29. The reallocation had the expected result of decreasing the number of successful trappers (25 percent) as well as the number of trappers harvesting the permit bag limit, while maintaining a harvest level similar to that of the previous year in zones 12, 19 and 27.

The size of cable or crucible wire used for body-gripping restraining devices was increased from 3/32 inches to 1/8 inches. The loop's maximum average diameter was increased from eight to twelve inches. The maximum distance between the walking surface and the top of the loop was increased from 18 to 24 inches. These changes effected an increased coyote harvest with minimal impact to non-target species. Of the 39 survey respondents that targeted coyotes, 97.4 percent made at least one change in their sets. One used higher sets or thicker cables and larger loop sizes (2.6 percent each, respectively); twenty (51.3 percent) used larger loop sizes and higher sets; and, sixteen (41.0 percent) used thicker cables, larger loop sizes and higher sets. Twenty-four respondents (61.5 percent) reported an increase in target species. One made no changes or used thicker cables and larger loop sizes (4.2 percent each, respectively); twelve (50.0 percent) used larger loop sizes and higher sets; and, ten (41.7 percent) used thicker cables, larger loop sizes and higher sets. Three respondents (7.7 percent) reported an increase in non-target species.

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The Division's Bureau of Law Enforcement did not receive any reports of conflicts between legal trappers and hunters or other resource users as a result of increased trapping opportunity on most State Wildlife Management Areas. Nor did they receive any reports of domestic animals captured in body-gripping restraining devices as a result of increased cable diameter, loop size or loop height.

Comments

The 2005-06 survey did not include a section for recipient comments due to space and budgetary considerations. Comments received during previous harvest surveys were addressed through the changes enacted for 2005-06 and discussed above.

Remarks

Occupant, qualified farmers are exempt from licensing requirements on their own property and consequently are not included in the mailing database. Licenses are otherwise required. Although only one unlicensed farmers (0.5 percent of respondents) was included in this year's survey, the presence of farmers in the survey underscores the need to acquire information from the predominantly non-licensed, farming community.

2005-06 NEW JERSEY TRAPPER HARVEST SURVEY

Dear Fellow Trapper:

This is a copy of the 2005-06 Trapper Harvest Survey. This survey contains questions about your trapping activities in New Jersey this past season. Kindly take a moment now to complete this survey and return it in the self-addressed envelope provided. The information you provide is anonymous.

The information we receive in this survey will be used in evaluating, planning and improving trapping seasons in New Jersey and for determining harvest levels and trends for several species. For example, information provided last year was used in support of positive changes to cable restraint regulations (thicker cable sizes, increased loop diameters and increased height from the walking surface). Your reply is important to us even if you **did not** trap or even if you **were not successful harvesting any game this year**.

Thank you for completing this questionnaire, and for promptly returning it in the envelope provided.

Sincerely,

Larry Herrighty

Larry Herrighty, Chief
Bureau of Wildlife Management
NJ Division of Fish and Wildlife

HOW TO COMPLETE THIS SURVEY

1. Please answer all applicable questions. Answer this questionnaire even if you did not trap or if you did not harvest any game during the past season.
2. Estimate the number of days trapped or game harvested if you don't recall the exact number. Please list specific numbers where they're asked for in days; please don't write in "week" or "month".
3. Please report only the game taken by **you**, not the entire trapping party, if more than one trapper shared a line. For example, if you were trapping with a friend who snared two red fox while you snared only one, you would report 1 red fox.
4. Record your answers in the space provided after each question.
5. After completing the questionnaire, return it in the envelope provided.

If you would like a copy of the survey results emailed to you, send a request to Wildlife Biologist Andrew Burnett at Andrew.Burnett@dep.state.nj.us and type "Trapper Survey Results" in the subject bar.

Appendix B: 2005-06 New Jersey Trapper Harvest, Recreational and Economic Survey

2005-06 New Jersey Trapper Harvest Survey Questionnaire

1. Do you belong to a New Jersey trapping organization? (Check **one**) YES NO
2. If you answered YES to Question 1, which organization(s)? NJFH NJTA
 OTHER ^{use} _____
3. Prior to the 2005-06 season, how long have you been trapping (in general)? _____ years
4. If you **did not** purchase a NJ Trapping license in either 2005 or 2006, check here Did not purchase
5. If you checked the box in Question #4, why did you not purchase a trapping license?
 A. I'm a farmer trapping my own property B. Other (reason): _____

If you checked "B" in Question #5, STOP HERE and return the survey, otherwise please GOTO Question #6

6. Please indicate which year(s) you purchased a NJ Trapping license (Check **one**)
 Both 2005 and 2006 2005 only 2006 only
7. Did you actively trap during the 2005-06 season? (Check **one**) YES NO

If you answered **NO** to Question #7, **STOP HERE** and return the survey, otherwise please provide information on your activity level in the table below.

Trapping Period	A. No. of Days Trapping	B. First County Trapped	C. 2nd County Trapped
8. 15 Nov – 31 Dec 2005 (47 days North, 31 days South)			
9. 01 Jan – 15 Mar 2006 (74 days)			

10. Please indicate the type(s) and number of traps used during the 2005-06 trapping season (check **all** that apply):

- A. Box _____ B. Conibear _____ C. Diver _____ D. Snare _____ F. Other _____

If you took advantage of the changes in the 2005-06 snare regulations, please answer the following:

- 11A. Did you use thicker snare cables (max. 1/8" in diameter)? YES NO
- 11B. Did you use larger snare loop sizes (max. 12" in diameter)? YES NO
- 11C. Did you raise your snare heights (max. 24" from surface)? YES NO
- 11D. Did you increase your catch of target species? YES NO
- 11E. Did you increase your catch of non-target species? YES NO

Please turn the page over and continue with the survey.

Appendix B: 2005-06 New Jersey Trapper Harvest, Recreational and Economic Survey

Please provide the harvest information requested for each species taken **by you** from *November 15, 2005 through March 15, 2006* on the following table. There are several questions for each species, so please take your time completing this portion of the survey.

Species	A. Trapped specifically for species?	B. If 'Yes', years of experience?	C. Primary county trapped in?	D. Number of days trapped for?	E. Number of traps set per day?	F. Total harvest	G. Average \$ per pelt paid
	(Yes or No)	(Years)	(list one)	(days)			(\$ US)
12. Beaver							
13. Otter							
14. Mink							
15. Muskrat							
16. Nutria							
17. Coyote							
18. Gray fox							
19. Red fox							
20. Opossum							
21. Raccoon							
22. Skunk							
23. Weasel							

24. During the past season, did you trap *primarily* on: (Check **one**)

- Privately owned land
 Publicly owned land
 Both private and public lands

25. Aside from your license and permit fees, how much money would you estimate spending on items such as gasoline, food, clothing, equipment and supplies for trapping in New Jersey during 2005-06? (Check **one**)

- A. \$1-100
 B. \$101-200
 C. \$201-300
 D. \$301-400
 E. \$401-500
 F. Over \$500

26. How much money would you estimate you have invested in trapping equipment and supplies overall? (Check **one**)

- A. \$1-500
 B. \$501-1000
 C. \$1001-1500
 D. \$1501-2000
 E. \$2001-2500
 F. Over \$2500

The survey is now complete. Thank you for participating in this year's Trapper Harvest Survey. Please return the survey in the self-addressed envelope provided, or mail to *NJ Division of Fish and Wildlife, Northern Region Office, 26 Rt. 173 West, Hampton, NJ 08827, Attn: Joseph Garris*. Survey results will be posted during Summer 2006 on the Division's website (<http://www.njfishandwildlife.com>). The NJ Division of Fish and Wildlife values your input and the information you provided.