



## New Jersey Furbearer Management Newsletter Winter 2013-14

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



### Deadlines and Dates to Remember-

#### Beaver and Otter Trapping Season Dates

Dec. 26 – Feb. 9 (Jan. 1 – Feb. 9 on some  
WMAs)

#### Coyote and Fox Special Permit Season Dates

January 1 thru March 15, 2014

**NJTA Fur Auction at Space Farms, Beemerville NJ, is scheduled for March 23, 2014. Furs will be collected on Saturday, March 22.**

**TAKE A KID TRAPPING!!**

**Please remember- the Beaver/Otter check station date is:  
February 22, 2014**

#### Beginning in 2013-14 trapping seasons...

The Conservation ID Number (known as the CID#) is added to the list of identification methods trappers may use to label their trap sets.

**If you're getting new trap tags made USE YOUR CID number!**



### Fur Market Forecast for the 2013-14 New Jersey Trapping Seasons

To be honest, we'll only know for sure about fur prices after the selling season begins in 2014, January and February but all indications point to a fairly certain prediction of a great year for fur sales. Trappers should try to make sure they trap when fur is prime, although many trappers can't do this due to some stiff competition. It's either trap it now or someone else will. Fur handling skills are always important- but the trapper who does the best job putting up their fur will see it in his or her fur check.

Let's all hope for the best. For several species we'll just have to see what happens. Remember, what we hear from most of our fellow trappers is the price they get for their best pelts and isn't really what is to be expected as the price of the average pelt.

Several reports (Trapper's Post and Trapper and Predator Caller) expect this year to be very good for trappers! Here's what is predicted.

**Muskrat:** The demand is there for this species. We should see prices starting in the neighborhood of \$10 to \$12 each for well-handled pelts.

**Raccoon:** Well-handled prime pelts will bring the most at the auction/sale. It's expected that we'll see prices in the \$25 to \$30 range for the best pelts.

**Red Fox:** Again, the trapper who takes the time to make sure his fur is handled properly will get the best prices. Good colored reds should start at \$35 to \$40 with really good prime furs higher.

**Gray Fox:** Who knows for sure about the market for this species? But- it's been speculated that prices will be in the \$25 to \$30 range for the best XLs.

**Otter:** The demand is there for this species. Prices for this species are expected to be in the \$75 to \$100 range. It's altogether possible that a larger, prime otter might bring over \$100.

**Mink:** Fur prices for this species should remain about like last season. Early season large males will probably start in the ~\$20 range. It's expected that prices will rise as the season progresses and fur quality gets better to somewhere in the \$30 to \$40 range for the best, prime large males. Pelts from the females, which are smaller, will be about half the price of a big male.

**Beaver:** It appears there is quite a range of prices predicted for this species and it depends on who you talk to. We'll have to wait and see for sure on this one. There's a lot of work that goes into handling beaver pelts to make them look their best, and the best will bring the highest price. Predicted average prices for blankets range from \$20 to \$25 to as high as \$35 to \$40.

**Coyote:** Speculation on the prices that coyote pelts might bring are all over the board. Who knows for sure? Some say coyotes like ours in NJ will be priced low- averaging in the \$20 to \$25 range but it's also been speculated that the best prime pelts might sell for about \$40. We'll have to wait and see on this species.

**Opossum:** We should see about \$3 to \$5 for the best large, prime pelts.

**Skunk:** We should see prices in the \$5 to \$7 for well-handled pelts with full stripes.

**Weasel:** A pretty rare item in NJ fur sales- \$3 to \$5 for the best pelts.

## New Jersey Furbearer Facts:



### Gray Fox (*Urocyon cinereoargenteus*)

The Gray Fox (*Urocyon cinereoargenteus*) is one of the most beautiful furbearers in North American. Common in New Jersey where deciduous woodlands provide habitat, it is a seldom seen, secretive carnivore. Habitats for gray fox include wooded, brushy, and rocky areas. And, although they are occasionally seen in old fields and farm country, they do not prefer agricultural habitats, unlike the red fox.

Geographically, gray foxes live in North, Central and South America and range from extreme southern Canada to northern Venezuela and Colombia. This range *excludes* the mountainous northwestern United States, the Great Plains, and eastern Central America.

In New Jersey the gray fox is classified as a game species and a furbearer. Male foxes, (both red and gray) are called “dogs” and females are known as “vixens”.

Like most foxes, gray foxes resemble small, slightly built dogs with bushy tails. The general coloration of a gray fox is a strikingly beautiful grizzled gray that appears on the face, sides and tail. Portions of the legs and lower sides as well as large areas of the neck, ears and bottom portion of the tail are a rusty, reddish color with white areas on the chin, belly and insides of the legs.

Adult gray foxes can weigh from about 6.5 to 15 pounds; generally though, a large male will weigh somewhere around 11 to 12 pounds, and males will be slightly larger than females. Total length measurements (body and tail) range from about 30 to 44 inches including the 11 to 17 inch tail.

A gray fox skull differs from all other North American canids by widely separated temporal ridges that form a U-shape.

The breeding season for gray foxes in New Jersey and the mid-Atlantic region usually occurs in February but within the gray fox’s geographic range this will vary somewhat; occurring earlier farther north and later in the south. Gestation takes about 53 days and the litter size is generally four to six young but can range from one to seven. Males assist the females in raising the young.

By about three months, the pups will begin to accompany their parents while they hunt. After about four months, the young will have their permanent teeth and will forage on their own. In autumn the family group will break up as the young reach maturity and disperse. Both male and female will reach sexual maturity by one year.

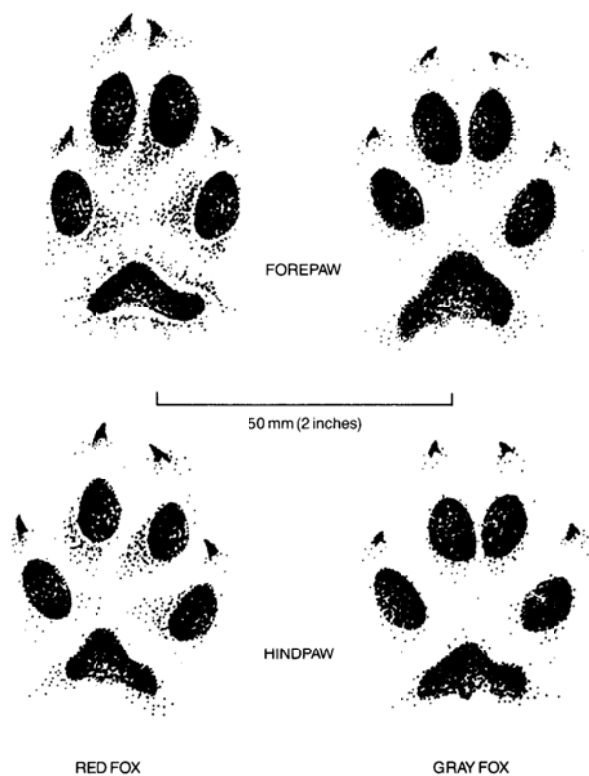
Gray foxes generally have a home range of about 500 acres, however, home range size varies and can be much larger, because as with other animals the lack or availability of prey and den sites may extend or limit home range size.

Gray foxes have a capability unique for a member of the dog family; this is their ability to climb trees. Their strong, hooked claws allow them to scramble up trees to avoid predators and to obtain fruit. They descend primarily by jumping from branch to branch. Gray foxes are nocturnal or crepuscular and they usually remain dened during the day in hollow trees, stumps or old woodchuck burrows.

The gray fox is generally a solitary hunter, but they may hunt as a pair, usually with a mate or offspring. They eat a wide variety of food types. The most important food source for the gray fox may be the cottontail but voles, field mice, shrews, and birds are readily eaten. The gray fox generally supplements its diet with whatever fruits are in season; generally utilizing more vegetable matter than the red fox.

Gray fox pelts are prime from late November to mid-February; peak primeness occurs during December.

The tracks of gray foxes are shorter and broader than those of the red fox. Distance between prints is also a bit closer. To some people, a gray fox print often appears similar to the track of a house cat except that the claw marks show. Hair between toes is evident in the track of the red fox track, especially in the snow- but not in the tracks of gray foxes. Take a look at the images on page 4 to see the differences in the track prints.



Comparison of Red Fox vs. Gray fox tracks

***Please Remember to Report Your Coyotes!***



*Coyotes harvested by any method must be reported to a New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife 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

### **Mange**

Mange. This term applies to several skin diseases in mammals that are caused by burrowing mites which are nearly invisible to the naked eye. Many trappers who regularly harvest red foxes or coyotes are familiar with what this disease looks like. Mites are not insects; instead they are more closely related to spiders. Sarcoptic mange, which will be discussed here, is caused by the mite, *Sarcoptes scabiei*, and is responsible for mange commonly seen by trappers in red foxes and coyotes. Wild cats rarely have sarcoptic mange nor do other furbearers to the degree it appears in red foxes or coyotes. Gray foxes don't seem to get it either. However, sarcoptic mange is contagious, and its effects are usually seen by trappers in wild members of the dog

family. Mange in those wild canid species predominantly affects younger animals and those not in peak health. Sarcoptic mange may be transmitted to people.

Adult *Sarcoptes scabiei* mites live 3 to 4 weeks in the host's skin. After mating, the female burrows into the skin, depositing 3 to 4 eggs in the tunnel behind her. The eggs hatch in 3 to 10 days, producing a larvae that in turn moves about on the skin surface, eventually molting into the nymphal stage and then finally into an adult. The adults move on the surface of the skin where they mate and the cycle begins again with the female burrowing and laying eggs.

Animals infected with sarcoptic mange experience itchiness, hair loss and crusty scabs which are often seen first on the head area, and thick, wrinkly skin. The skin damage and changes may cause blindness, impaired hearing, and difficulty in eating. In advanced cases, the animal will be weak, emaciated and smell foul which is a result of secondary infections brought on by constant scratching. In most cases a red fox or coyote will die of exposure, exhaustion, dehydration, or the secondary infections.

Unaffected animals pick up the parasites from direct contact with an infested animal or its den. Mange is nearly always fatal to red foxes and coyotes. As a side note- mange is treatable for domestic dogs and other pets and treatment usually includes clipping, medicated baths or sprays, and medication.

People can get mange. An infestation causes a rash that usually looks like pimples, but might appear as blisters or an inflammation and it most often first appears on the forearms, thighs, and abdomen. Generally, the mites die off, because they don't do as well on humans and although doctors don't usually attempt to kill the mites with drugs, they regularly offer patients medication to control the itching so the infected person doesn't scratch constantly, which might cause other infections.

To avoid infection please follow a few precautions when dealing with animals that obviously have mange. Always try to minimize contact with mangy animals. Avoid touching the animal if you can! A good tip to remember is that freezing and sub-freezing temperatures kill the mites and may be useful for decontaminating clothing or other gear. Also, about a 10% solution of chlorine bleach sprayed on or splashed on thoroughly will help de-contaminate equipment.

1. Wear disposable gloves.
2. Use a catch pole or other restraining device to touch and/or hold the animal. Wash promptly afterwards.
3. Always minimize your contact with infected equipment or clothing. Clean your gear if you think it may have picked up mites.



Please report any fisher or bobcat captures -  
**Call: 877-WARNDEP (877-927-6337)**




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