

Populations Steady for Upcoming Furbearer Hunting, Trapping Seasons

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COLUMBUS, OH – Ohio's annual furbearer hunting and trapping seasons begin on Nov. 10 for certain species. Good furbearer populations are expected this year, according to the Ohio Department of Natural Resources' (ODNR) Division of Wildlife.

"Following the mild winter of 2011-2012, most populations of furbearing species are doing very well," said ODNR Division of Wildlife Biologist Suzie Prange. "We anticipate fur takers will have a good season for most species."

Fox, raccoon, opossum, skunk and weasel hunting and trapping seasons are open Nov. 10 through Jan. 31, 2013. Mink and muskrat trapping seasons are open Nov. 10 through Feb. 28, 2013. However, raccoon, opossum, skunk, weasel, mink and muskrat trapping seasons will remain open through March 15, 2013, only in Erie, Ottawa and Sandusky counties as well as Lucas County east of the Maumee River.

Coyote hunting and trapping has no closed season with an unrestricted bag limit. Special hunting regulations for coyotes apply during the statewide deer-gun season, Nov. 26-Dec. 2 and Dec. 15-16, and deer-muzzleloader season, Jan. 5-8, 2013.

Beaver and river otter trapping seasons are open Dec. 26 through Feb. 28, 2013, and beaver trapping is open statewide.

For the eighth year, 43 counties will be open for river otter trapping. River otters were reintroduced into Ohio from 1986-1993 and have increased their range in the state. River otters were removed from Ohio's Endangered Species List in 2002. Full details of open counties as well as checking and permit requirements can be found in the Ohio River Otter Trapping Regulations or at wildohio.com.

There will be no daily bag limits or restrictions on hours for hunting and trapping furbearers, with the exception of river otters. River otter bag limits are dependent on the county where it was trapped.

A fur taker permit is required in addition to a valid Ohio hunting license to hunt or trap furbearing animals, except for coyotes, which may be hunted or trapped year-round without a fur taker permit. A special ODNR Division of Wildlife permit is required to trap beaver and river otter on state public hunting areas.

River otters that are accidentally captured, either in excess of bag limits or in closed counties, must be released unharmed. River otters that cannot be released must be turned over to ODNR Division of Wildlife. Beaver trappers in particular are advised to watch for river otter sign and modify set placements where necessary. The Ohio State Trappers Association and ODNR Division of Wildlife have published a guide on how to recognize river otter sign and use avoidance techniques while trapping for beaver in areas closed to river otter trapping. A copy of the publication can be ordered by calling 800-WILDLIFE.

Ohio is among the nation's leading producers of raw furs. Last year, 22,195 fur taker permits were sold in the state. The state currently has 65 licensed fur dealers.