



Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks Furharvester Activity Summary, 2015-16



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Licenses: A total of 7667 adult and 230 junior resident furharvesting licenses were sold in 2015. This is an 8% decrease from 2014, but also the 3rd most licenses sold since 1987 (behind 2013 and 2014). Licenses are valid for a calendar year (Jan 1-Dec 31), so changes in licenses sales related to last season's fur market will not likely be reflected in license sales until next season.

The season ends February 15th for badger, bobcat, red fox, gray fox, swift fox, mink, muskrat, opossum, raccoon, striped skunk and weasel. Beaver and otter may only be trapped, and their season runs through March 31.

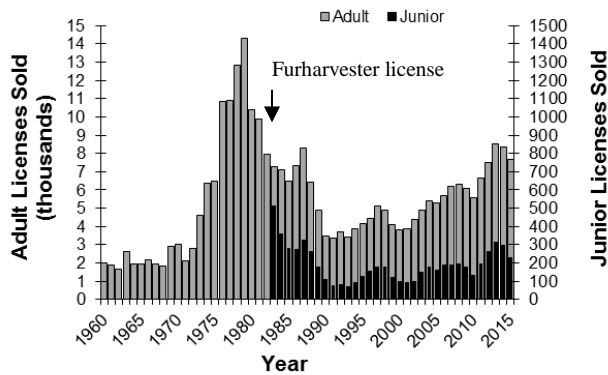


Figure 1. Resident furharvester license sales in KS, 1960-2015.

Historically, the raccoon has been the most important furbearer species in Kansas in terms of total harvest and pelt value, and season dates are set to roughly correspond with the time when raccoons are prime (Figure 3). In addition to ensuring the different species are conserved, emphasis is placed on having season open for all species at the same time – so a bobcat taken incidentally by a raccoon trapper in November can be kept, and a raccoon taken incidentally by a bobcat trapper in February can be kept. Last season, an estimated 175,269 user days were spent hunting and trapping furbearers in Kansas.

Unlimited nonresident furharvester licenses have been available in Kansas since 1983. Eighty-three were sold in 2015. This is the 4th most nonresident license sales on record, and represents 1.04% of all furharvester license sales.

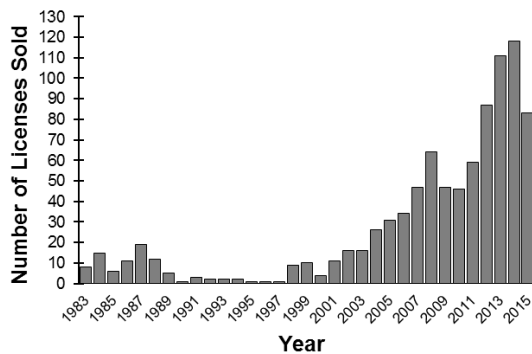


Figure 2. Nonresident furharvester license sales in Kansas, 1983-2015.

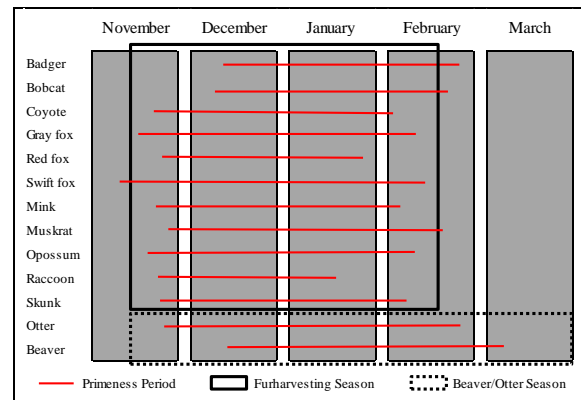


Figure 3. Pelt primeness dates for Kansas furbearers as indicated by Kansas furdealers.

Seasons: Furbearer hunting and trapping seasons open statewide the Wednesday following the second Saturday in November.

Harvest and Furdealer Purchases:

Total harvest and the number of furbearers purchased by Kansas furdealers are provided in Table 1. Harvest decreased from last year for nearly every species. Of particular note, the harvest of raccoon, typically our most important furbearer, fell by 50%, and harvest of coyote, which was our most

important furbearer this year, fell by only 9%. Gray fox harvest and purchases is also of note. The sample size for gray fox is now too small to have confidence in the results of the Harvest Survey, but the long-term decline in furdealer purchases is also alarming. The Dept. will be taking a closer look at alternative management options for this species in the near future.

Table 1. Furbearer Harvest and Furdealer Purchases of Kansas Furbearers, 2015-16.

Species	Total Harvest**	Total Purchases***	% Change in harvest from previous year
Badger	1602	289	-11%
Beaver	6262	500	-12%
Bobcat	2319*	877	-24%
Coyote	44,124	8165	-9%
Gray Fox	55	7	206%
Red Fox	427	86	-47%
Swift Fox	75*	1	-50%
Mink	226	7	-4%
Muskrat	5228	623	-43%
Opossum	24,538	1826	-43%
Otter	115*	17	-32%
Raccoon	51,250	8650	-45%
Skunk	9994	504	-23%

*From pelt tagging records rather than Furbearer Harvest Survey

**From annual Furbearer Harvest Survey

***From furdealer record books

Table 2. Pelt Values of Kansas Furbearers, 2015-16

Species	Average Pelt Price*	% Change from previous season*	% Change from 5-year average*
Badger	\$5.73	-32%	-44%
Beaver	\$5.65	-13%	-38%
Bobcat	\$39.36	-40%	-52%
Coyote	\$13.46	0%	12%
Gray Fox	\$15.00	0%	-18%
Red Fox	\$10.84	-33%	-41%
Swift Fox	\$7.38	n/a	-33%
Mink	\$7.83	-26%	-35%
Muskrat	\$2.03	-54%	-70%
Opossum	\$0.71	-43%	-16%
Otter	\$33.33	6%	-45%
Raccoon	\$2.86	-50%	-72%
Striped Skunk	\$1.69	32%	-11%

*From annual Furdealer Pelt Price and Primeness Survey

Pelt Values: Pelt values decreased substantially for many furbearer species compared to last season as well as compared to 5-year averages (Table 2). Coyote is the one species that has held its value recently, and this is certainly why coyote harvest levels have also been maintained in recent years. At 50% off last year's value and 72% off their 5-year average, raccoons were a tough sell this year.

Kansas furdealers purchased an estimated \$178,719 worth of pelts from furbearers harvested in Kansas in 2015-16. (This estimate does not include the value of pelts harvested in Kansas but sold out-of-state, including at fur auctions, or those kept for personal use.) This was an unusual market year in which coyote accounted for 61% of the total value of pelts sold (\$109,901). Bobcat was second most important, accounting for 19% of the value (\$34,519). Raccoon has traditionally been our most important furbearer in terms of total pelt value, but fell to just 14% (\$24,739). Beaver accounted for 1.6% (\$2,825) and no other species accounted for even 1% of the total value of pelts. As indicated in figure 4, our market today differs from a predominantly beaver/mink/muskrat market of the pre-1970's and the raccoon/bobcat market that developed in about 2000.

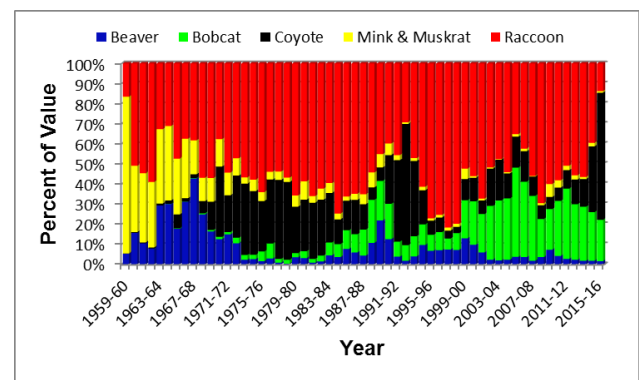


Figure 4. Relative cumulative value of select furbearers purchased by Kansas furdealers, 1959-2015.