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Contact your regional DEC office

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2020-2021 FINAL HARVEST NUMBERS

Check out the results from last year’s harvest!

Here are the reported number of harvests for fisher, otter, bobcat, and marten from the ’20-'21 mandatory pelt sealing program.

To learn more about harvest results in your specific county or town, visit our website here: https://www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/93855.html
River otter surveys are slated to return to the southern zone in the winter of 2021-22. Staff previously conducted surveys during the winters of 2016-17 and 2017-18 by walking 400 meters of shoreline to look for sign of otters including tracks, scat, slides, or otters themselves. In 2018, staff surveyed a total of 1,192 sites – that’s a lot of walking!

The objective of these surveys is to provide information on the status of river otter throughout the varying landscapes of the southern zone and to evaluate the central and western New York otter reintroduction efforts in the early 2000’s. Results of these surveys will help inform future river otter management decisions.
FISHER RESEARCH
CAMERA STUDY
Southern Zone

This past winter, DEC completed the third and final year of fisher camera surveys in central and western New York. In 2021 DEC staff surveyed a total of 603 sites. Photographs of fisher were collected at 78% of these sites. Analysis of the data from these surveys, along with data from surveys completed in 2013-2015, will allow DEC to better understand fisher density estimates, evaluate new seasons, and identify new areas for potential harvest opportunity in central/western NY.
FISHER RESEARCH

continued...

FISHER
DEMOGRAPHICS STUDY

Northern Zone

The second year of the northern zone fisher research project was completed this spring. The project aims to compare population drivers of the stable Tug Hill population to the declining Central Adirondack population. Our work will estimate key demographic parameters for fishers, including adult survival and reproductive rates, thus providing insight into potential limiting factors driving recent declines.

Wildlife staff and contract trappers live-trapped 26 fisher in region 5 and 30 fisher in region 6 during the 2020-2021 season.
During the handling process, a number of samples and measurements are collected including blood samples to test for rodenticide poisoning, as well as the hormone progesterone for all females. We are able to tell if a female is pregnant based on the level of this particular hormone. This information allows us to prioritize our tracking efforts and focus on studying denning individuals. During the 2020-2021 season, blood results suggested that 7 female fisher in the Adirondack study area and 6 fisher in the Tug Hill study area were pregnant. Another 3 females collared in the previous trapping season had the potential to have kits as well. Of these sixteen females, only 3 in the Tug Hill study area were confirmed to have kits.

Apart from den monitoring, we have continued to monitor survival of others through ground and aerial telemetry. Our research will continue through next summer, and we are planning on capturing more fisher at both study areas this fall/winter. This research is a collaborative effort between the NYSDEC and SUNY-ESF.
RESULTS FROM THE 2020 FISHER & MARTEN TRAPPING ACTIVITY LOG

Beginning in 2016, trappers were required to submit a fisher and marten activity log as a condition of the fisher/marten trapping permit. The close of the 2020 trapping season concluded the activity log obligation for fisher trapping, but a log is still required for marten trapping.

METHOD OF TAKE

Of the 1,984 reported fisher harvests in 2020, 274 were harvested using general land sets, while the other 1,710 were targeted using fisher/marten specific sets.

Of the 96 reported marten harvests, 18 were harvested using general lands sets and 79 were harvested using fisher/marten specific sets.
Earlier this year DEC proposed regulations that would remove the requirement for the free special fisher trapping permit. Unfortunately, due to a publication error, these regulations will not be adopted prior to the start of the 2021 trapping season. To simplify the process for trappers this season, DEC has created a self-issued fisher trapping permit for trappers.

We automatically sent fisher permits to those that applied for a Fisher or Fisher/Marten Trapping Permit in 2020. Trappers should have expected to receive these permits by mid-September. Please sign and date the permit and carry it with you when trapping. This permit can also be downloaded from DEC's website. Please help us spread the word by forwarding this information to any trappers you know who are interested in trapping fisher this season.

Trappers will not be required to submit the lower jaw, head, or carcass of any fisher taken during the 2021 trapping season. In addition, trappers do not have to complete or submit a Fisher Trapping Activity Log this season. Trappers do still need to have fisher sealed by DEC staff.

Please note that a separate permit is required for trappers wishing to pursue marten. Contact DEC's Region 5 Wildlife Office in Warrensburg at 518-623-1240 to obtain a marten trapping permit.

We encourage all trappers to stay involved by commenting on any proposed regulations, including the proposal to remove the special fisher trapping permit. For information on the proposed regulations and how to comment, visit DEC's website.

We thank trappers for their continued cooperation in helping us manage furbearer populations in New York.
Species that require pelt seals in NYS: fisher, marten and otter (trapped); bobcat (hunted or trapped)

You must obtain a pelt seal before:

- ten days have passed since the close of the season within the WMU where the fur was taken, or
- it is sold or ownership is transferred to another person, or
- it leaves NYS, or
- it is mounted or tanned
PELT SEALING FAQ

1. Where do I get a Furbearer Possession Tag?
Possession tags can be obtained from your regional DEC office or printed from the DEC website at www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/29046.html.

2. Do I have to attach the Furbearer Possession Tag to the carcass/pelt?
No. The completed possession tag needs to remain in possession of the trapper/hunter, OR with the pelt/unskinned animal.

3. Can you mail me the pelt seals?
No, pelt seals cannot be mailed. By DEC regulation, only DEC authorized staff can affix pelt seals to the carcass/pelt.

4. I want to get the harvested animal mounted; can I have my taxidermist skin the animal before it is sealed?
Yes, as long as arrangements are made by the trapper/hunter to have the pelt sealed before the end of the 10-day period after the season ends where the animal was harvested, and any required biological samples are turned in at the time of sealing. In most cases, NYSDEC staff are not able to travel to a taxidermist to seal pelts, and pelts must be taken to a DEC office to be sealed. The animal MAY NOT be mounted or tanned until the pelt seal is attached.

5. Who do I call to obtain a pelt seal?
To set up an appointment to have the carcass/pelt sealed, you can contact the regional DEC wildlife office.

6. Can I put more than one species on my Furbearer Possession Tag?
No, only one species should be listed per page. However, you may list multiple animals of the same species on the same page.

7. When can I remove the pelt seal?
Pelt seals can be removed once the pelt is processed for taxidermy, display, tanning, or manufacturing.
8. What happens if the pelt seal breaks?
If the pelt seal falls off or breaks, contact the regional DEC wildlife office for a replacement seal.

9. Are there special preparations that need to be made if I want to have a frozen animal/skin sealed?
If a skin will be frozen at the time it is presented for sealing, even if it hasn’t been removed from the carcass, a popsicle stick, pencil, dowel, or similar object should be inserted either from the mouth hole through one of the eye holes or through a front or hind foot before freezing. Make sure this hole is accessible after freezing. Removal of the stick at the time of sealing allows the seal to be inserted in the skin without thawing it out. NYSDEC staff may refuse to seal frozen skins which have not been prepared in this manner.

10. Is there anything that I need to do for dried pelts?
For animals that have been pelted, the seal is typically placed through an eye hole. For river otter or fisher, please place a pencil, dowel, popsicle stick, or similar object through both eye holes before drying. When using wire stretchers, make sure to remove the skin from the stretcher before sealing occurs.

11. Can I keep a roadkill fisher, marten, river otter, or bobcat that I find?
If the trapping or hunting season is open for the species in a WMU, you may keep a dead furbearer found on roads within that WMU. You must have a valid hunting or trapping license for the season/species in question, complete a furbearer possession tag and obtain a pelt seal for that animal.
BEST OF PHOTOS