

2005-06 Furbearer Harvest Survey

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2005-06 Furbearer Harvest Survey

Prepared by Matt Peek, Furbearer Biologist

The Furbearer Harvest Survey (FHS) is mailed to furharvesters at the end of the trapping season. Since 2001, 70% of the furharvester license holders from each of nine physiographic provinces in Kansas have been surveyed. Two mailings are conducted, with the second being sent to all nonrespondents of the first. The format and questions of the survey have been the same since 1983. The questionnaire is divided into 5 sections: general information, trapping activities, hunting activities, running activities, and a special section.

Information provided by furharvesters is an estimate of their harvest and activities during the season. Results from bobcat and swift fox pelt tagging have always been lower than the harvest estimates derived from the FHS, suggesting an overestimate by the FHS. Consequently, harvest figures obtained from this survey should be considered representative of annual harvest indices rather than parameters.

Survey recipient names were randomly selected from a list of internet license sales rather than the paper receipts from license sales books that had been used in the past. This allowed for the survey to be conducted near the end of the season rather than months afterward - and likely was a major factor in a dramatically increased response rate from previous years' surveys. There were a total of 5504 furbearer licenses sold in 2005, included 5314 resident licenses, 159 junior residents, and 31 nonresidents. The first mailing was sent to 3602 furharvesters on March 7, 2006, and a second mailing was sent to 2577 furharvesters on March 24, 2006. A total of 1921 usable surveys were returned, for a final response rate (after removal of nondeliverable surveys) of 54.7%. The number of responses and the response rate of furharvesters within each physiographic province can be found in Figure 1.

Survey results were extrapolated to represent total harvest and activity. Seventy-one percent of the respondents indicated they participated in furharvesting activities during the 2005-06 season (i.e. were active). Estimated furharvester distribution based on the county in which they conducted most of their furharvesting activities can be found in Figure 2. The mean age of active furharvesters was 43 years old, with a range from 11 to 89 years. Age distribution can be found in Figure 3.

Furharvesters spent an estimated 162,500 user days in pursuit of furbearers, including 88,700 days trapping, 53,500 days hunting, and 20,300 days running. These figures represent an increase of less than 1% in combined user days from the previous season. Trappers, hunters, and runners spent an average of 36, 20, and 33 days afield, respectively. Participation in various combinations of furharvesting activities is presented in Table 1. As has been the case in recent years, approximately half of all license buyers hunt and half trap. Far fewer license buyers run furbearers, as many of the "hunters" are predator callers or opportunistic shooters rather than houndsmen.

Harvest, participation, and activity levels for trapping, hunting and running are presented in Tables 2-4, respectively. Trappers accounted for the majority of harvest for all species except for coyote. Trappers had the highest success per 100 trap nights capturing beaver, muskrat, raccoon, and opossum. Far more hunters pursued coyotes than any other species, but total harvest and harvest per trapper was much higher for raccoon than any other species.

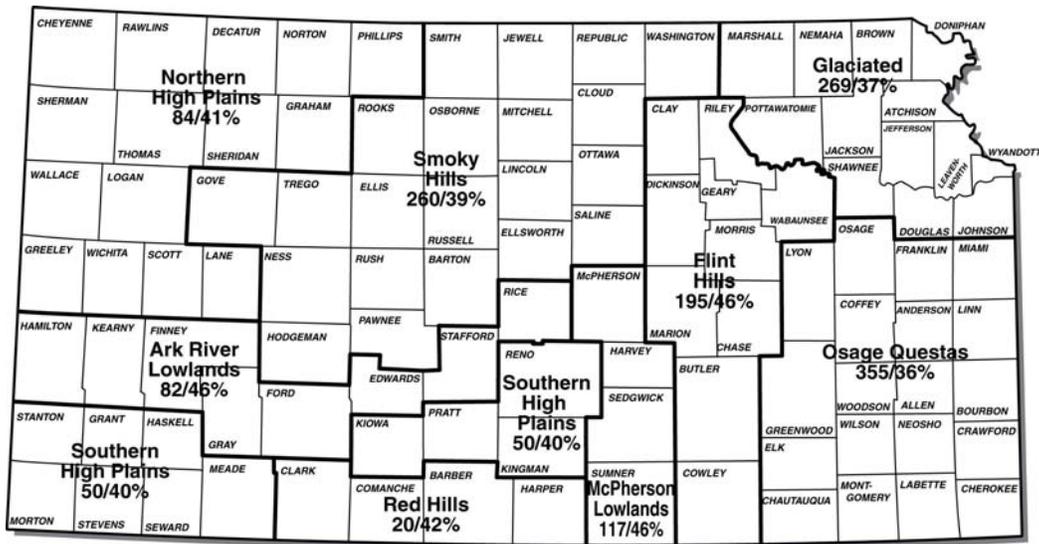


Figure 1. The number of survey respondents (number) and the response rate of furharvesters (percent) within each physiographic province in Kansas.

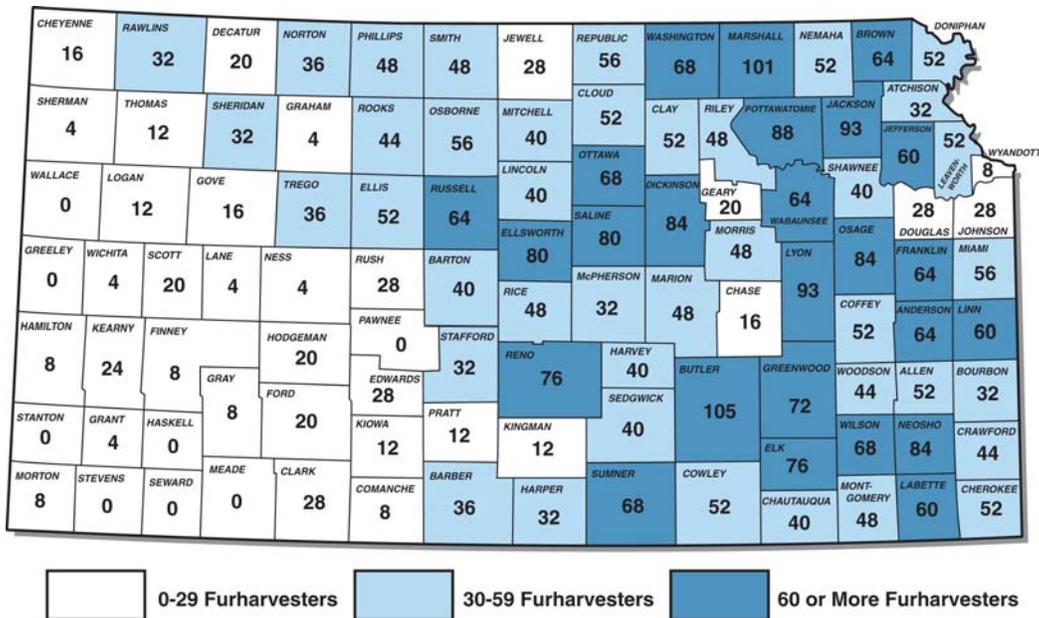


Figure 2. Estimated furharvester distribution in Kansas based on the county in which active survey respondents conducted most of their furharvesting activities.

Historical furbearer harvest in Kansas based on the Furbearer Harvest Survey can be found in Table 5. The harvest trend relative to the previous 5 years' harvest data is also found in this table. Beaver, red fox, swift fox, mink and raccoon harvests declined from their 5 year averages, while harvest for other species increased. Harvest of all species except for bobcat and muskrat decreased from the previous year, reflecting the strength of the pelt market for these species within an otherwise generally weakening pelt market.

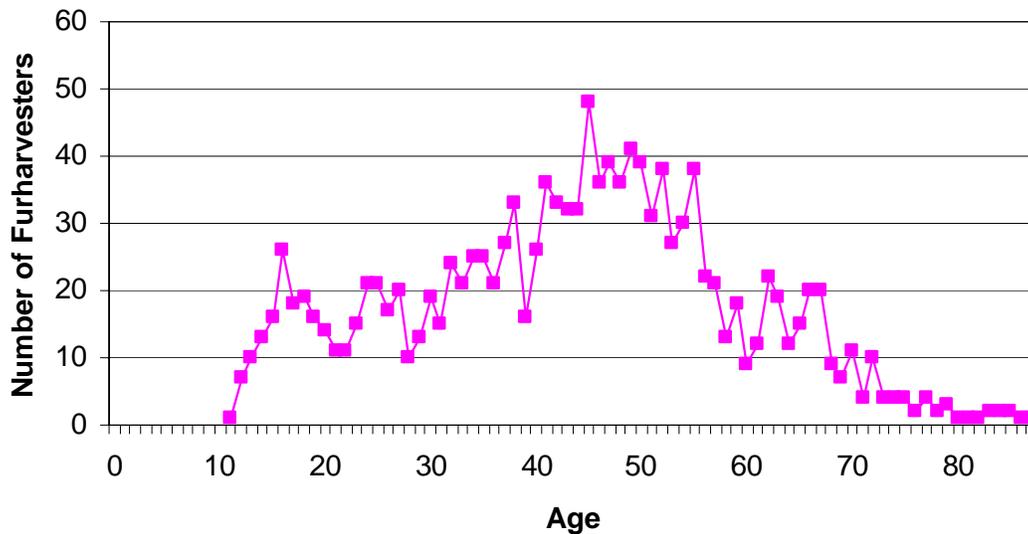


Figure 3. Age distribution of active Kansas furharvesters during the 2005-06 season.

Table 1. Number and percent of furharvesters who participated in each possible combination of furharvesting activities, and total participation in trapping, hunting and running.

Activity	Number of Furharvesters	Percent of Furharvesters
Inactive	555	28.9
Trap only	424	31.0
Hunt only	357	26.1
Run only	7	0.5
Trap and hunt	347	25.4
Trap and run	17	1.2
Hunt and run	143	10.5
Trap, hunt and run	68	5.0
Total Participation		
Total trappers	856	62.7
Total hunters	915	67.0
Total runners	235	17.2

Table 2. Harvest, participation, and activity levels for trappers in Kansas during the 2005-06 harvest season.

Species	Number of Trappers Who Pursued (n)	Estimated Harvest	Total Days Traps Set	Ave Traps/Day	Captures/100 Trap Days	Maximum Harvest	Ave Harvest/Trapper
Badger	178	1,146	5,210	14.7	4.8	25	2.2
Beaver	322	7,186	6,320	7.62	13.9	75	7.8
Bobcat	487	6,192	16,176	12.8	2.9	50	4.4
Coyote	409	10,896	13,021	14.7	3.8	127	9.3
Red Fox	85	410	2,448	20.3	4.3	10	1.7
Gray Fox	29	89	763	18	4.0	5	1.1
Swift Fox	20	132	718	19.5	4.0	20	2.3
Mink	54	206	1,732	13.7	2.6	10	1.3
Muskrat	165	5,733	3,137	10.8	17.6	280	12.1
Opossum	569	37,345	18,355	15	8.4	700	22.9
Raccoon	712	46,275	21,728	14.4	10.0	346	22.7
Skunk	403	12,421	13,401	16.2	4.1	250	10.8
Weasel	2	3	-	6	-	1	0.5

Table 3. Harvest, participation, and activity levels for hunters in Kansas during the 2005-06 harvest season.

Species	Number of Hunters Who Pursued (n)	Estimated Harvest	Harvest/100 Days	Maximum Harvest	Ave Harvest/Hunter
Badger	35	166	35.2	13	1.7
Bobcat	310	1,266	22.9	20	1.4
Coyote	588	10,962	54.6	128	6.5
Red Fox	19	49	46.1	3	0.9
Gray Fox	4	0	0.0	0	0.0
Swift Fox	3	3	3.3	1	0.3
Opossum	60	1,564	69.7	93	9.1
Raccoon	315	20,052	110.7	338	22.2
Skunk	28	309	51.1	11	3.9

Table 4. Harvest, participation, and activity levels for furharvesters in Kansas during the 2005-06 running season.

Species	Number of Runners Who Pursued (n)	Estimated Take*	Take/100 Days*	Maximum Take*	Ave Take/Runner*
Bobcat	19	198	30.0	18	3.6
Red Fox	2	60	17.2	20	10.5
Gray Fox	1	3	16.7	1	1.0
Opossum	30	2,742	176.6	500	31.9
Raccoon	206	21,532	129.4	600	36.5

*Take refers to the number of animals "seen or treed" while running.

Table 5. Historical harvest of furbearers in Kansas based on Furbearer Harvest Survey (FHS).

Seasons	Badger	Beaver	Bobcat Tagging *	Bobcat	Coyote	Gray Fox	Red Fox	Swift Fox Tagging *	Swift Fox	Mink	Muskrat	Opossum	Raccoon	Striped Skunk	Weasel
1969-70	311	8583		373	9758	81	193			2189	43773	10452	63004	2466	28
1970-71															
1971-72															
1972-73	305	5178		458	13385	102	508			1508	27828	11421	46101	3174	
1973-74															
1974-75															
1975-76	1202	6484		1454	30150	539	638			1875	51083	45994	102760	8703	
1976-77															
1977-78	4054	5826		1705	35138	141	703			1764	38167	45625	74731	9824	
1978-79	4530	5315	825	1705	50195	193	533			2192	36639	51156	101450	15184	
1979-80	5882	19140	1050	1955	51380	245	888			3378	75962	56937	133311	23297	
1980-81	2501	14939	1027	1966	35238	274	645			3304	59063	49741	94754	16495	
1981-82	2673	5440	882	1730	32310	171	672			2342	30703	59916	93823	15917	
1982-83	3708	7653	1014	1686	36526	247	795		1000	3583	49528	58138	87425	11453	
1983-84	1754	8908	1334	2471	31466	93	1193		740	1600	21791	19347	67042	4985	
1984-85	1774	11814	1869	3212	33066	122	876		426	1937	24863	31142	108694	6806	
1985-86	1348	15543	1916	2837	34418	117	487		314	1507	15241	30955	96708	6909	
1986-87	3009	14732	2720	4522	40999	107	961		1161	2571	25561	59190	119488	10460	21
1987-88	2402	12474	3192	4805	41460	123	1113		650	2619	33814	54714	118878	8847	23
1988-89	1417	13989	2878	4492	25387	235	672		442	1545	22822	24117	72028	4233	5
1989-90	476	9607	1560	2482	15314	30	462		264	630	7114	9775	38274	2043	4
1990-91	442	5214	1409	1694	11968	34	242		76	423	4083	5493	27137	1258	0
1991-92	571	5429	2043	2453	15941	77	509		93	713	3043	12427	43977	3576	0
1992-93	687	3044	1618	2307	16076	59	328		64	252	2115	8101	33710	3125	2
1993-94	649	5288	2413	2900	16595	55	731		73	368	2571	12727	48203	2610	146
1994-95	781	12123	3590	5352	17022	204	1003	48	34	746	6215	19692	64951	4131	9
1995-96	522	8089	3020	3932	14009	99	753	33	45	291	3598	16120	58600	2877	2
1996-97	874	10653	4296	7041	19794	179	1232	33	144	473	5451	29980	93190	8065	40
1997-98	876	13337	3347	6233	14398	71	823	17	25	718	9679	49437	108727	9323	101
1998-99	958	8606	2385	3938	12125	152	490	7	15	419	7445	26512	71709	6375	107
1999-00	451	8845	2121	3578	11920	191	455	5	0	257	7252	13051	51307	3887	11
2000-01	1094	9388	2731	4018	15054	97	559	6	24	164	3964	14294	56143	5460	0
2001-02	434	9617	3597	5286	15329	35	584	32	0	180	3348	17080	72918	5559	0
2002-03	910	7716	5054	6521	18577	62	578	86	203	246	4596	32595	79538	10255	0
2003-04	1760	7250	5963	9654	25407	64	625	178	470	303	2823	42125	94506	10952	40
2004-05	1469	7737	5353	7062	23322	140	783	86	129	230	4845	43356	84132	10910	0
2005-06	1312	7186	6021	7458	21861	89	459	58	135	206	5733	38909	66458	12730	3
5 yr trend	15.8%	-13.9%	32.6%	14.6%	11.9%	11.8%	-26.7%	-25.3%	-18.3%	-8.3%	46.4%	30.2%	-14.2%	47.6%	-

* Bobcat and swift fox pelt tagging values are based on tagging records whereas bobcat and swift fox harvest are estimates based on FHS.

Special Section

The “Special Section” of the Furbearer Harvest Survey changes annually and is used to collect information and opinions from furharvesters on a diversity of topics that relate to furharvesting or furbearers. Past surveys have addressed subjects such as wildlife diseases, trap ownership and use, and regulatory preferences. Last year, river otter and spotted skunk observations were addressed.

The 2005-06 Special Section requested information from furharvesters on the handling and disposition of pelts. Furharvesters were first asked how they handle most of their furbearer pelts prior to sale (Table 6.). They were then asked to indicate all the ways in which they marketed the furbearers they harvested (Table 7). Of these options, they were asked to select the one in which they sold *most* of the furbearers they harvested (Table 8). Kansas furdealers were selected by the most individuals as a source where they marketed pelts (63%), and were also the most important marketing source for almost ¾’s of respondents, indicating that furdealers in Kansas are a very important link between Kansas Furharvesters and the pelt trade. This assessment is further supported by the initial table indicating 40% of furharvester sell their furbearers unskinned – Kansas furdealers offer one of the few available and practical markets for unskinned furbearers.

Of those furharvesters who skinned but did not finish their pelts, furdealers (Kansas and out-of-state combined) were the most important marketing source for 82% of respondents, while the Kansas Fur Harvesters Association (KFHA) auction was the most important marketing source for 12% of respondents. Of those who fully finished most of their pelts, major international auctions and Kansas furdealers were the most important marketing source for an equal percent of respondents (32% each), while the KFHA auction was most important to another 14% of respondents.

Table 6. Number and percent of Kansas furharvesters who handled most of their pelts prior to sale in the following ways (n=1091).

Way in which most pelts were handled prior to sale:	Number of Furharvesters	Percent of Furharvesters
Unskinned (sold on the carcass)	437	40.1
Skinned (but not finished)	399	36.6
Finished (skinned, fleshed & dried)	255	23.4

Table 7. Number and percent of Kansas furharvesters who marketed their furbearers in each of the ways provided (n=1158).

Ways in which Furharvesters marketed their harvest:	Number of Furharvesters	Percent of Furharvesters
I sold to a Kansas furdealer.	734	63.4
I sold to a furdealer outside of Kansas.	58	5.0
I sold at the Kansas Fur Harvesters Assoc. auction(s).	65	5.6
I sold at some other state trapper assoc. auction (i.e. MO or OK)	11	0.9
I shipped to major North American auction house (NAFA or FHA)	65	5.6
I have pelts tanned for sale	30	2.6
I kept pelts for personal use.	352	30.4

Table 8. Number and percent of Kansas furharvesters who marketed their furbearers in each of the ways provided (n=589).

Ways in which Furharvesters marketed MOST of their harvest:	Number of Furharvesters	Percent of Furharvesters
I sold to a Kansas furdealer.	440	74.7
I sold to a furdealer outside of Kansas.	22	3.74
I sold at the Kansas Fur Harvesters Assoc. auction(s).	42	7.13
I sold at some other state trapper assoc. auction (i.e. MO or OK)	4	0.68
I shipped to major North American auction house (NAFA or FHA)	44	7.47
I have pelts tanned for sale	4	0.68
I kept pelts for personal use.	33	5.6

Appendix 1.

2005-06 Furbearer Harvest Survey

GENERAL INFORMATION

1. Did you hunt or trap furbearers during the 2005-06 season, or did you run furbearers in 2005 (circle answer)? YES NO
2. Did you hunt or trap furbearers during the PAST 2004-05 season, or did you run furbearers in 2004 (circle answer)? YES NO

If you answered "NO" to question 1, please return your survey. Even though you did not furharvest this year, your response is important, and we thank you.

3. In which County did you do most of your furharvesting in 2005-06? _____
4. Your Age: _____

TRAPPING

5. How many calendar days did you TRAP? _____ days
6. Please record for each species: total number of animals trapped (INCLUDE ALL ANIMALS, EVEN IF THEY WERE NOT SOLD), total number of days (24 hr periods) traps were set, and the average number of traps set per day for each particular species even if you were trapping for more than one species. Here's an example: *you trapped raccoons for 45 days and each day you had 2 dozen traps set in shallow water. During that time you caught 25 raccoons and 4 muskrats.* See the example below on how to fill the table.

2005-06 Season Only

Species	Total number of animals trapped	Total number of days traps were set	Average number of traps set per day
<i>example: Raccoon</i>	25	45	24
<i>example: Muskrat</i>	4	45	24
Badger			
Beaver			
Bobcat			
Coyote			
Gray Fox			
Red Fox			
Swift Fox			
Mink			
Muskrat			
Opossum			
Raccoon			
Striped Skunk			
Weasel			

HUNTING

7. How many total calendar days did you HUNT? _____ days
8. Please record for each species: total number of animals taken (INCLUDING ANIMALS NOT SOLD) and the total number of days or nights you hunted. Example: *you called coyotes for 10 days and killed 5 coyotes. Then at other times, you hunted raccoons with hounds for 5 nights and killed 3 raccoons.* See the example below on how to fill the table.

2005-06 Season Only

Species	Number of Animals Taken	Number of Days or Nights Hunted
<i>example: Coyote</i>	5	10
<i>example: Raccoon</i>	3	5
Badger		
Bobcat		
Coyote		
Gray Fox		
Red Fox		
Swift Fox		
Opossum		
Raccoon		
Striped Skunk		

RUNNING / HOUND TRAINING

9. How many total calendar days did you RUN furbearers? _____ days
10. Please record for each species: total number of animals SEEN or TREED and the total number of days or nights of running effort.

2005 Season Only

Species	Number of Animals Treed	Number of Days or Nights Hunted
<i>example: Raccoon</i>	25	50
Bobcat		
Gray Fox		
Red Fox		
Opossum		
Raccoon		

Please complete and return this survey within 5 days. Thank you.

SPECIAL SECTION

Pelt Handling and Disposition

As part of an effort to better understand the fur trade in Kansas, I would like to request information on how you handled and marketed the furbearers you harvested during the 2005-06 season. Your response is confidential, and will only be used to estimate the activities of furharvesters as a group.

11. How did you handle most of your furbearer pelts prior to sale? (check one box)
 - I sold most of the furbearers I harvested on the carcass (unskinned).
 - I skinned most of the furbearers I harvested, but did not flesh or dry them.
 - I fully finished most of the furbearers I harvested (i.e. skinned, fleshed and dried).
12. Where did you market the furbearers you harvested? (check ALL that apply.)
 - I sold directly to a Kansas furdealer (fur buyer) either at his place of business or at one of his pick-up locations in Kansas.
 - I sold directly to a furdealer at some location outside of Kansas.
 - I sold pelts at the Kansas Fur Harvesters Assoc. auction(s) in Abeline.
 - I sold pelts at some other state trapper assoc. auction (i.e. MO or OK).
 - I shipped my fur to a major North American auction house such as North American Fur Auctions (NAFA) or Fur Harvesters Auction.
 - I have pelts tanned for sale.
 - I kept my pelts for personal use or did not harvest any saleable pelts.
13. Of the options listed in question 12 above, please circle the one box indicating where you sold MOST of the furbearers you harvested in 2005-06. (i.e. Which one marketing option was most important to you in terms of the number of animals sold?)

OTHER INFORMATION

Last year's Harvest Survey Report (including river otter and spotted skunk data), Bobcat Pelt Tagging Report, and annual Roadside Furbearer Survey can be found on the KDWP web site at: http://www.kdwp.state.ks.us/news/other_services/research/wildlife_research_surveys

KDWP is still trying to collect information on the status and distribution of spotted skunks and river otters. Please contact me at mattp@wp.state.ks.us or by phone at (620) 342-0658 if you observe these species or their sign.

The National Trappers Association's 47th National Convention will be held at the Kansas State Fair Grounds in Hutchinson, KS on August 3-6, 2006. For more information, visit the NTA website: <http://www.nationaltrappers.com/>.

I often receive requests for the information in the Furbearer Status and Harvest table on the other side of this survey. This table is posted on the web at the KDWP site listed above.