

# **2015-16 OTTER PELT TAGGING REPORT**

## PERFORMANCE REPORT STATEWIDE WILDLIFE RESEARCH AND SURVEYS

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The 2015-16 furbearer harvest season was the fifth in which river otter harvest was allowed in Kansas in modern times. The season is open statewide concurrent with beaver season (Nov 18, 2015-Mar 31, 2016). The first two seasons, there was a 100 otter quota, which has been eliminated for the last two seasons. In all five seasons, a 2 otter per trapper bag limit has been in place.

Like bobcats, river otters are CITES Appendix II (“look-alike”) species, and therefore must be pelt tagged. The pelt tagging process is accomplished with tags provided by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Office of Management Authority, under the CITES Export Tag Program. In 2015, Kansas used white “KS ROTR” tags below number 0001280. A total of 47 KDWPT employees and offices were issued tags for the 2015-16 furharvesting season. These were mostly in or near the primary otter range, but tags were also maintained by regional and district offices as well as the Pratt Operations Office.

CITES tags were affixed to the pelts of 116 otters taken in Kansas during the season. One of these otters was taken during season by Nuisance Animal Damage Control (NADC) permittee who had already harvested 2 otters. Two additional otters were taken by NADC permittees after the season. These two otters are not included in this report. The number of otters taken annually since the otter season was opened is provided in **Figure 1**. This figure includes those otters incidentally taken after a 100 otter quota was reached the first two seasons.

Otters were taken in 21 counties. These counties are shown in **Figure 2**. Greenwood county was the only new county where an otter had not been previously harvested during season. The number of otters taken each day of the season is presented in **Figure 3**.

Otters may be taken using trapping equipment authorized in K.A.R. 115-5-1 or salvaged during the harvest season. A total of 75 furharvesters took otters. This included 35 individuals who took 1 otter, 39 who took 2, and 1 who took 3 (the third being by NADC permit). **Table 1** provides a break down of the methods furharvesters used to take otters and the primary species the trap was intended for at the time the otter was taken. **Table 2** provides the location from which otters were taken.

After the initial tag allocation, tag accountability was maintained via reports from KDWPT employees or offices issued tags. After the season, each was responsible for inventorying unused tags and accounting for all tags they were issued. Unused tags were then destroyed, retained by each tagger, or returned to the Emporia office.

Figure 1. Number of otters pelt tagged annually since the season was opened in 2011.

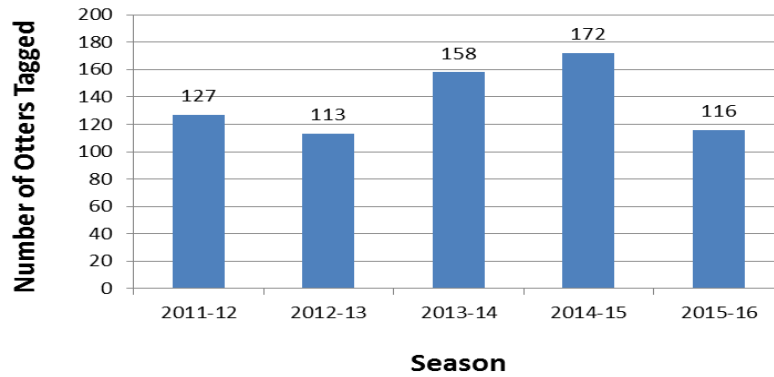


Figure 2. Counties from which otters have been taken during the first four harvest seasons in Kansas.

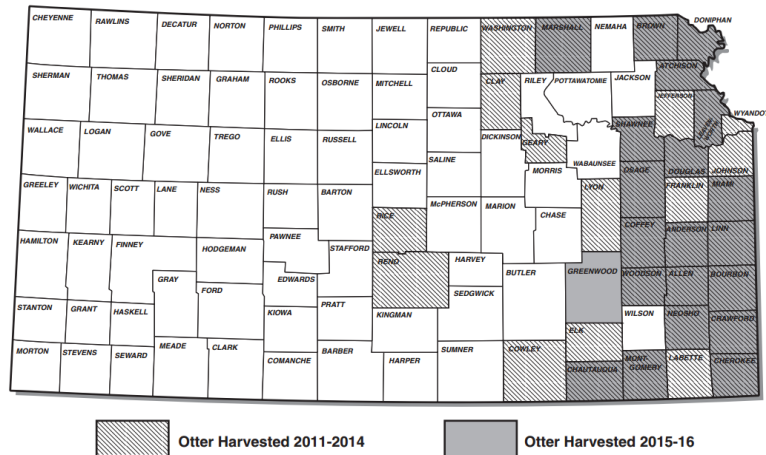


Figure 3. Reported number of otters taken per day during the 2015-16 furharvesting season (n=116).

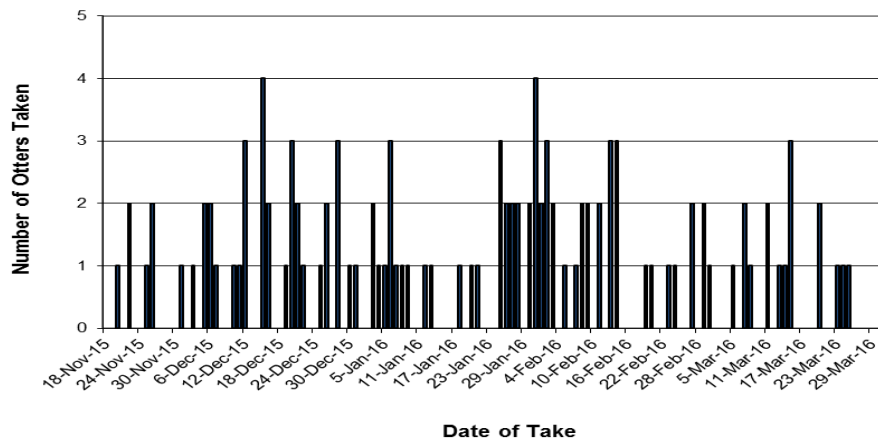


Table 1. Method of harvest and the primary species being trapped when otters were taken during the 2015-16 furharvesting season in Kansas.

Method of Harvest	Target Species							Subtotal	
	Otter	Beaver	Raccoon	Muskrat	Bobcat	Coyote	Salvage	Number	Percent
Foothold Trap	8	4		1	2	1		16	13.8
Bodygrip Trap	56	29						85	73.3
Cage Trap		2	1					3	2.6
Snare	2	5	1					8	6.9
Salvage							4	4	3.4
Subtotal Number	66	40	2	1	2	1	4	116	
Percent	56.9	34.5	1.7	0.9	1.7	0.9	3.4		100.0

Table 2. Location from which otters were taken during the 2015-16 furharvesting season in Kansas.

Harvest Location	Minimum Number of Unique Locations	Number of Otters	Percent of Otters
River	6	18	15.5
Creek	27	35	30.2
Pond	24	38	32.8
Strip Pit	5	7	6.0
Wildlife Area or Marsh	5	11	9.5
Drainage Ditch	2	2	1.7
Unspecified/Other	4	5	4.3
	73	116	100.0

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