



# Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks Furharvester Activity Summary, 2011-12



Matt Peek, furbearer biologist

**Licenses:** A total of 6625 adult and 193 junior resident furharvesting licenses were sold in 2011. This is a 19% increase from 2010, and a 11% increase from the 5-year average. It is also the most licenses sold since 1987.

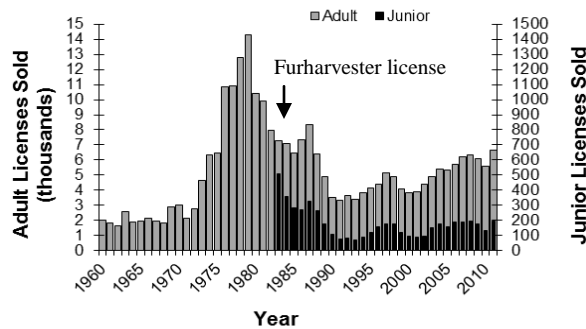


Figure 1. Resident furharvester license sales in KS, 1960-2011.

Nonresident furharvester licenses have been available in Kansas since 1983. Fifty-nine were sold in 2011. The most nonresident license sales on record was 64 in 2008.

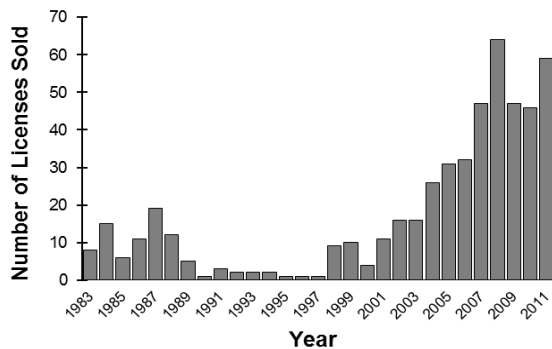


Figure 2. Nonresident furharvester license sales in Kansas, 1983-2011.

**Seasons:** Furbearer hunting and trapping seasons open statewide the Wednesday following the second Saturday in November. 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, or in the case of otter, when the 100 otter quota is reached.

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, over 190,000 user days were spent hunting and trapping furbearers in Kansas.

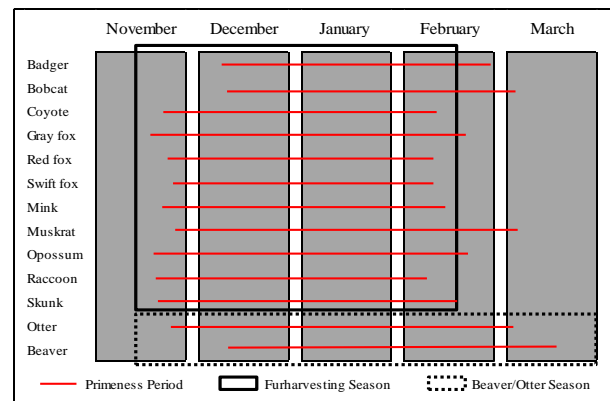


Figure 3. Pelt primeness dates for Kansas furbearers as indicated by Kansas furdealers.

### **Harvest and Furdealer Purchases:**

Total harvest and the number of furbearers purchased by furdealers are provided in Table 1. Change in harvest from last season was variable by species. Bobcat harvest increased by nearly a quarter reflecting a substantial increase in pelt value, raccoon harvest was similar despite reports of major distemper die-offs in some areas, and muskrat (and incidentally mink) harvest fell

by almost half likely due to drought in many areas. Additionally, the unusually mild and dry winter in most of the state allowed furharvesters to keep dryland sets operational throughout much of the season, and likely influenced the species they pursued.

**Table 1. Furbearer Harvest and Furdealer Purchases of Kansas Furbearers, 2011-12.**

Species	Total Harvest**	Total Purchases***	% Change in harvest from previous year
Badger	1591	544	-16%
Beaver	9191	2292	-6%
Bobcat	5918*	3529	23%
Coyote	36,460	6732	-7%
Grey Fox	54	20	26%
Red Fox	732	217	-26%
Swift Fox	113*	37	163%
Mink	201	69	-43%
Muskrat	8282	3000	-45%
Opossum	43,758	2823	-9%
Otter	127*	39	-
Raccoon	101,924	41,949	4%
Skunk	14,060	863	10%

\*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, 2011-12**

Species	Average Pelt Price*	Average KFHA Auction Pelt Price **	% Change from previous season*
Badger	\$11.83	\$14.94	32%
Beaver	\$10.03	\$10.68	40%
Bobcat	\$81.57	\$139.46	39%
Coyote	\$11.22	\$17.01	72%
Gray Fox	\$20.60	-	39%
Red Fox	\$17.52	\$35.37	54%
Swift Fox	\$10.50	-	17%
Mink	\$13.53	\$11.00	39%
Muskrat	\$5.83	\$7.24	30%
Opossum	\$0.80	\$0.36	33%
Otter	\$69.17	-	-
Raccoon	\$9.98	\$6.57	12%
Striped Skunk	\$2.38	\$1.43	18%

\*From annual Furdealer Pelt Price and Primeness Survey.

\*\*From Kansas Fur Harvesters Assoc. Auctions (Dec. 17, 2011, Jan. 21 & Feb 18, 2012).

**Pelt Values:** For the second consecutive year, pelt values increased substantially for many furbearer species (Table 2). In fact, most species saw increases of over 30%. Notably, bobcat, which has been a major influence on furbearer harvest levels in recent years, increased by 39%, and coyote, which is usually our 3<sup>rd</sup> most important species in total pelt value, increased by 72%. Raccoon saw the smallest change, but still increased by 12%.

Kansas furdealers purchased an estimated \$842,000 worth of pelts from furbearers harvested in Kansas in 2011-12. (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.) Raccoon is by far the most important furbearer in terms of total pelt value, accounting for about 50% (\$418,700) of the total value of pelts harvested in Kansas. Bobcat remained second most important, accounting for 34% of the value (\$287,900). Coyote (9%; \$75,500), beaver (3%; \$23,000) and muskrat (2%; \$17,500) were the only other species that accounted for more than 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.

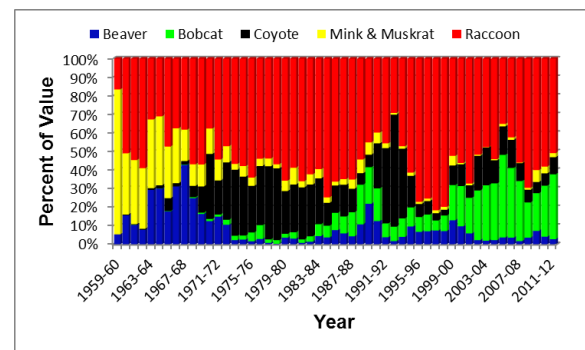


Figure 4. Relative cumulative value of select furbearers purchased by Kansas furdealers, 1959-2011.