

2014-15 OTTER PELT TAGGING REPORT

PERFORMANCE REPORT STATEWIDE WILDLIFE RESEARCH AND SURVEYS

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Robin Jennison
Secretary

Prepared by

Matt Peek
Furbearer Biologist



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The 2014-15 furbearer harvest season was the fourth in which river otter harvest was allowed in Kansas in modern times. The season is open statewide concurrent with beaver season (Nov 12, 2014-Mar 31, 2015). The first two seasons, there was a 100 otter quota, which has been eliminated for the last two seasons. In all four 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 2014, Kansas used white “KS ROTR” tags below number 0001060. A total of 45 KDWPT employees and offices were issued tags for the 2014-15 furharvesting season. These were mostly in or near the primary otter range, but tags were also maintained by each of the 5 regional offices and the Pratt Operations Office.

CITES tags were affixed to the pelts of 169 otters taken in Kansas during the season. Two additional otters were taken during season by Nuisance Animal Damage Control (NADC) permittees, and one additional otter was salvaged by KDWPT after the season. During the first three seasons, 132, 129 and 158 otters were taken respectively (including those incidentally taken after the 100 otter quota was reached the first two seasons).

Otters were taken in 21 counties. These counties are shown in **Figure 1**. This included five counties where otters had not been harvested in the past four years: Lyon, Montgomery, Reno, Shawnee and Wyandotte. The number of otters taken each day of the season is presented in **Figure 2**.

Otters may be taken using trapping equipment authorized in K.A.R. 115-5-1 or salvaged during the harvest season. A total of 105 furharvesters took otters. This included 41 individuals who took 1 otter and 64 who took 2. **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. Counties from which otters have been taken during the first four harvest seasons in Kansas.

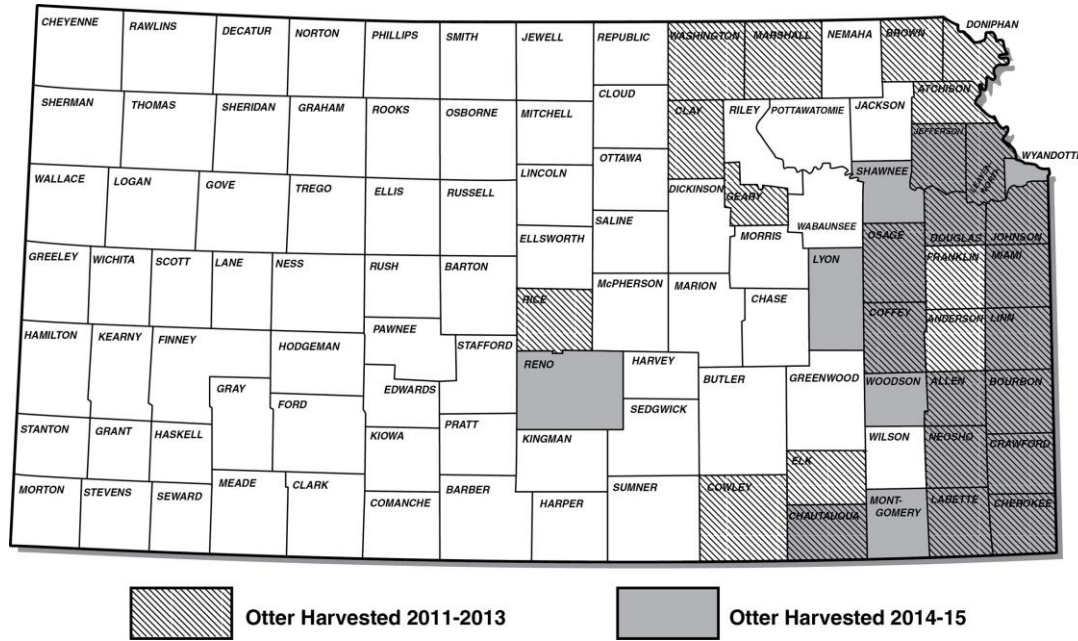


Figure 2. Reported number of otters taken per day during the 2014-15 furharvesting season (n=171).

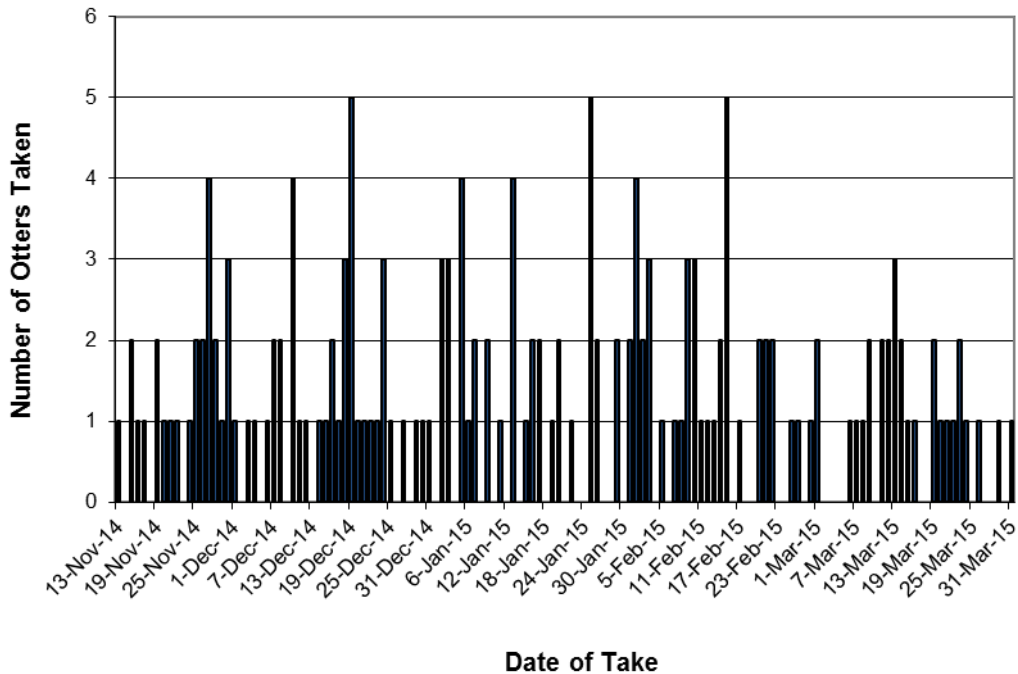


Table 1. Method of harvest and the primary species being trapped when otters were taken during the 2014-15 furharvesting season in Kansas.

Method of Harvest	Target Species							Subtotal	
	Otter	Beaver	Raccoon	Mink	Muskrat	Bobcat	Salvage	Number	Percent
Foothold Trap	6	6	5	2				19	11.1
Bodygrip Trap	66	68	2		2			138	80.7
Cage Trap	1	2				1		4	2.3
Snare	3	3						6	3.5
Salvage							3	3	1.8
Other	1							1	0.6
Subtotal Number	77	79	7	2	2	1	3	171	
Percent	47.0	48.2	4.3	1.2	1.2	0.6	1.8		100.0

Table 2. Location from which otters were taken during the 2014-15 furharvesting season in Kansas.

Harvest Location	Minimum Number of Unique Locations	Number of Otters	Percent of Otters
Reservoir/Lake	3	3	1.8
River	11	51	29.8
Creek	25	52	30.4
Pond	25	37	21.6
Strip Pit	9	13	7.6
Wildlife Area or marsh	5	9	5.3
Unspecified/Other	5	6	3.5
	83	171	100.0

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