

2008-09 SWIFT FOX PELT TAGGING REPORT

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2008-09 Swift Fox Pelt Tagging Report

Prepared by Matt Peek, Furbearer Biologist

The swift fox (*Vulpes velox*) is classified as a furbearer in Kansas (K.S.A. 32-701 (e)). The first swift fox harvest season in Kansas in recent times was initiated in 1982. Since that time, harvest information has been acquired by the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks (KDWP) through an annual Furbearer Harvest Survey. Additionally, a pelt tagging program was initiated in 1994 to acquire more precise information on swift fox distribution and harvest.

Any swift fox taken in Kansas must be presented to KDWP for tagging within seven days of the close of the season (K.A.R. 115-5-2). All five KDWP regional offices as well as biologists and conservation officers within or near the swift fox range are provided with tags. The number of swift foxes presented annually to KDWP for pelt tagging since the tagging program was initiated is presented in **Figure 1**. In 2008-09, 97 swift foxes were taken by furharvesters in Kansas. This included 32 foxes that were taken as a part of the swift fox Best Management Practices (BMP) trap testing project. (More information on this project can be found at the following website: http://www.fishwildlife.org/furbearer_bmp.html.) Two additional foxes that were salvaged by the Department outside the harvest season were pelt tagged, but are not included in this analysis.

Swift foxes may be taken using equipment authorized in K.A.R. 115-5-1. **Table 1** provides a breakdown of the methods used to take swift foxes. Trapping and hunting accounted for 90% and 5% of the harvest, respectively. **Table 2** shows the primary species being pursued at the time the swift fox was taken.

A total of 17 furharvesters took swift foxes during the season. The single furharvester who took the most swift fox (n=29) accounted for nearly 30% of the total harvest. The annual season bag per furharvester is given in **Table 3**. Habitat types from which swift fox were taken are presented in **Table 4**. Shortgrass prairie and dryland crop ground are the two dominant habitats where swift fox are harvested.

Notes:

Swift fox season opened on November 12, 2008 and ended February 15, 2009. Harvest by month is as follows: November – 3, December – 32, January – 53, February – 9.

Swift foxes were harvested from 11 western Kansas counties in 2008-09, including Gove, Hamilton, Haskell, Kearny, Logan, Ness, Rawlins, Scott, Sherman, Thomas, and Wichita

The 32 swift foxes that were taken as part of the BMP trap testing project were harvested by two furharvesters during December (n=25) and January (n=7). Twenty-four of the foxes were taken in foothold traps and 8 were taken in body gripping traps. Swift fox was the target species for all these foxes, and the furharvesters who participated had final season bags of 15 and 19 foxes. All of these foxes were reportedly harvested from dryland crop fields within a predominantly dryland crop landscape (i.e. recorded within dryland crop/dryland crop row in Table 4).

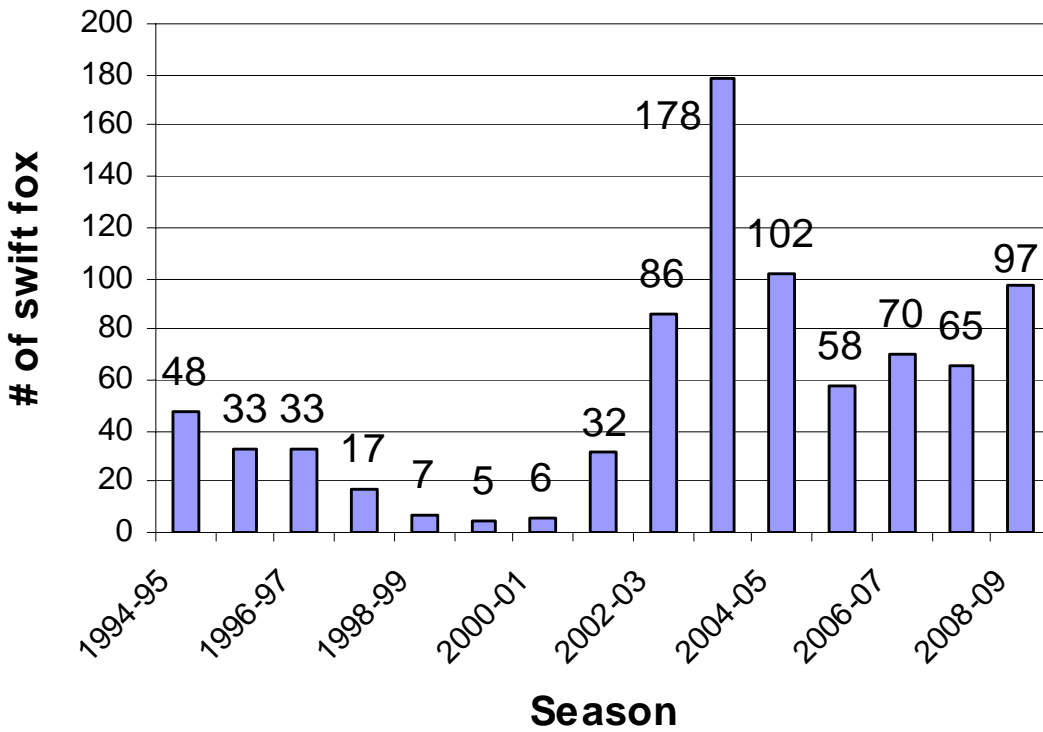


Figure 1. Number of swift foxes pelt tagged annually by KDWP since a tagging program was initiated in 1994.

Table 1. Methods used to take swift foxes during the 2008-09 furbearer season in Kansas.

Method of Take	Number of Swift Fox	Percent of Swift Fox
foothold trap	45	46
body gripping trap	16	16
cage trap	27	28
Rifle	3	3
Shotgun	2	2
Salvage	4	4
Total	97	100

Table 2. Primary species being pursued when swift foxes were taken during the 2008-09 furbearer season in Kansas.

Target Species	Number of Swift Fox	Percent of Swift Fox
Swift fox	84	87
Coyote	9	9
Salvage	4	4
Total	97	100

Table 3. Total bag of swift foxes by individual furharvesters during the 2008-09 furbearer season in Kansas.

Season Bag per Furharvester	Number of Furharvesters	Percent of Furharvesters	Cumulative Percent of Furharvesters	Total number of Swift Fox Taken	Percent of Swift Fox Taken	Cumulative Percent of Swift Fox Taken
1	9	56.25%	56.25%	9	9.28%	9.28%
2	2	12.50%	68.75%	4	4.12%	13.40%
10	1	6.25%	75.00%	10	10.31%	23.71%
11	1	6.25%	81.25%	11	11.34%	35.05%
15	1	6.25%	87.50%	15	15.46%	50.52%
19	1	6.25%	93.75%	19	19.59%	70.10%
29	1	6.25%	100.00%	29	29.90%	100.00%
	16			97		

Table 4. Habitat types from which swift foxes were taken during the 2008-09 furbearer season in Kansas. (The "immediate habitat" type is that from which the swift fox was taken, and the "general habitat" type is the predominant habitat within 2 miles of the harvest site.)

Immediate Habitat	Number of Swift Fox Harvested	Percent of Total Harvest
General Habitat		
Short-grass prairie		
Short-grass prairie	35	36.1
Dryland crop		
Dryland crop	53	54.6
Irrigated crop	2	2.1
CRP	2	2.1
Suburban/town	1	1.0
Irrigated crop		
Dryland crop	1	1.0
Irrigated crop	2	2.1
Unspecified	1	1.0
Total	97	100