

2011-12 OTTER PELT TAGGING REPORT

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Prepared by Matt Peek, Furbearer Biologist



The Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism (KDWPT) passed regulations allowing the first modern harvest season on river otters in Kansas during the 2011-12 furbearer harvest season. Regulatory highlights included:

- Season open statewide
- 2 otter per trapper bag limit
- 100 otter season quota
- Season dates from Nov. 16 – March. 31 (concurrent with beaver), or ending 3 days after the 100 otter quota met
- Trappers must report harvests to the Department via telephone hotline within 24 hours of harvest and present the pelt for tagging and relinquish the skinned carcass within 4 days of harvest

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 2011, Kansas used white “KS ROTR” tags below number 0000451. A total of 33 KDWPT employees and offices mostly in or near the primary otter range were issued tags for the 2011-12 furharvesting season. Tagging was primarily conducted by law enforcement personnel from the law enforcement and public lands divisions. Tags were also maintained by each of the 5 regional offices.

CITES tags were affixed to the pelts of 127 otters taken in Kansas during the season. This included 13 otters taken during or within the 3-day grace period of reaching the 100 otter quota and one otter taken during season but confiscated by KDWPT. An additional 8 otters taken during season were not counted toward the quota as a result of personnel error. Also not counted toward the quota were 5 otters salvaged during season.

Otters were taken in 18 counties. These counties are shown in **Figure 1**. The number of otters taken each day of the season is presented in **Figure 2**. The season quota was reached on Feb. 2 and the season was closed on Feb. 5.

Otters may be taken using trapping equipment authorized in K.A.R. 115-5-1 or salvaged during the harvest season. A total of 87 furharvesters took otters. This included 47 individuals who took 1 otter and 40 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. Otters taken after season closed (n=5) are included only in Figure 1 and Table 2.

All regulations pertaining to otter harvest will remain the same for the upcoming 2012-13 season. Age and reproductive characteristics being obtained from carcasses will be used along with other data to reevaluate harvest regulations following next season.

Figure 1. Counties from which otters were taken during the 2011-12 furharvesting season in Kansas (n = 132, includes 5 otters incidentally taken after season closed).

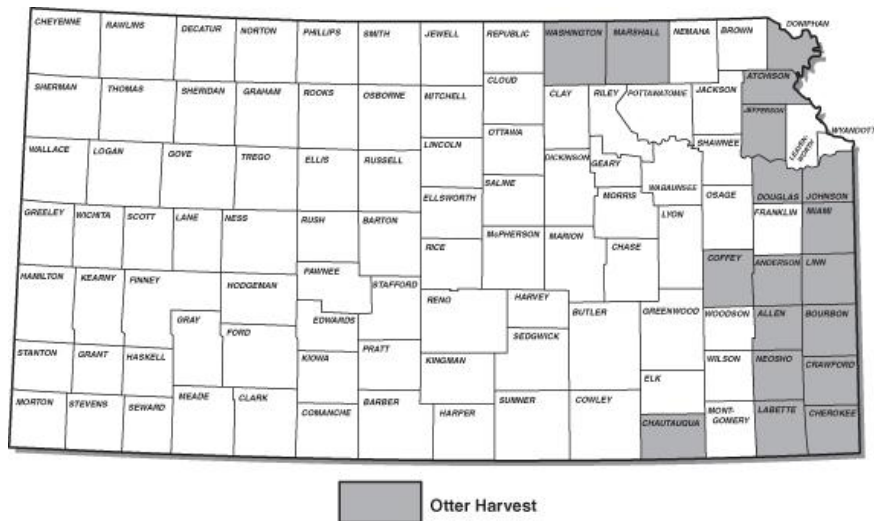


Figure 2. Reported number of otters taken per day during the 2011-12 furharvesting season (n=127).

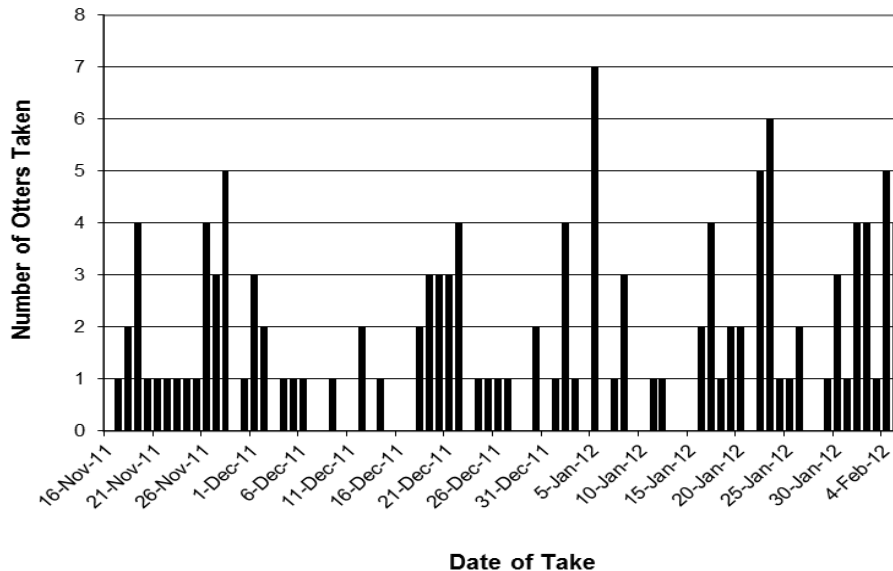


Table 1. Method of harvest and the primary species being trapped when otters were taken during the 2011-12 furharvesting season in Kansas.

Method of Harvest	Target Species					Subtotal	
	Otter	Beaver	Raccoon	Mink	Unspecified	Number	Percent
Foothold Trap	11	4	14	2		31	24.4
Body-gripping Trap	46	24	8		1	79	62.2
Cage Trap			1			1	0.8
Snare	5	4	1			10	7.9
Salvage	5					5	3.9
Unspecified or Other	1					1	0.8
Subtotal Number	68	32	24	2	1	127	
Percent	56.2	26.4	19.8	1.7	0.8		100.0

Table 2. Location from which otters were taken during the 2011-12 furharvesting season in Kansas (includes 5 otters incidentally taken after season closed).

Harvest Location	Number of Source Locations	Number of Otters	Percent of Otters
Reservoir/Lake	4	6	4.5
River	9	20	15.2
Creek	25	49	37.1
Pond	11	13	9.8
Strip Pit	17	22	16.7
Ditch	2	2	1.5
Wildlife Area	6	17	12.9
Unspecified	3	3	2.3
	77	132	100