

2018-19 OTTER PELT TAGGING REPORT

PERFORMANCE REPORT STATEWIDE WILDLIFE RESEARCH AND SURVEYS

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Kansas has had a river otter harvest season since 2011. The season is open statewide concurrent with beaver season (Nov 14, 2018-Mar 31, 2019), and like beaver, otters may only be trapped or salvaged. There was a 100 otter season quota for the first two seasons, but the season quota is now unlimited. A two otter per trapper bag limit has been in place since a season was first opened.

Like bobcats, river otters are CITES Appendix II (“look-alike”) species which are pelt tagged not because of their lack of abundance, but because they look like species that are threatened or endangered. Pelt tagging is mandated by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), and is accomplished with tags provided by the USFWS Office of Management Authority, under the CITES Export Tag Program. In 2018, Kansas used white “KS ROTR” tags below number 0001760. A total of 47 KDWPT employees and offices were issued tags for the 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 128 otters taken in Kansas during the season. The number of otters taken annually since the otter harvest season was established 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**. 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 82 furharvesters took otters. This included 43 individuals who took one otter and 39 who took more than one, including 4 who took from three to five otters. Otters taken over the two-otter bag limit were either relinquished to KDWPT or taken by Nuisance Animal Damage Control (NADC) permit holders for damage. **Table 1** provides a breakdown 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 waterbody or location type 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.

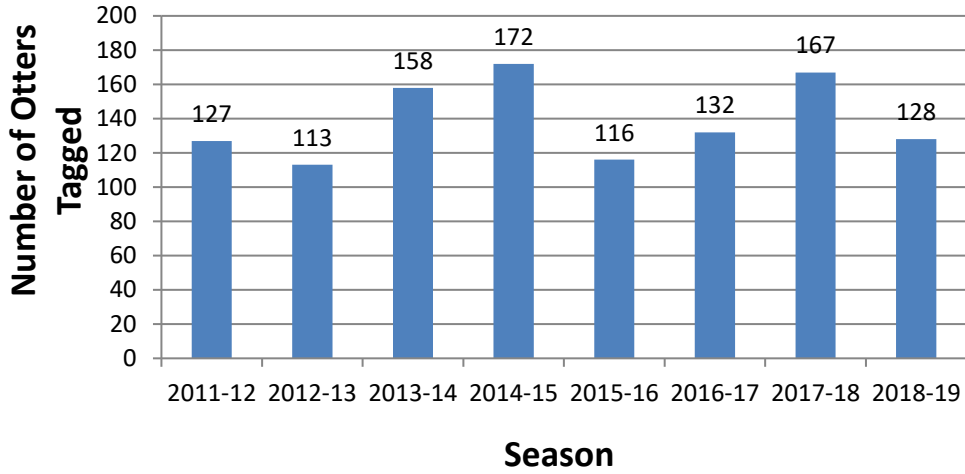


Figure 1. Number of otters pelt tagged annually since the season was opened in 2011.

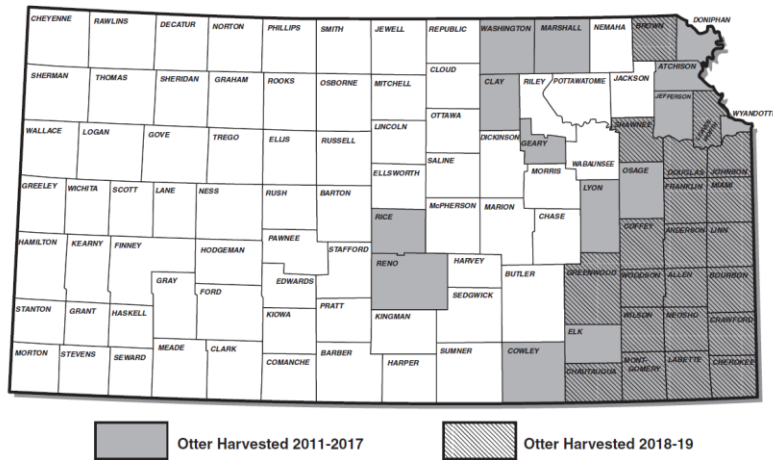


Figure 2. County of harvest of Kansas river otters.

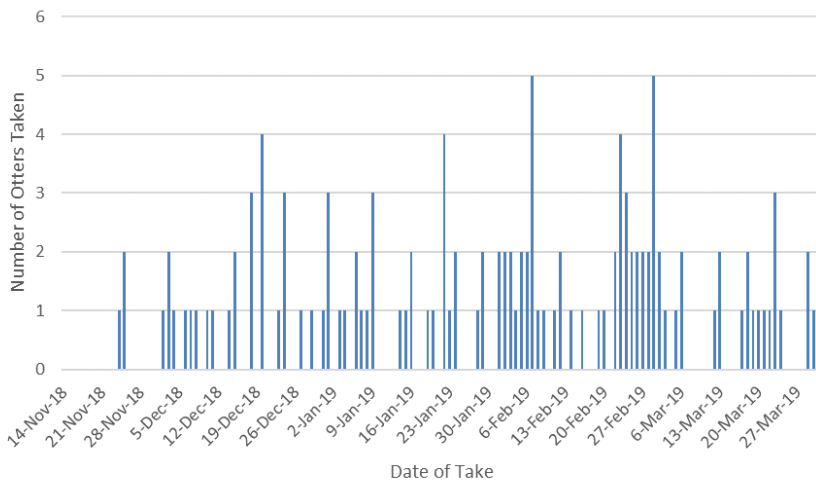


Figure 3. Reported number of otters taken per day during the 2018-19 furharvesting season (n=128).

Table 1. Method of harvest and the primary species being trapped when otters were taken during the 2018-19 furharvesting season in Kansas.

| Method of Harvest | Target Species | | | | | | Subtotal Number | Percent |
|-------------------|----------------|--------|---------|--------|---------|-------------|-----------------|---------|
| | Otter | Beaver | Raccoon | Coyote | Salvage | Unspecified | | |
| Foothold Trap | 5 | 3 | | 1 | | | 9 | 7.0 |
| Bodygrip Trap | 53 | 53 | 1 | | | | 107 | 83.6 |
| Snare | 3 | 5 | | | | | 8 | 6.3 |
| Salvage | | | | | 3 | | 3 | 2.3 |
| Unspecified | | | | | | 1 | 1 | 0.8 |
| Subtotal Number | 61 | 61 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 128 | |
| Percent | 47.7 | 47.7 | 0.8 | 0.8 | 2.3 | 0.8 | | 100.0 |

Table 2. Location from which otters were taken during the 2018-19 furharvesting season in Kansas.

| Harvest Location | Minimum Number of Unique Locations | Number of Otters | Percent of Otters |
|------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Reservoir/Lake | 1 | 2 | 1.6 |
| River | 6 | 10 | 7.8 |
| Creek | 16 | 30 | 23.4 |
| Pond | 27 | 38 | 29.7 |
| Strip Pit or quarry | 11 | 16 | 12.5 |
| Wildlife Area or marsh | 5 | 19 | 14.8 |
| Unspecified/Other | 9 | 13 | 10.2 |
| | 75 | 128 | 100.0 |

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