



Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks Furharvester Activity Summary, 2021-22



Matt Peek, furbearer biologist

Licenses: A total of 5618 adult and 99 junior resident furharvesting licenses were sold in 2021. This is a 9% decrease from 2020, and an 11% decrease from the 5-year average.

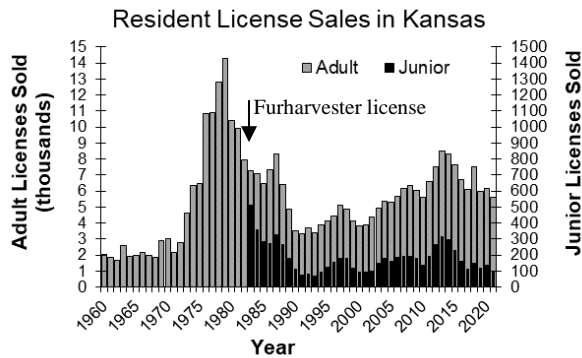


Figure 1. Resident furharvester license sales in KS, 1960-2021.

Unlimited nonresident furharvester licenses have been available in Kansas since 1983. In 2021, 171 were sold. This is up 22 from last season's 149, which was the previous annual high. Nonresidents accounted for 2.9% of all furharvester license sales.

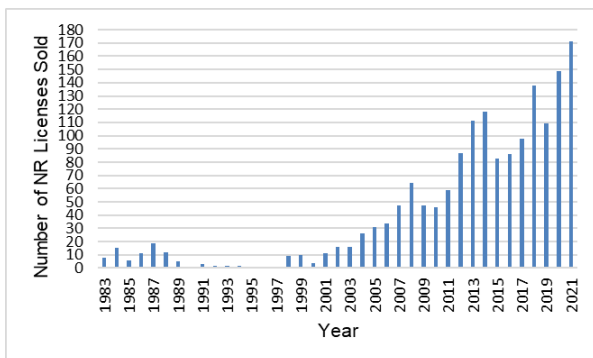


Figure 2. Nonresident furharvester license sales in Kansas, 1983-2021.

Harvest and Furdealer Purchases: Total harvest and the number of furbearers purchased by Kansas furdealers are provided in Table 1. Total harvest was down 7% from last season, and harvest of most species declined. Otter and raccoon were the two exceptions. Otter are still expanding, and their increase (13%) is partially the result of harvest in places they have been scarce until recently.

The raccoon harvest increase (13%) may be the result of increasing take for management or population reduction. Complaints about raccoon overabundance have become common, and it is true that estimated raccoon harvest has declined by nearly an estimated 50,000 per year from what it was during 2003-2015. It seems a general lack of activity has really impacted the take of many of the species less important to the fur trade in Kansas including badger, the three fox species, mink, and muskrat which all experienced a 40% or greater decrease in harvest. Except for muskrat, these species are often taken incidentally to the pursuit of other, more common species.

Table 1. Furbearer Harvest and Furdealer Purchases of Kansas Furbearers, 2021-22.

Species	Total Harvest**	Total Purchases***	% Change from previous season**
Badger	1103	124	-53%
Beaver	6110	474	-12%
Bobcat*	2384	821	-3%
Coyote	51087	5080	-15%
Gray Fox	0	0	-100%
Red Fox	330	49	-49%
Swift Fox*	37	8	-74%
Mink	25	1	-92%
Muskrat	2987	434	-41%
Opossum	11838	103	-6%
Otter*	202	75	13%
Raccoon	44816	2466	13%
Skunk	4838	155	-16%

*From pelt tagging records rather than Furbearer Harvest Survey

**From annual Furbearer Harvest Survey

***From furdealer record books

Pelt Values: Kansas furdealers purchased an estimated \$78,420 worth of pelts from furbearers harvested in Kansas in 2021-22. This was a 71% decrease from last season and the lowest total value of pelts purchased by Kansas furdealers since records have been kept (1959; Figure 3). Most notably, the coyote bubble has officially burst. After floating the fur market for the past six years, their value dropped off last season and then fell by over 50% again this year to basically a \$5-\$7.50 average (Table 2).

The one documented bright spot this year is that bobcat prices rose by 27%, reportedly due to demand for our central grade bobcats for use in bedspreads for which western grades are too heavy. Other variation shown in Table 2 is largely the result of fluctuating participation in the furdealer survey and very low pelt values rather than an actual meaningful change.

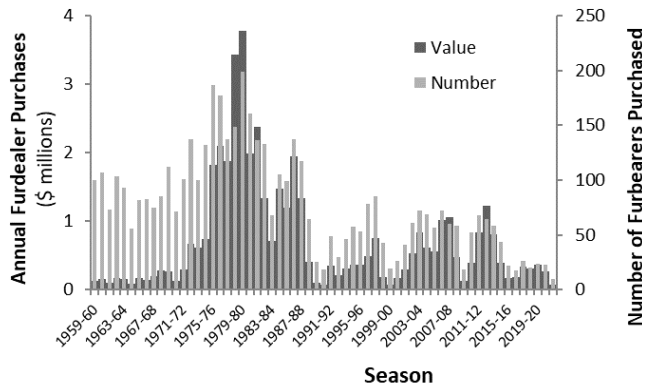


Figure 3. Value and number of furbearers harvested in Kansas & purchased by Kansas furdealers, 1959-2021.

Despite the crash of the coyote market, they still represented the highest percentage of the value of furbearer pelts sold to Kansas furdealers this season (48%; Figure 4). Bobcats came in second at 40% of the market, but their value increased or became known late or even after the season for many or it likely would have been higher. Raccoon represented about 5% of the total value, but with reported pelt values averaging less than \$2, there is just basically no market for them right now. With pelt prices for so many species being so low, some of the non-fur products from furbearers have become a significant consideration in harvest value. Beaver castor, skunk essence, and coyote and bobcat glands have retained good or even really good value due to generally low harvests, and a recent KDWP survey indicated nearly all furharvesters (>99%) who skin their own catch are collecting one or more of these items for sale or personal use.

Furbearer Seasons and Harvest: With the fur market being historically depressed and furbearer harvest declining in kind, concerns

about furbearer overabundance and impacts on other species have become prevalent. KDWP has proposed a season extension through the end of February so harvest can occur nearly the whole time any species has fur value, but has no plans to open a damage-take season at this time due to concerns about orphaning young, the likely lack of meaningful harvest increase, the likely difficulty in reversing this decision, and not wanting to undermine legal fur harvest as the method of choice for dealing with furbearer damage issues. We recommend those who feel there are too many furbearers use the existing harvest season (3-3.5 months) to address furbearer management issues.

Table 2. Pelt Values of Kansas Furbearers, 2021-22

Species	Average Pelt Price*	Average KFHA auction pelt price**	% Change from previous season*
Badger	\$6.51	\$5.00	6%
Beaver	\$4.69	\$5.53	-22%
Bobcat	\$37.86	\$71.61	27%
Coyote	\$7.44	\$4.72	-54%
Gray Fox	-	-	-
Red Fox	\$6.51	-	9%
Swift Fox	-	-	-
Mink	\$6.00	-	60%
Muskrat	\$2.03	-	-3%
Opossum	\$0.70	\$1.00	15%
Otter	\$17.67	-	19%
Raccoon	\$1.47	\$1.95	-36%
Striped Skunk	\$1.98	\$2.16	-

*From annual Furdealer Pelt Price and Primeness Survey
**From Kansas Fur Harvester Assoc (KFHA) auction

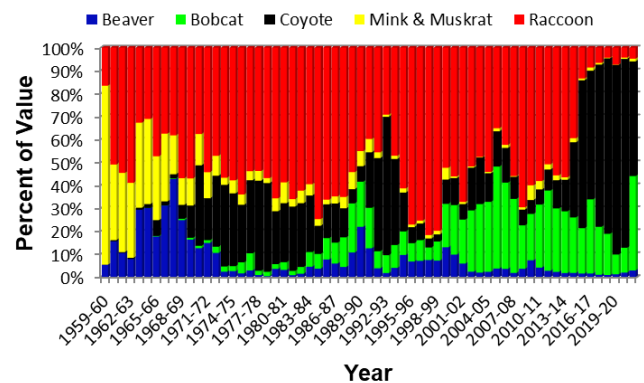


Figure 4. Relative cumulative value of select furbearers purchased by Kansas furdealers, 1959-2021.