



West Virginia Division of Natural Resources

## Furbearer Management Newsletter

Fall/Winter 2010/2011

Wildlife Resources Section

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Welcome to the fifth issue of the Furbearer Management Newsletter. We hope you have been enjoying it. Although last winter put a damper on trapping efforts, data collection by the Wildlife Resources Section to secure the fur resource for future generations continued. We trust that this winter will see your fur sheds full. Please direct correspondence to: Rich Rogers, WVDNR, 1 Depot St., Romney, WV 26757, [Rich.E.Rogers@wv.gov](mailto:Rich.E.Rogers@wv.gov).

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### River Otter Trapping Season Update

By now, most have heard that an otter trapping season has been approved for the 2011-2012 trapping season. The new statewide season will open on the first Saturday of November and close at the end of February. The season bag limit will be one otter per trapper. Trappers will be required to check their catch at an official game checking station. CITES seals will be required to sell otter pelts on the international market. These are the same type of seals that are currently affixed to all bobcat pelts for the same purpose.

Approval of this season was the result of hard work by wildlife biologists, wildlife managers, and West Virginia trappers. Biological data collected from carcasses used to estimate otter population size, bridge surveys to detect distribution, and years of observation reports all contributed to the success of the otter program. Thanks to all of you who faithfully called in observations and turned in your incidental otter catches over the years.

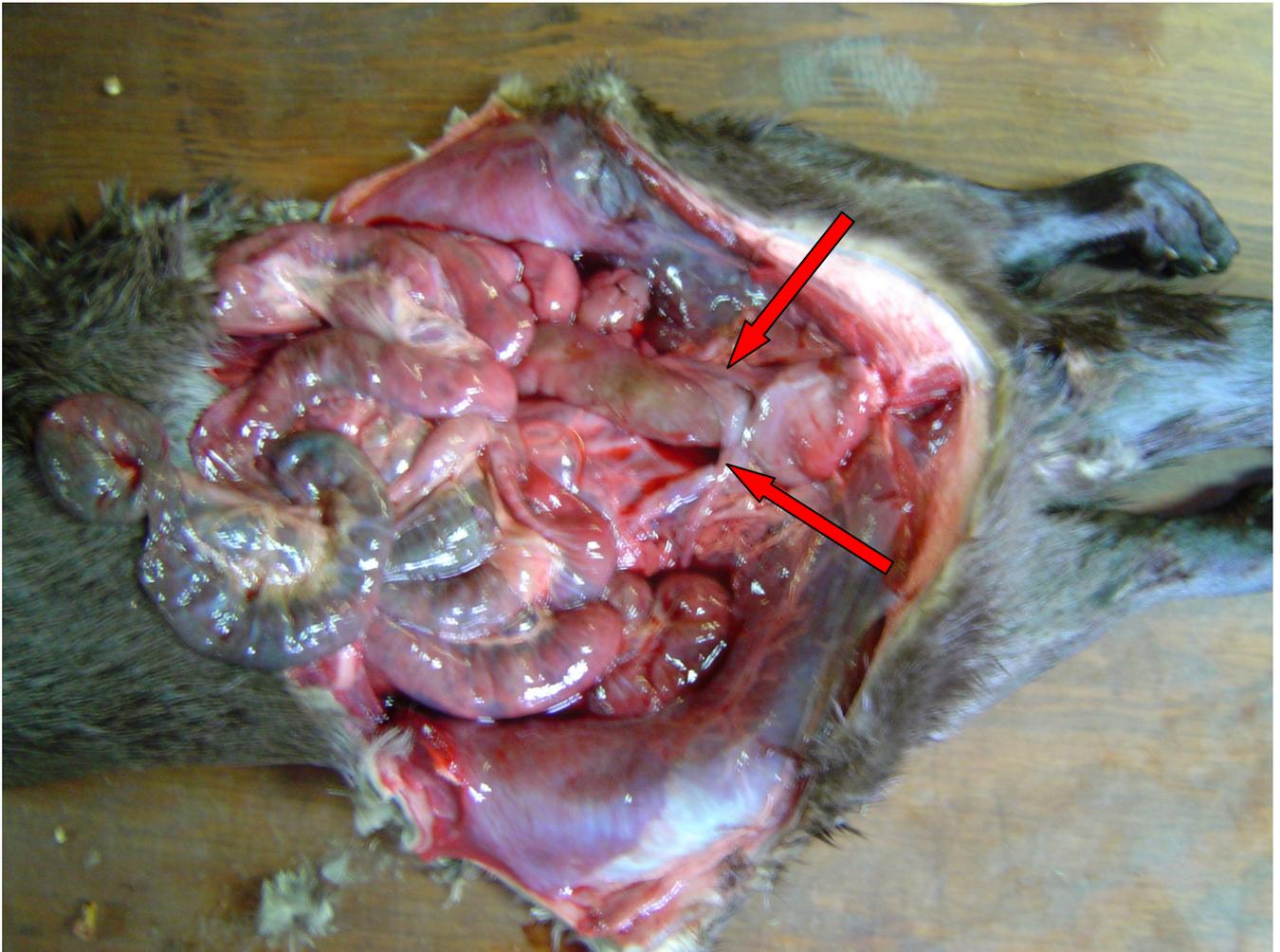
Trappers will be asked to voluntarily bring the skinned carcasses of their trapped otters to a DNR District Office or contact a biologist to arrange for a pick up. Otter age and sex data will be collected to refine the population model that will be used to monitor population response to the harvest. In this way, we will assure that the harvest is not detrimental to the state's otter population.



Otters ready for biological data to be collected. These otters were turned in by trappers accidentally catching them in beaver traps.



Preparing to extract a canine tooth for sectioning and aging.



Female reproductive tract. The wishbone-shaped piece of tissue is actually both horns of the uterus, each of which leads to an ovary. Cellular changes in the ovary tell researchers how many eggs have been released and, in most all cases, are fertilized.



Female reproductive tract removed from a carcass. Arrows indicate location of ovaries, which are the approximate size of a green pea with some size variation.

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## Furbearer Harvest Statistics

Final figures for the 2009-10 season are now available. Beaver, bobcat, and fisher totals are from all animals checked at game checking stations. All other species numbers recorded are numbers of pelts that have been sold and moved through the market. Harvests of all major species are down except for muskrat and coyote. WFTA fur sales recorded lower numbers of pelts sold with many trappers citing the long, harsh winter as a reason for not being able to keep steel on the ground and in the water. Harvest results

tabulated from checking tags and fur dealer transactions through the 2009-10 season are presented in the following table:

WEST VIRGINIA FUR HARVEST											
Season	Beaver	Bobcat	Fisher	Gray Fox	Mink	Muskrat	Opossum	Raccoon	Red Fox	Skunk	Coyote
1998-99	1616	554	45	1111	211	2833	1201	9939	671	40	29
1999-00	988	644	27	933	97	1734	504	4283	359	33	43
2000-01	1140	705	26	1213	183	2857	463	4350	334	31	49
2001-02	1829	943	45	2147	448	5785	922	7733	747	130	169
2002-03	849	891	26	1533	267	4160	1048	6148	610	51	149
2003-04	917	1090	50	1480	374	3210	1277	11160	957	160	539
2004-05	1247	1447	72	1238	382	2523	2506	15794	969	159	467
2005-06	1589	1682	105	1316	325	2978	1358	8641	1117	124	613
2006-07	1839	1902	98	2115	335	3293	1925	11726	1683	235	360
2007-08	1487	1976	108	2164	331	3477	2704	19189	1746	225	108
2008-09	1107	1456	84	1631	318	2331	2866	8949	1472	222	624
2009-10	783	992	60	988	237	2850	1487	6201	1152	103	691

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## USDA Wildlife Services Coyote Movements Study

USDA Wildlife Services is continuing its coyote movements and home range study in West Virginia and Virginia. The purpose of the study is to help biologists and managers better understand coyote movements, and includes the use of radio-collars on coyotes. To date, several animals have been collared in WV. Unfortunately, three animals with collars are missing and valuable data has been lost. Anyone with knowledge of any of these animals is asked to call **Lauren Mastro, USDA Wildlife Services, Elkins, WV, 26241 (304)636-1785.**

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## Regional Coyote Food Habits Study Update

The coyote food habits study being conducted by Geriann Albers at West Virginia University is still underway. To date, over 200 coyote stomachs have been sampled. Stomachs are still being collected and will continue to be sampled until May of 2011. More samples are needed from the eastern panhandle and the southern counties, in particular. See instructions at the end of the newsletter for removing stomachs.

**For further information, contact Geriann Albers at (304)293-0050, [galbers@mix.wvu.edu](mailto:galbers@mix.wvu.edu), or Rich Rogers, WVDNR Furbearer Program Coordinator at (304)822-3551, [Rich.E.Rogers@wv.gov](mailto:Rich.E.Rogers@wv.gov).**

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## Commonly Asked Legal Questions

In this new section of the newsletter, we will periodically answer questions are commonly asked by trappers and furbearer hunters. The source of all answers provided will come directly from regulations books, Chapter 20 law, and code of state regulations. When necessary the WVDNR Law Enforcement Section will be consulted regarding their policy on how a law is interpreted and will be enforced.

### **Q: Do I have to field tag a bobcat?**

**A:** Yes, each person killing a bobcat must attach a completed field tag to the bobcat or remain with the bobcat and have upon their person a completed field tag before moving the carcass from where it was killed. The tag must bear the hunter/trapper's name, address, hunting license number (if required) and the date, time and county of kill. On arriving at a residence, camp, lodge, vehicle, or vessel the field tag must be attached to the bobcat and remain on the carcass until it is tagged with an official game checking tag.

### **Q: Is it legal to dispatch animals held in traps with a hand gun?**

**A:** Yes, it is legal if the trapper also has a Class A-1 pistol stamp with his license. The barrel must be at least 4 inches long and be carried outside of clothing in an unconcealed and

easily visible place. Trappers should also be aware that after 5 AM on Sunday, only .22 caliber rimfire firearms may be used.

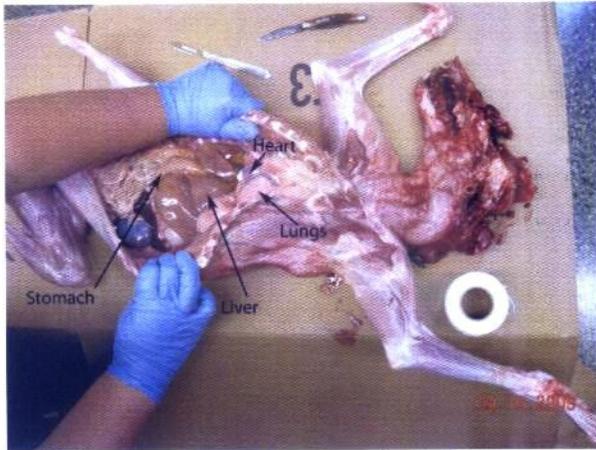
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## Links

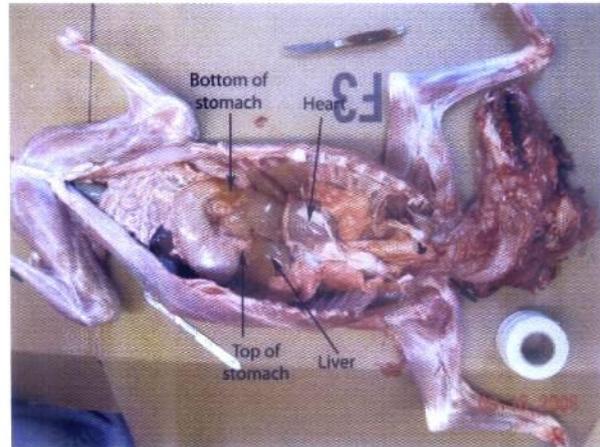
West Virginia Division of Natural Resources	<a href="http://www.wvdnr.gov">www.wvdnr.gov</a>
West Virginia Trappers Association	<a href="http://www.wvtrappers.com">www.wvtrappers.com</a>
Guide to State Game Depts.	<a href="http://www.identicards.com/links/statednr.html">www.identicards.com/links/statednr.html</a>
Assoc. of Fish and Wildlife Agencies	
Furbearer Resources	<a href="http://www.fishwildlife.org/furbearer.html">www.fishwildlife.org/furbearer.html</a>
National Trappers Association	<a href="http://www.nationaltrappers.com">www.nationaltrappers.com</a>
Fur Takers of America	<a href="http://www.furtakersofamerica.com">www.furtakersofamerica.com</a>
Conserve Wildlife	<a href="http://www.conservewildlife.org">www.conservewildlife.org</a>
Furbearers Unlimited	<a href="http://www.furbearers.org">www.furbearers.org</a>
CITES	<a href="http://www.cites.org">www.cites.org</a>

# Collecting Coyote Stomachs and Heads

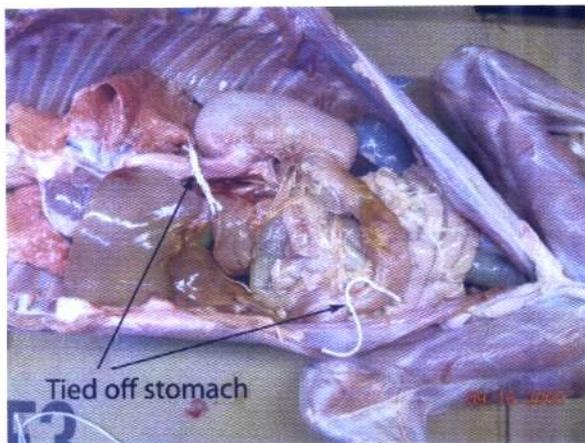
For this study, we ask that you collect the stomach and head of each coyote you trap. After removing the stomach as shown below, place in a one gallon sealable bag. Then, detach the head from the spinal cord and place in a bag as well.



Coyote skinned and opened by slitting from center between front legs to center between back legs, cutting through the ribs, and gently cutting the diaphragm between the liver and heart.



View of open animal with liver pushed aside and diaphragm cut to show beginning and end of stomach



Liver and other tissue are gently cut away to expose stomach. Both ends of stomach are tied off with string. Then the stomach can be cut on the side of the string away from the stomach and removed. When removing, you'll have to cut through some fatty tissue to free the stomach.



Removed Stomach

**Labeling is very important.** Please label each bag with your name, sex of animal, location trapped and date trapped. This is crucial to us getting the best information possible so please write down as much as you can. It is also important that individual heads and stomachs be kept together so we can keep accurate records. Thank you!