

2018 NJ Trapper Survey Results



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A mail questionnaire survey was provided to 1,280 trappers licensed in calendar year 2017 to estimate furbearer harvests, trapper effort, and overall trapper experience in New Jersey during the 2017-18 seasons.

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Executive Summary

- A mail questionnaire survey was sent to 1,280 individuals having a 2017 New Jersey trapping license to estimate furbearer harvest levels during the 2017-18 season (November 15, 2017 through March 15, 2018). The response rate was 37%.
- An estimated 692 trapping license holders actively trapped during the 2017-18 season, enjoying an estimated 22,000 recreation-days afield while harvesting an estimated 824 mink, 9,279 muskrats, 97 gray fox, 3,822 red fox, 467 opossums, 4,233 raccoons, 129 skunks, and 3 weasels in addition to the reported harvest of 613 beavers, 51 river otters, and 198 coyotes. The raw fur value was estimated at \$120,835 based on average prices from international and local auctions.
- Trapping is a predominantly male-oriented recreation, but 4% of the State's trappers are female, who are, on average, considerably younger (27 years) than their male counterparts (49 years).
- Trapping is a life-long activity for many sportsmen. Respondents had 0-70 years of trapping experience prior to the beginning of the season, with a mean 20.2 years of experience.
- Disinterest due to low fur prices may have reduced trapper activity. An estimated 692 trappers were active, compared to 734 active trappers in 2016-17 and 1,159 active trappers in 2015-16. Most active trappers (88%) were successful in taking fur during 2017-18.

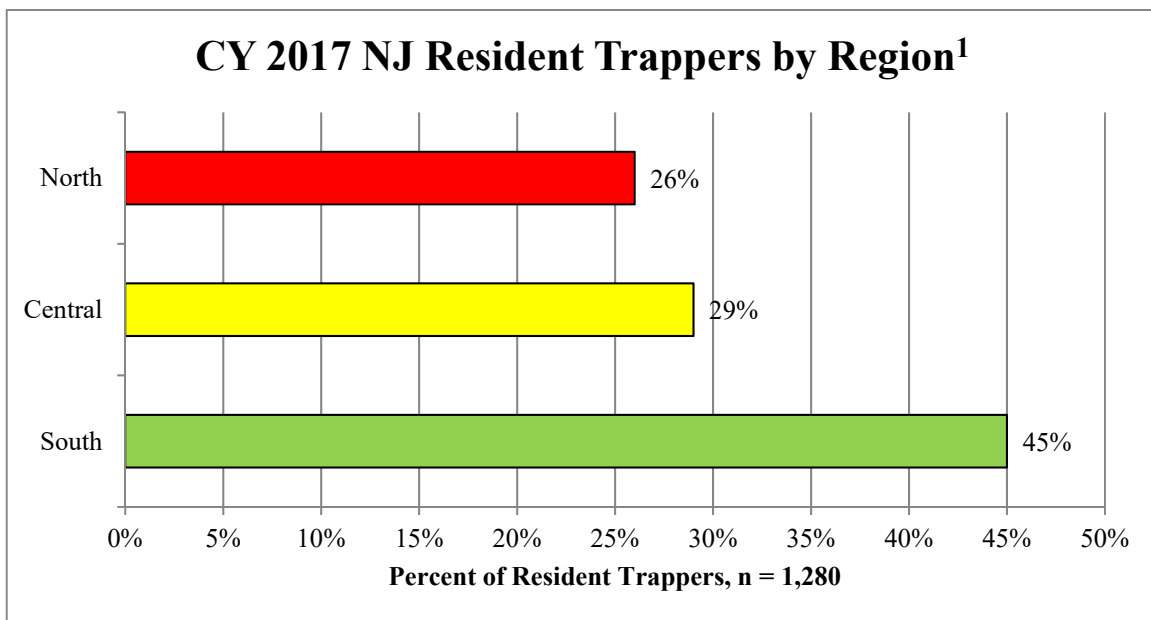
Methods

A mail questionnaire was sent to 1,280 trappers licensed in calendar year 2017 to estimate furbearer harvest levels for 2017-18. Surveys were sent via US Mail on or about March 15, 2018 with a return deadline of April 15. The instrument included several general questions and a table for recipients to populate with their results. Specific questions regarding realized fur prices, annual trapper expenditures, and total trapper expenditures were omitted from this year's survey, as these were thought to be potential reasons for non-participation in prior surveys. A separate, more detailed, voluntary on-line survey link was included at the bottom of the survey instrument; however, low participation ($n = 17$ responses) limited any meaningful value of the data.

Trapper demographics (e.g., gender, age, and residency) were examined for all 1,280 license holders.

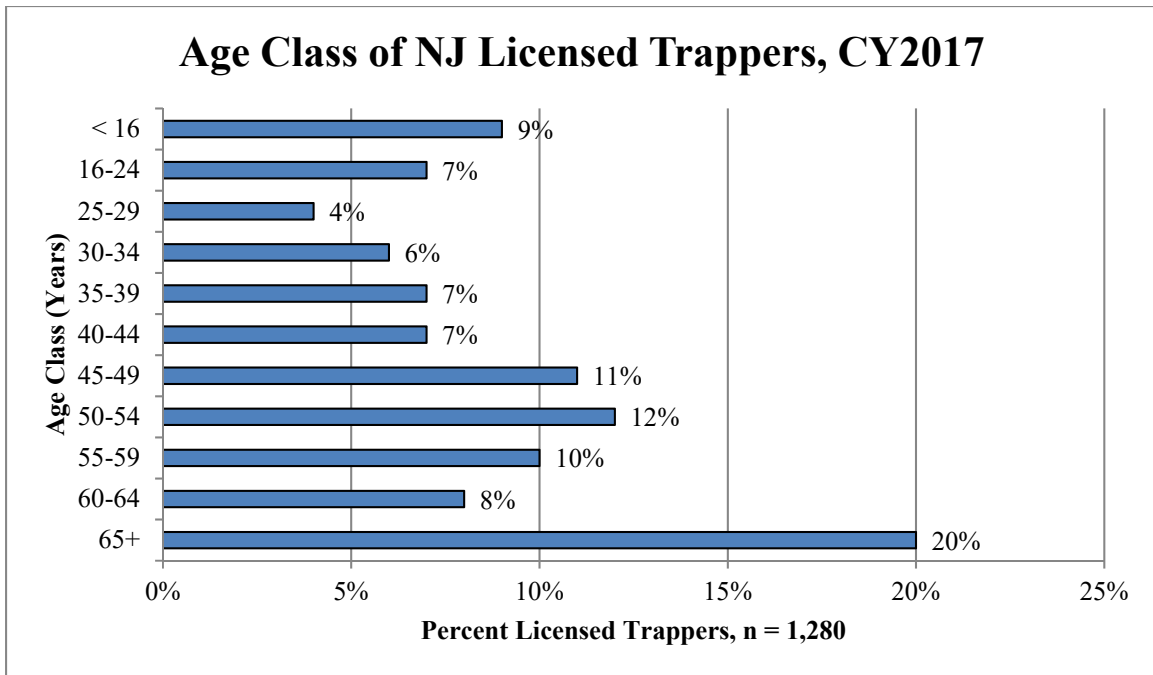
Trapper Demographics

Total trapping license sales for calendar year 2017 were 1,200 in addition to 80 youths under the age of 17 years (total 1,280) comprising 1,262 resident and 18 non-resident trapping licenses. New Jersey residents constituted 99% of all licensed trappers followed by Pennsylvania (13), Alaska and Delaware (2 each), and New York (1). Distribution of resident trappers by region was similar to that of 2016.



Trappers are predominantly male (96%) with an average age of 49 years while female trappers averaged 27 years. The mean age for the 1,280 trappers licensed in calendar year 2017 was 49.0 ± 0.5 years as of November 15, 2017.

¹ North = Bergen, Essex, Hudson, Morris, Passaic, Sussex and Warren counties; Central = Hunterdon, Mercer, Middlesex, Monmouth, Ocean, Somerset and Union counties; South = Atlantic, Burlington, Camden, Cape May, Cumberland, Gloucester and Salem counties.

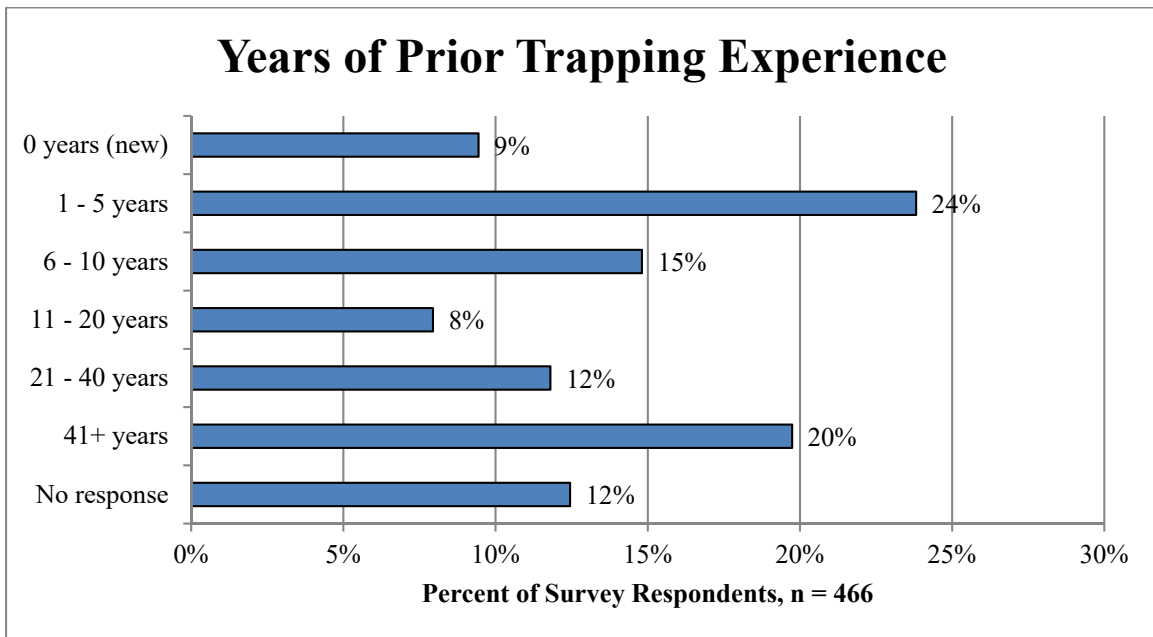


General Questions - All Survey Recipients

A mail survey was sent out March 15, 2018 to 1,280 licensed trappers. Nineteen (1.5%) surveys were returned as undeliverable and 1,261 were presumed correctly delivered. A total 468 responses were received of which 2 were improperly completed and censored from analysis for a 37% response rate.

Prior Trapping Experience

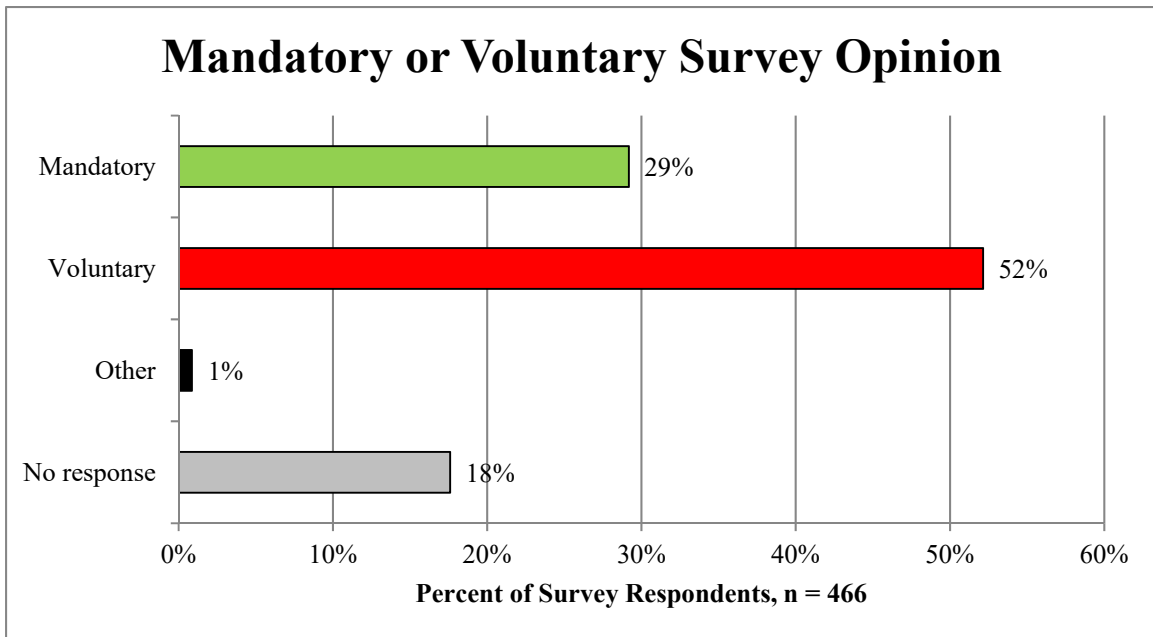
Question 2. How many years have you trapped before 2017-18?



Years of prior trapping experience for the 408 respondents answering this question ranged from 0 to 70, with a mean $20.2 \pm SE 1.0$ years. The median experience of respondents was 10 years.

Question 3. Should the Trapper Harvest Survey Report be mandatory or voluntary?

The NJ Trapper Harvest Survey is currently a voluntary survey. This question was added to this year's survey to gauge the level of support for changing the survey from voluntary to mandatory. Inactive trappers were less likely to respond to this question (35%) than active trappers (3%) and expressed less support for a mandatory survey (22%) than active trappers (35%).



Active Trapper

Question 4. Did you trap during 2017-18?

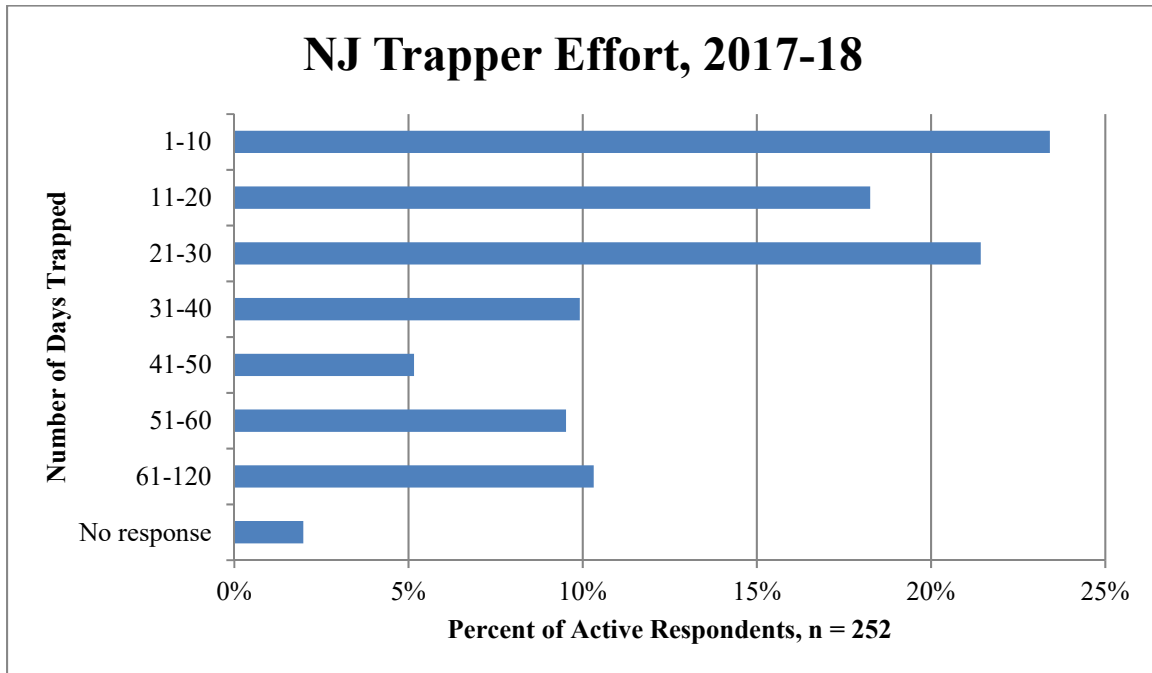
Fifty-four percent of respondents trapped at least one day during the 2017-18 seasons that began November 15, 2017 and concluded March 15, 2018 indicating that there were 692 active trappers

Questions for Active Trappers

Number of Days Trapped

Question 5. How many days trapped in season?

Trappers spent 1-120 days trapping with a mean $31.8 \pm SE 1.6$ days afield (median 28 days) yielding 21,999 recreation-days.



Trap Tampering or Trap Theft

Question 6. Traps stolen/tampered? Twenty-one percent of respondents reported having their traps tampered with or stolen during the 2017-18 season, compared to 25% during 2016-17.

Successful Trappers

Question 7. Did you take fur?

Most active trappers (87%) were successful in capturing at least one furbearing animal during 2017-18, compared to 92% during 2016-17.

Tables and Survey Instrument

Table 1. Estimated number of NJ trappers and trapper effort by species, 2017-18

Species	# Active Trappers	Recreation-days	# Traps/Day	# Trap-nights (TN)
Beaver	142	1,723	466	9,409
River otter	91	860	169	2,962
Mink	146	2,949	2,088	17,470
Muskrat	209	3,428	5,183	94,572
Nutria	0	0	0	0
Coyote	244	8,516	7,832	385,953
Gray fox				
Red fox				
Opossum	63	1,619	416	11,907
Raccoon	305	7,015	2,806	75,493
Skunk	22	418	187	4,409
Weasel	5	70	15	242
Total	692	21,999		

Table 2. Estimated total capture, harvest and fur value for New Jersey furbearers, 2017-18

Species	# Harvesters	# Captured	# Harvested	Harvest/100 TN	Value (\$US)
Beaver	125	613	613	6.52	5,591
River otter	55	55	51	1.72	1,768
Mink	170	835	824	4.72	6,693
Muskrat	236	9,284	9,279	9.81	26,537
Nutria	0	0	0	0.00	0
Coyote	363	204	198	0.05	6,612
Gray fox		102	97	0.03	2,252
Red fox		3,966	3,822	0.99	40,831
Opossum	168	753	467	3.92	546
Raccoon	426	5,043	4,233	5.61	28,478
Skunk	91	144	129	2.93	1,157
Weasel	5	3	3	3.27	9
Total	604	20,998	19,715		\$ 120,835

Table 3. Estimated number of furbearers captured incidental to target species by survey respondents, 2017-18

Species	Incidental Take	Pct. Of Harvest
Beaver	0	0%
Otter	4	7%
Mink	233	28%
Muskrat	599	6%
Gray fox	39	40%
Red fox	1,010	26%
Opossum	261	56%
Raccoon	646	15%
Skunk	79	62%

Table 4. Estimated NJ furbearer harvest by county, 2017-18

Northern Region

Species	Bergen	Essex	Hudson	Morris	Passaic	Sussex	Warren	Total
Beaver	3	0	0	90	35	126	18	272
Otter	0	0	0	4	3	5	2	14
Mink	0	0	0	33	19	36	132	220
Muskrat	96	0	0	190	335	519	63	1,203
Nutria	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Coyote	12	0	0	18	2	7	79	118
Gray fox	0	0	0	3	0	3	3	9
Red fox	42	0	0	418	44	66	299	869
Opossum	0	0	0	0	3	44	14	60
Raccoon	19	8	0	102	30	181	154	494
Skunk	0	0	0	3	0	8	0	11
Weasel	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Table 4. Estimated NJ furbearer harvest by county, 2017-18 (continued)

Central Region

Species	Hunterdon	Mercer	Middlesex	Monmouth	Ocean	Somerset	Union	Total
Beaver	6	28	26	38	36	3	0	137
Otter	1	0	1	4	1	1	0	8
Mink	63	16	3	0	16	168	0	266
Muskrat	113	30	80	143	82	319	0	766
Nutria	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Coyote	16	0	5	0	3	4	0	28
Gray fox	0	0	0	0	6	0	0	6
Red fox	731	6	232	147	97	656	0	1,868
Opossum	16	0	33	5	5	3	0	63
Raccoon	288	93	135	346	242	38	0	1,143
Skunk	3	0	3	14	5	0	0	25
Weasel	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Southern Region

Species	Atlantic	Burlington	Camden	Cape May	Cumberland	Gloucester	Salem	Total
Beaver	40	71	21	0	17	4	51	204
Otter	8	4	1	1	13	0	2	29
Mink	22	11	5	11	44	11	231	335
Muskrat	503	154	3	124	3,101	821	2,508	7,213
Nutria	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Coyote	13	13	1	9	9	7	0	52
Gray fox	6	0	0	0	11	22	6	39
Red fox	6	33	0	8	36	94	0	177
Opossum	63	8	0	0	25	44	69	209
Raccoon	187	107	55	154	343	494	978	2,318
Skunk	8	16	3	22	14	3	19	85
Weasel	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0

Unknown County

Beaver	Otter	Mink	Muskrat	Coyote	Gray fox	Red fox	Opossum	Raccoon	Skunk
0	0	3	96	0	44	908	135	277	8



TRAPPER HARVEST REPORT 2017-18

NJ Division of Fish & Wildlife
Trapper Report
26 Route 173 West
Hampton NJ 08827

Reports are **DUE BY APRIL 15**. Please submit your report **WHETHER OR NOT ANY TRAPPING WAS DONE, OR ANY FURS WERE TAKEN**. This report is for animals taken during the legal trapping season **ONLY**. If you trapped with a partner, include **only** the information for the animals that **you** captured.

Use pre-paid envelope or mail to: NJ Div. of Fish & Wildlife, Trapper Report, 26 Route 173 West, Hampton NJ 08827

~ Thank you for your help in improving furbearer management in New Jersey ~

1. Conservation ID Number:

4. Did you trap during 2017-18?
_____ NO or _____ YES

5. How many days trapped in season?
_____ total days

2. How many years have you trapped before 2017-18?
_____ years of prior experience

If *No*, **Stop Here & Return**

6. Traps stolen/tampered?
_____ NO or _____ YES

3. Should the Trapper Harvest Report be:
_____ Mandatory or _____ Voluntary

7. Did you take fur?
_____ NO or _____ YES

TARGET SPECIES (* no open season)	PRIMARY COUNTY Trapped In	# TRAPS SET For Target Species	# NIGHTS TRAPPED For Target Species	TOTAL HARVEST (# killed)	TOTAL RELEASED (if any)
Beaver					
Otter					
Mink					
Muskrat					
Nutria					
Bobcat*					
Canine (fox/coyote)					
Coyote					
Gray fox					
Red fox					
Fisher*					
Opossum					
Raccoon					
Skunk					
Weasel					

A separate, voluntary online survey to collect trapper data not necessarily related to harvest is available on Survey Monkey at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/5BHWH65>. If you have access to a computer, type in the link as written to get to the brief survey (it shouldn't take more than 10 minutes to complete). Survey responses will be analyzed in the coming months, and survey results will be posted on the Division website when finalized.