



West Virginia Division of Natural Resources

Furbearer Management Newsletter

Spring/Summer 2010

Wildlife Resources Section

We are now in our third year publishing the Furbearer Management Newsletter. We hope you enjoy this issue and would appreciate hearing from you. Please direct correspondence to: Rich Rogers, WVDNR, 1 Depot St., Romney, WV 26757, richrogers@wvdnr.gov.

River Otter Trapping Season Proposed

The Wildlife Resources Section has proposed an otter trapping season for the 2011-12 hunting and trapping season. The proposed season will run statewide from the first Saturday in November through the end of February with a yearly bag limit of one. Checking of harvested otters at official game checking stations will be mandatory. The proposal received a favorable response from 84% of individuals and 82% of clubs sending in comments after the Division's spring open house meetings in March, 2010. Division of Natural Resources commissioners will be considering the proposal at their next meeting.

Population models using reproductive data obtained from WV otters, and survival data from numerous studies indicate a healthy, growing population of otters in WV that can easily sustain a limited harvest. Even with fairly conservative survival rate estimates, the model shows a growing population with a limited harvest. Data will continue to be collected and analyzed after each season to insure the health of otter populations. Season length, bag limits, and management issues will be modified as needed. Trappers are strongly urged to turn skinned carcasses in to District offices so that biological data can be collected. Directions will be forthcoming if the season is finally approved.

Convention in International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) approval for otter pelt export will be sought on approval of the season. This will be necessary to export pelts to the

Raccoon Field Trial Survey

Results of the 2009-2010 Raccoon Field Trial Survey will be made available soon. Unfortunately, very few clubs participated this past year. But, it appears that raccoon numbers are holding their own throughout much of the state.

As stated in the last newsletter, our staff will be making an effort to make it out to the West Virginia Coon Hunters Association state championship hunt and youth championship hunt as we have in past years. We look forward to meeting with many of the hunters again, being available to answer questions and address concerns, and encourage clubs to participate in the WV Raccoon Field Trial Survey which many have been faithfully contributing to for 18 years. Write to the address at the beginning of the newsletter for a copy of the latest survey or if you would like your club to participate. **Participation is sorely needed and validity of the survey is being hurt by lack of participation.**

Furbearer Harvest Statistics

Final figures for the 2009-10 season are currently being tabulated and will be available in the next issue of this newsletter. We are attempting to have this data available in a more timely manner in the future.

Legislative Updates

Two items pertaining to trapping were clarified by changes in the law this past legislative session. Trap tags with name and address must now be attached to the trap chain, trap, or snare in order to be legal. The previous law included "trap set" in the previous list, with "set" not being defined anywhere in code. Also, in the past it has been required that all trapped beaver must be checked at an official game checking station. When the law was written there was no nonresident trapping of beaver allowed. The original law did not include nonresident requirements to check beaver. Technically, until now, nonresidents have not

had to check beaver. With the new change, everyone trapping beaver must present pelts or carcasses to an official game checking station for game checking tags.

USDA Wildlife Services Coyote Movements Study

USDA Wildlife Services is continuing its coyote movements and home range study in West Virginia. To date, four coyotes have been collared with GPS collars that record locations at specific time intervals. One collar is still active and three are missing, or no longer transmitting a signal. There is a \$50 reward offered for the return of these collars that contain valuable coyote movements data. This information will make it possible for Wildlife Services employees to more efficiently remove nuisance coyotes from areas where they are causing damage. The USDA Wildlife Services is asking for the return of these collars if they are in anyone's possession. **To return a collar from a trapped or shot coyote, or for additional information, contact: Lauren Mastro, USDA Wildlife Services, Elkins, WV, 26241 (304)636-1785.**

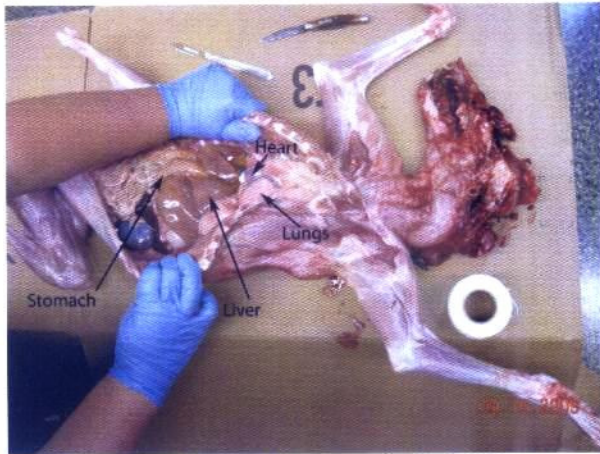
Regional Coyote Food Habits Study Update

The coyote food habits study currently underway at West Virginia University got off to a good start. Researcher Geriann Albers has already collected around 160 animals from 33 counties for stomach content analysis. Only about 20 of these have come from trappers while the rest have been furnished by USDA Wildlife Services employees. Samples from the far eastern panhandle and the southwestern counties are still needed. Additionally, a \$10,000 grant from the Berryman Institute was obtained to hire lab techs to assist with stomach and scat content analysis for the duration of the study.

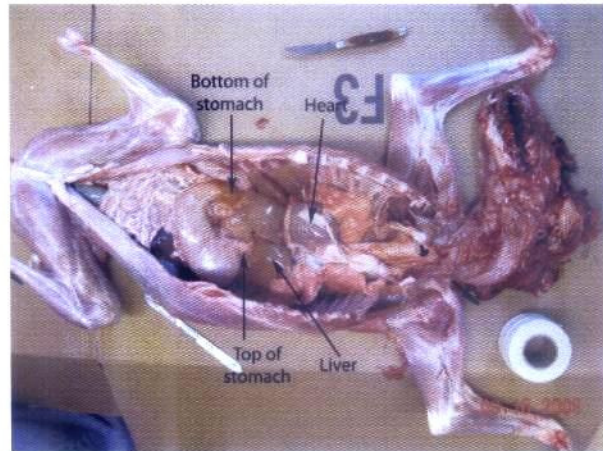
Anyone wishing to help should salvage the stomach and skinned head of harvested coyotes as described below and contact or bring them to the nearest WVDNR office. Stomachs and heads may be frozen until a convenient time. **For further information, contact Geriann Albers at (304)293-0050, galbers@mix.wvu.edu, or Rich Rogers, WVDNR Furbearer Program Coordinator at (304)822-3551, richrogers@wvdnr.gov.**

Collecting Coyote Stomachs and Heads

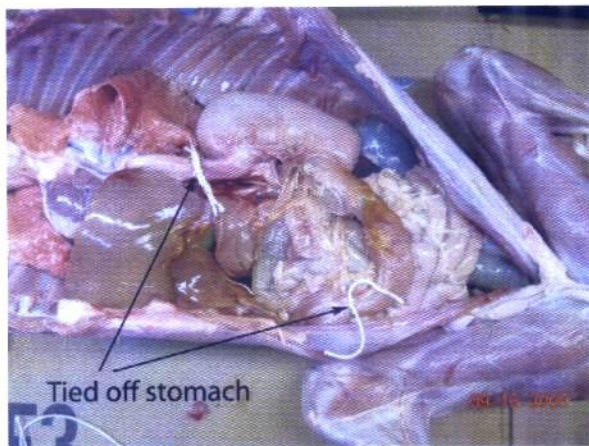
For this study, we ask that you collect the stomach and head of each coyote you trap. After removing the stomach as shown below, place in a one gallon sealable bag. Then, detach the head from the spinal cord and place in a bag as well.



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!

Links

West Virginia Division of Natural Resources

www.wvdnr.gov

West Virginia Trappers Association

www.wvtrappers.com

Guide to State Game Depts.

www.identicards.com/links/statednr.html

Assoc. of Fish and Wildlife Agencies

Furbearer Resources

www.fishwildlife.org/furbearer.html

National Trappers Association

www.nationaltrappers.com

Fur Takers of America

www.furtakersofamerica.com

Conserve Wildlife

www.conservewildlife.org

Furbearers Unlimited

www.furbearers.org

CITES

www.cites.org