

Fur Harvest Statutes

This brochure contains a summary of the state statutes regarding trapping and the commercial harvest of furbearers. Applicable statutes are listed in parentheses at the end of each section of this brochure. Copies of actual statutes of the SC Code of Laws are available online from the South Carolina Legislature at www.sccode.com or by writing: Furbearer Program, SC Department of Natural Resources, P.O. Box 167, Columbia, SC 29202.

Legislative Changes for the 2016-2017 Season

There were no legislative changes affecting trapping or furbearing animals.

Furbearers which may be commercially harvested

The following species are legally classified as furbearers and may be taken by hunting or trapping during the open season: beaver, bobcat, coyote, gray fox, red fox, mink, muskrat, opossum, otter, raccoon, spotted skunk, striped skunk, and weasel. The pelts of these animals may be sold with a valid commercial fur harvest license. **(50-11-110, 50-11-1080 50-11-2400)**

License (\$25 resident, \$200 nonresidents)

A *Commercial Fur Harvest License* is required for:

- anyone who traps, or attempts to trap furbearing animals, whether *commercially* or *recreationally*, or
- anyone that takes furbearing animals by any means, for sale, trade, exchange or barter, or
- anyone who possesses more than 5 furbearing animals or raw or green pelts (this provision does not apply to a licensed fur buyer or fur processor).

All licensed commercial fur harvesters must also possess a valid South Carolina hunting license, regardless of age*. These licenses shall be carried while involved in fur taking activities. A youth (under 16) is not required to be licensed in order to assist a licensed fur harvester, so long as the youth is in the presence of the licensed fur harvester and the youth does not sell, trade, exchange, or barter any furbearing animals taken under the authority of the licensed fur harvester.

*A youth under 16 years of age must purchase a hunting license in order to purchase a Commercial Fur Harvest License *unless the youth has completed an approved Trapper Education Course.*

Anyone who purchases any whole furbearing animal, raw or green furs, pelts or hides is required to have a Fur Buyer's License (\$100.00 for residents, \$200 for nonresidents).

Exemptions from Fur Buyer's License: (1) a person who acquires not more than five furs, pelts, hides, or whole animals for his own personal use during one season and not for barter, exchange, or sale; (2) a person licensed as a fur processor (\$200); (3) a taxidermist who possesses a fur, pelt, hide, or whole furbearing animal legally owned by another person which he is holding temporarily solely for the purposes of processing; (4) a person acquiring furbearing animal carcasses without hides; (5) an owner or enclosure operator of a permitted fox and coyote hunting enclosure who purchases live foxes or coyotes for release into the enclosure.

(50-9-450, 50-11-2470, 50-11-2480)

Legal Traps

In South Carolina, a *trap* is broadly defined as:

“any device, other than a weapon, designed or constructed for taking animals.”

The following traps are legal to use for trapping statewide:

- Foothold traps with an inside jaw spread of 5 ¾” or smaller on land and 7 ¼” or smaller for water sets. Inside jaw spread is measured at the widest point perpendicular to the pivot points (jaw hinges) when the trap is in the set position (Figure 1).
- Enclosed foothold traps such as “Egg”, “Duffer”, “Coon-cuff”, and similarly designed dog-proof style traps designed for raccoons.
- Body gripping traps of the Conibear® type in water or slide sets only. No bait is allowed to be used with body-gripping traps.
- Snares may be used in water sets only.
- Live traps. Live traps may also be used to catch feral animals at any time without a license or permit from the Department.
- Small snap, box and other commonly used traps to catch commensal rodents or snakes in homes and businesses may be used at any time by property owners, occupants, or their designees to catch snakes, rats and mice.

Unless otherwise specified in Title 50 of the SC Code, all other traps and trap uses, including deadfalls or other improvised traps, are unlawful, regardless of the intended species.

All traps must bear the owner's name and address, or the owner's SCDNR-issued Customer ID number either directly thereon or by an attached tag (Figure 2). **(50-11-2400, 50-11-2460)**

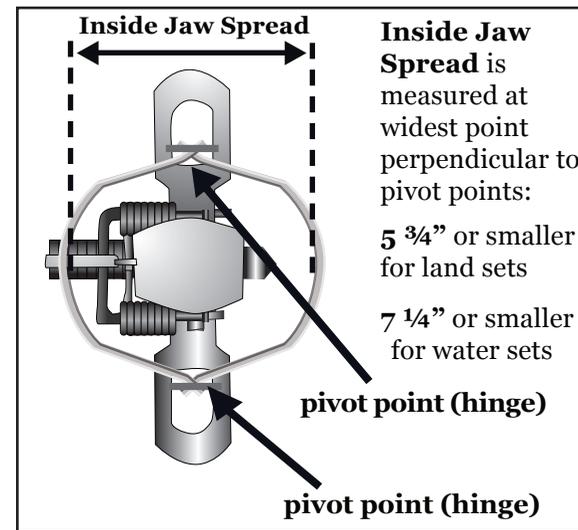


Figure 1. How to measure foothold trap size

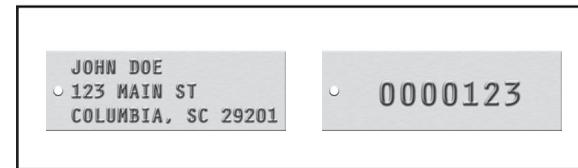


Figure 2. Examples of trap identification tags

Seasons (Trapping & Hunting)

Trapping: It is lawful to trap furbearing animals from December 1 of each year to March 1 of the following year with a valid Commercial Fur Harvester's License.

Hunting: Furbearer hunting seasons vary by game zone and are printed in the annual SCDNR Rules and Regulations brochure. Coyotes and beaver may be hunted during daylight hours year 'round on private lands by licensed hunters.

Night Hunting: Raccoons, opossums, foxes, mink, and skunk may be hunted at night during the open hunting season for those species; however, they may not be hunted with artificial lights except when treed or cornered with dogs and no buckshot or any shot larger than #4, or any rifle ammunition larger than a twenty-two rimfire may be used. Devices that amplify light using any type of power source are considered artificial light (including night vision or thermal imaging equipment).

(50-11-120, 50-11-710, 50-11-1080, 50-11-2540)

Night Hunting for Coyotes

A hunting license is required; however, there is no closed season for hunting coyotes on private land statewide during daylight hours, with or without bait. Coyotes may be hunted at night with an artificial light or nightvision devices using a rimfire rifle, bow and arrow (no crossbows), a shotgun with a shot size no larger than size BB, or a sidearm of any caliber that has iron sights, a barrel length not exceeding nine inches, and which is not equipped with a buttstock, scope, or laser sight.

From the last day of February to July 1, if the landowner provides notification to DNR at least 48 hours in advance, coyotes may be hunted at night with artificial lights and nightvision devices using any legal firearm, bow, or crossbow. Notice to the DNR is required once per season for each property and the names and license numbers of each person participating in the hunt must be listed. Hunters using centerfire rifles during this time must be at an elevated position at least 10 feet from the ground, *unless the hunter is using and only possesses subsonic ammunition for the same rifle.* Persons convicted of certain road hunting and night hunting violations during the previous five years are ineligible to hunt coyotes at night. **(50-11-1080, 50-11-710)**

Electronic Calls

It is illegal to hunt, catch, take, kill or attempt to hunt, catch, take or kill any game bird or game animal with the aid of electronic calls. Except for coyotes, all furbearing animals are also classified as small game and cannot be taken with electronic calls. However, it is legal to use electronic calls during the day or night for hunting coyotes on private lands and during the day on WMA lands where hunting for coyotes is allowed. **(50-11-40)**

Depredation Permits

Depredation permits may be issued at any time of the year by the SCDNR for the taking of furbearing animals that are destroying or damaging private or public property, wildlife habitat, game species, timber, crops, or other agriculture so as to be a nuisance, or for scientific, research, or for wildlife management purposes. There is no cost for this permit. Animals captured under a depredation permit may not be relocated, sold, traded, exchanged, or bartered.

A depredation permit or license *is not required* by the property owner, or his or her designee, when capturing furbearing animals or squirrels within one-hundred yards of the owner's home when the animals are causing damage to the owner's property. Animals captured under this exemption *may not be relocated* and must be released on site or destroyed. (50-11-2570)

Trapper's Responsibility

A person may trap on lands that he owns, or on lands owned by others, provided the trapper has written permission from the landowner. The written permission must be in the trapper's possession at all times while engaged in trapping activities.

There is no trapping allowed on any Wildlife Management Area or Heritage Preserve lands.

All traps must be checked at least once daily from two hours before official sunrise to two hours after official sunset. Body gripping traps used in water sets and other traps used in submersion sets must be checked once every 48 hours. No one, except the owner of the trap, may remove any legally trapped animal from the trap; however, a licensed trapper may tend another's traps with *written permission of the trap's owner or agent*.

Though no longer required, any person shipping or transporting raw furs, pelts, hides or whole animals out of South Carolina can obtain a shipping certificate from the SCDNR if the receiving state or entity requires one, and/or the fur harvest licensee requests this certificate. A conservation officer must be notified at least *48 hours* prior to the need of a shipping certificate in order to inspect the package and issue the certificate. A list of SCDNR Law Enforcement offices can be found on the back of this brochure. (50-11-2430, 50-11-2440, 50-11-2445, 50-11-2500)

Special Tagging Requirement for Bobcat and Otter

Any person required to have a commercial fur license who takes any bobcat or otter must tag the fur, pelt, hide, or whole animal before it is sold, shipped, transferred to any person or business, or transported out of the state, if required by the Federal Government in order to comply with the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES).

A commercial fur licensee must apply to SCDNR before CITES tags can be issued. There is no fee for each individual tag, but the SCDNR must charge a processing fee of \$3.00 for each order. No more than 10 tags may be ordered at any one time. Bobcat and Otter tags may only be ordered from Nov. 1st - April 30th.

The tags must be securely attached and may not be removed until the time of processing. CITES tags are nontransferable and may not be altered in any manner. The SCDNR may limit the number of tags issued for each species and the area in which they may be used. Furbearing animals to be sold as live animals are not required to be tagged. (50-11-2510)

Fur Harvest Reporting Requirement

All commercial fur harvest licensees shall submit an annual report of their harvest to the SCDNR by **April 15th** of each year, using forms provided by the SCDNR. In addition, a trapper shall maintain an accurate **daily** record of all live fox and coyote sales or transfers on forms provided by the SCDNR. These live fox and coyote transaction forms must be retained by the trapper and made available for reasonable inquiry by SCDNR employees.

Any trapper who sells or transfers live foxes or coyotes to permitted fox and coyote hunting enclosures must submit all daily records of these transactions by **April 15th** of each year on the forms provided by the SCDNR.

Failure to report by date due, upon 2nd offense, shall render the violator ineligible for a commercial fur harvest license the following year, in addition to fines for each offense. (50-11-2450, 50-11-2620, 50-11-2630, 50-11-2650)

Fur Buyers Reporting Requirement

Fur buyers shall keep a daily register of furs purchased on forms provided by the SCDNR. No later than the 10th day of each month the fur buyer shall furnish the SCDNR all daily register sheets from the previous month.

Failure to report will result in the loss of buying privileges for one year in addition to the prescribed penalties. (50-11-2490, 50-11-2560).

Importation of Wildlife

It is unlawful to bring, import, or cause to have imported a live coyote or fox into the state. It is also unlawful to release a coyote or fox into the state, except as authorized.

It is unlawful to import any other furbearers into this state without a permit first being issued by the SCDNR. However, any requests for permits to import furbearing animals as pets will routinely be denied. (50-11-1765, 50-11-2605, 50-11-2640, 50-16-20)

Possession and/or Sale of Live Foxes or Coyotes

Live foxes or coyotes may only be sold or transferred to the listed owner or operator of a permitted fox and coyote hunting enclosure by the licensed trapper who took the animal.

A licensed trapper may only possess a live fox or coyote during the commercial fur harvest trapping season (Dec. 1- Mar.1) and for 30 days after (Mar. 2-April 1). After this time, it is unlawful for *anyone*, except a currently permitted fox and coyote enclosure, to possess a live fox or coyote without a permit issued by the SCDNR.

(50-11-2605, 50-11-2630)

To obtain an application for a Commercial Fur Harvest License, contact the SCDNR licensing office at: 803-734-3833

Law Enforcement Offices

Charleston	(843) 953-9307
Clemson	(864) 654-8266
Columbia	(803) 734-4002
Florence	(843) 661-4766

Wildlife Section Offices

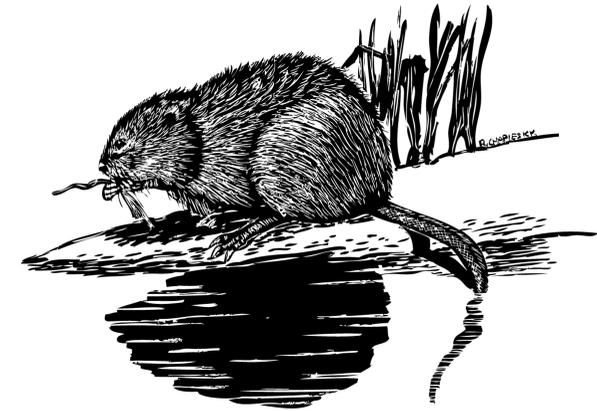
Charleston	(843) 953-5291
Clemson	(864) 654-1671
Columbia	(803) 734-3886
Florence	(843) 661-4766

The South Carolina Department of Natural Resources prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, gender, national origin, disability, religion or age. Direct all inquiries to the Office of Human Resources, PO BOX 167, Columbia, SC 29202.

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South Carolina Trapping and Commercial Fur Harvest Regulations 2016 – 2017



Muskrat (*Ondatra zibethicus*)

SC Department of Natural Resources
Wildlife & Freshwater Fisheries Division

Wildlife Section
Furbearer Project



www.dnr.sc.gov

This brochure expires July 1, 2017