2011-12 Small Game and Furbearer Harvests

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EVERY YEAR the Game Commission surveys hunters and trappers to learn about small game and furbearer harvests, and hunting and trapping effort. Our ability to manage wildlife more effectively and maximize recreational opportunities without jeopardizing our wildlife heritage is improved through the cooperation of the dedicated sportsmen who take the time to provide us with a summary of their hunting and trapping seasons.

Following the close of the 2011-12 small game hunting and trapping seasons, a sample of Pennsylvania's hunters and trappers was surveyed to determine their success and hunting effort. Each purchaser of a general hunting license had about a 1-in-50 chance of receiving a Game Take Survey and each purchaser of a furtaker license had about a 1-in-5 chance of receiving a Furtaker Survey. A total of 18,000 Game Take questionnaires and 6,945 Furtaker questionnaires were mailed. For the Game Take and Furtaker surveys, 10,722 and 4,080 returned questionnaires, respectively, were processed.

Overall, between 2010-11 and 2011-12, harvests of 5 of 8 small game species increased (Table 1). The number of hunters increased for all small game species except rabbits, grouse and quail (Table 2). Harvest per 100 hunter-days increased for 5 of 8 small game species (Table 3).

Furtaker participation and furbearer harvests have remained relatively stable or increased since 2007 (Tables 4 and 5). The furbearer harvests increased for all 10 species (Table 4), and the number of hunters/trappers of furbearers increased for all but weasel (Table 5), between the 2010-11 and 2011-12 seasons. These increases are partly due to inclusion of Junior combination license holders in the Furtaker Survey. Of 417 Junior combination license holders responding to the survey, 69 (14.6%) indicated they trapped or hunted furbearers.

We asked resident junior hunters if they participated in Pheasant, Squirrel, Rabbit or Spring Turkey Junior Hunts. Participation and harvests during the Spring Turkey Junior Hunt increased in 2011 compared to 2010 (Tables 6 and 7).

For a full report of Game Take and Furtaker survey results, including results back to 1983, please go to www.pgc.state.pa.us, and click on "Resources" then "Reports/Minutes." The reports are found under "Annual Wildlife Management Reports."

We would like to thank all of the hunters and trappers who completed Game Take and Furtaker surveys. Their time and dedication to hunting/trapping and our wildlife heritage are greatly appreciated.

Table 1. Estimated harvest by species.

Year	Rabbits	Grouse	Squirrel	Pheasant[a]	Quail[a]	Hare	Woodchuck	Crow
2007	418,139	82,020	674,991	168,094	4,507	685	840,523	182,320
2008	463,935	108,693	708,898	110,331	1,097	783	993,207	183,203
2009	419,721	75,997	635,193	151,737	3,452	1,525	710,411	268,711
2010	341,288	66,385	530,125	103,366	311	1,030	684,927	96,831
2011	289,547	52,243	690,141	116,828	2,260	510	821,965	182,659

[a]Estimates exclude harvest on shooting preserves.

Table 2. Estimated number of hunters.

Year	Rabbits	Grouse	Squirrel	Pheasant[a]	Quail[a]	Hare	Woodchuck	Crow
2007	135,956	96,429	154,653	90,548	3,112	3,030	75,554	23,228
2008	137,842	102,139	171,786	86,052	2,396	2,890	80,116	25,706
2009	139,772	104,228	157,907	91,549	4,412	4,703	69,407	31,519
2010	125,537	91,003	150,309	71,579	3,499	2,756	71,618	20,835
2011	109,369	79,687	165,927	88,307	2,578	4,039	87,549	25,290

[a] Estimates exclude number of hunters on shooting preserves.

Table 3. Estimated harvest per 100 hunter-days.

Year	Rabbits	Grouse	Squirrel	Pheasant[a]	Quail[a]	Hare	Woodchuck	Crow
2007	50.7	15.3	78.6	41.4	42.4	10.1	87.7	102.6
2008	58.6	18.7	79.3	29.8	10.9	15.5	94.7	108.2
2009	51.4	14.6	74.3	39.2	16.8	16.8	88.7	137.5
2010	51.8	16.0	73.0	34.1	2.5	18.6	91.6	99.9
2011	52.4	14.9	87.2	30.4	22.2	6.5	94.3	116.3

[a]Estimates exclude effort on shooting preserves.

Table 4. Estimated harvest of furbearers.

Year	Raccoon	Red Fox	Gray Fox	Coyote[a]	Muskrat	Mink	Beaver	Skunk	Weasel	Opossum
2007[b]	121,446	52,000	18,613	28,974	72,174	10,004	11,542	9,818	813	41,168
2008[b]	142,808	44,745	20,845	23,699	74,059	8,632	9,942	12,331	504	54,273
2009[b]	112,550	37,418	13,793	30,386	63,988	7,261	9,704	8,314	468	37,270
2010[b]	125,423	54,661	15,691	26,658	58,296	8,204	9,254	8,935	436	36,188
2011[c]	174,858	68,214	19,380	32,202	89,274	11,855	18,212	13,057	652	49,626

[a]Combines estimates from Game Take and Furtaker surveys.

[b]Estimates do not account for combination licenses.

[c]Estimates do not account for Senior combination licenses.

Table 5. Estimated number of hunters and trappers of furbearers.

Year	Raccoon	Red Fox	Gray Fox	Coyote[a]	Muskrat	Mink	Beaver	Skunk	Weasel	Opossum
2007[b]	10,131	10,628	7,811	37,792	4,272	3,674	3,112	3,484	1,447	5,307
2008[b]	11,498	12,426	9,561	40,982	4,687	3,617	3,090	4,143	1,466	6,344
2009[b]	8,702	6,651	3,953	40,648	3,261	2,147	1,810	2,587	203	4,482
2010[b]	11,609	13,635	9,455	43,162	4,539	4,093	2,943	3,891	1,655	6,012
2011[c]	16,479	17,934	11,360	55,810	6,451	4,925	3,431	4,500	922	7,654

[a]Combines estimates from Game Take and Furtaker surveys.

[b]Estimates do not account for combination licenses.

[c]Estimates do not account for Senior combination licenses.

Table 6. Estimated number of resident junior license holder participants for Junior Hunts.

Year	Spring Turkey	Pheasant	Squirrel	Rabbit[a]
2007	5,911	3,874	6,165	-
2008	7,354	5,272	8,941	-
2009	1,876	2,003	4,713	-
2010	8,096	5,048	7,850	4,371
2011	12,710	4,778	7,873	2,649

[a]The Junior Rabbit Hunt began in the 2010 hunting season.

Table 7. Estimated harvests by resident junior license holders during Junior Hunts.

Year	Spring Turkey	Pheasant	Squirrel	Rabbit[a]
2007	1,650	5,964	18,101	-
2008	1,638	3,412	29,143	-
2009	1,772	3,671	17,453	-
2010	1,478	4,617	22,625	5,325
2011	1,588	3,201	14,921	1,588

[a]The Junior Rabbit Hunt began in the 2010 hunting season.