

Furbearers

Licenses, applications, harvest reporting and general information: **1-888-248-6866**

Trapping Licenses

All trappers and furbearer hunters must purchase a Trapper License, available online, by telephone, at NMDGF offices and license vendors. Trapper-license holders who do not submit a mandatory harvest report by April 7, 2019 will be rejected from the draw. An \$8 late fee will be charged to report before a new Trapper License may be purchased.

New Mexico residents 12–17 years of age must purchase a Junior Trapper License to trap or hunt **protected furbearers**, however, a Hunter Education number is required to hunt (Mentored Youth number is not eligible.) New Mexico residents 11 years of age or younger do not need a license to trap or hunt protected furbearers. No license is required for New Mexico residents to take **unprotected furbearers** (see '*Unprotected Furbearers*' below).

Nonresidents who hunt protected furbearers or who trap any furbearer (protected and unprotected) in New Mexico **must have a Nonresident Trapper License**. Nonresidents who hold a Nonresident Nongame License or any current New Mexico nonresident hunting license may hunt and possess coyote, prairie dog, rabbit or skunk, but may not set traps or snares unless they also have a Nonresident Trapper License. Nonresidents of states that do not allow New Mexico residents to trap may not legally purchase a New Mexico Nonresident Trapper License. For information and licenses, telephone: 1-888-248-6866.

License Requirements and Fees (see pages 8–12)

Trapper Education (see page 18)

Legal Means of Harvest

Furbearers may be taken with the legal sporting arms for furbearers listed on page 30, and/or with traps and snares. Calls (including mechanically or electronically recorded calling devices) are legal for hunting protected furbearers. Dogs may be used only during open trapping season for protected furbearers. There is no "pursuit or training season" other than the regular open season—except for raccoon (page 127).

Bag Limit

There is no bag limit on any protected furbearer. The director may close seasons to address management needs.

Protected Furbearers

Protected furbearers that may be taken during open season are raccoon, badger, weasel, fox, ringtail, bobcat, muskrat, beaver and nutria. **Taking of all other protected furbearers is prohibited.** These include, but are not limited to, mink, pine marten, river otter, black-footed ferret and coatimundi.

Unprotected Furbearers

Unprotected furbearers include coyote and skunk. There is no closed season or bag limit on unprotected furbearers. Nonresidents must purchase a Nonresident Trapping License to trap unprotected species. Nonresidents must purchase a nongame or any current New Mexico nonresident hunting license to hunt unprotected species.

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Trap Inspection

A licensed trapper or his/her representative (agent) must personally visit and inspect each trap every calendar day, and all wildlife must be removed. Every other calendar day all traps must be checked personally by the trapper.

Each trapper will be allowed one or more agents, who must possess written permission from the trapper and a valid Trapper License. The permission must include the trapper's full name, address, Trapper License Number, Trapper Identification (ID) Number or Customer Identification Number (CIN) and the general location or route of traps.

A release device or catch pole must be carried.

Harassing Trappers, Trap Tampering or Furbearer Removal

It shall be illegal to destroy, disturb or remove any trap, snare or trapped wildlife belonging to a licensed trapper, without permission of the owner of the trap or snare—except from March 16–Oct. 31, when landowners may remove any trap or snare from their privately owned or leased land, if such a trap or snare could endanger livestock. Domestic animals may be released from any trap at any time.

New Mexico Law (Chapter 17-2-7.1, NMSA 1978) prohibits interference with another who is lawfully trapping in an area where those activities are permitted. The first offense is a petty misdemeanor, the second a misdemeanor. See pages 23–24.

Trap Identification

For any trap or snare that reasonably could be expected to catch a protected furbearer, the following restrictions apply. Each trap or snare must be permanently marked with either the trapper's CIN (page 8), a Trapper ID number (previously issued by NMDGF) or the trapper's name and address. The trapper's identification information must be stamped on the bottom of the frame of the trap or on a metal tag which is riveted, welded or otherwise securely attached to the trap frame, chain or cable.

Land Sets

No foot-hold trap with an outside jaw-spread of more than 6.5 inches, or 7 inches if laminated above the jaw surfaces, shall be used in making a land set. No tooth-jawed traps are permitted. Any foot-hold trap with an inside jaw spread 5½ inches or larger shall be offset, unless it has padded jaws.

No land set may be placed within one-quarter mile of a designated and signed roadside rest area, picnic area or an occupied dwelling, without the prior written permission of the occupant of the dwelling—except for land sets placed by the occupant/landowner on his/her own land.

No land set shall be placed within one-half mile of an established and maintained public campground or boat-launching area. It is unlawful to make a land set within 25 yards of any public road or trail (including culverts or structures located beneath)—except on private land with written permission from the landowner. "Trail" shall mean: any path opened for public use and maintained annually with public funds or any path published on a map by a municipal, state or federal agency that is open for public travel. "Public road" shall mean: any thoroughfare constructed and annually

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maintained with public funds (regardless of whether it is currently open or closed to vehicular use) and any thoroughfare published on a map by a municipal, state or federal agency that is open for public travel. When a fence is present within 25 yards of the outside edge of a road, sets must be made on the side of the fence opposite the road.

No body-gripping trap with an inside jaw spread greater than 7 inches may be set on land. Body-gripping traps with inside jaw spreads of 6–7 inches set on land shall be used in conjunction with a cubby set, such that the trap trigger is recessed in the cubby at least 8 inches from an entrance.

Water Sets: No foot-hold trap with an inside jaw spread larger than 7½ inches or body-gripping trap with a jaw spread larger than 12 inches shall be used in making a water set.

Visible Bait and Trap Flags

It shall be illegal to place, set or maintain any trap or snare within 25 feet of bait that is visible from any angle and that consists of the flesh, hide, fur, viscera, or feathers of any animal—unless the bait is used in conjunction with a cubby set where it cannot be seen except from a height of 3 feet or less above ground level and at a maximum distance of 25 feet. The bait must be inside the cubby, but the trap or snare may be outside. Bones that are entirely free of flesh, hide, fur or feathers may be used as visible bait. The restriction on visible bait shall not apply to a trap flag that is suspended above the ground and that is made from materials other than animal parts.

Possession of Live Furbearers

It is illegal to import and/or possess live protected furbearers in New Mexico. The director of NMDGF may issue a permit for retention of raccoons or other activity permitted by rule. Individuals must obtain a permit prior to possessing a live raccoon.

No Trapping of Bear

There are no open trapping seasons for bear. Livestock owners or others suffering depredation should call the nearest NMDGF office for assistance (see page 1).

Cougar Trapping and Snaring

Hunters with both a valid trapper license and a cougar license may use traps or foot snares to harvest cougars on state trust land or private deeded land with written permission from the landowner (pages 46, 48). Neck snares are not a legal method of take. All furbearer trapping rules including trap-size restrictions apply. **Foot snares are prohibited in GMU 27 and those portions of GMU 26 (San Luis Mountains) designated by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as critical habitat for jaguars.** Jaguar critical habitat area in GMU 26 can be viewed at: <https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/report/table/critical-habitat.html> by clicking the 'online mapper' link and entering 'San Luis Mountains' in the 'Find address or place' search menu.

Bobcat Pelt Tag Required

Anyone taking a bobcat in New Mexico must present the pelt for tagging by April 14 or prior to leaving the state, whichever occurs first. Although a carcass tag is not required, a current Trapper License (except N.M. residents 11 years of age or younger) is required when presenting a bobcat for tagging. Tags may be obtained from NMDGF offices (see page 1, *Regional Offices*). Pelts also may be tagged by New Mexico licensed fur dealers—following the policies established by NMDGF.

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No person shall transport across state lines, sell, barter or otherwise dispose of any bobcat pelt taken in New Mexico unless it has been properly pelt tagged. It is unlawful to present for tagging any bobcat pelt taken outside the State of New Mexico. It also is unlawful for licensed fur dealers to tag any bobcat contrary to this rule.

Accidental Trapping of Protected Species

If at anytime you trap a river otter, lynx, coatimundi, mink, pine marten or black-footed ferret, a federally protected bird, or a protected furbearer during closed season—you must release it. If you accidentally trap a Mexican gray wolf—follow the instructions provided on page 130. Trappers must carry a device for releasing nontarget animals. However, if the animal is badly injured and/or releasing it would be dangerous, NMDGF must be contacted as soon as possible. **Trappers will not be held criminally liable if a protected species is accidentally captured, and the trapper voluntarily reports the event or releases the animal.**

Mandatory Harvest Reporting, see page 6.

What You Must Know Before You Hunt or Trap

Closed Areas: Los Alamos County, except the northern quarter and a strip along the west bank of the Rio Grande (north of Water Canyon from the Rio Grande to a line 1,000 feet below the canyon rim); Valles Caldera National Preserve; portions of the Wild Rivers Recreation Area; Orilla Verde and Santa Cruz Lake recreation areas; the Valle Vidal; Chihuahuan Desert Rangeland Research Center; New Mexico state parks; national parks and monuments; national wildlife refuges and New Mexico State Game Commission–owned WMAs. Fort Bliss/McGregor Range only allows furbearer hunting and is closed to trapping. The Gila, Cibola, Lincoln and Apache Sitgreaves National Forests are all closed to beaver trapping.

Seasons (Statewide)

Badger, Weasel, Fox, Ringtail and Bobcat: Nov. 1, 2019–March 15, 2020.

Beaver, Muskrat and Nutria: April 1–30, 2019 and Nov. 1, 2019–March 31, 2020.

Raccoon Trapping and Hunting: April 1–May 15, 2019 and Sept. 1, 2019–March 31, 2020.

Raccoon Pursuit Only (statewide): April 1, 2019–March 31, 2020.

Raccoon Hunting with the Aid of Artificial Light

Hunters possessing a valid Trapper License may hunt raccoons with the aid of artificial light only during raccoon trapping and hunting season. Artificial light must be a headlamp or handheld flashlight. Artificial light cannot be cast from a vehicle. Legal sporting arms are limited to a rimfire rifle or handgun no larger than .22 caliber, shotguns, bows and crossbows. Hunting any other furbearer with the aid of artificial light or after legal shooting hours is unlawful.

Rabies Information for Trappers

In recent years, rabies has been detected in some furbearers in New Mexico. All mammals are capable of contracting rabies. Wild animals infected more often include skunks, foxes, coyotes, raccoons, bobcats and bats.

Trappers should be aware of the potential risk of contracting rabies when harvesting an animal. Rabies is caused by a virus that can be transmitted to humans through contact with the saliva, nervous tissue and/or brain tissue of a rabid animal. Rabies is transmitted only if the virus is introduced through a bite, contact with an open cut in the skin, or more rarely, when infectious material such as saliva from a rabid animal gets into the eyes, nose or mouth.

Some recommended precautions for trappers include:

- Avoid attack or being bitten.
- Wear protective gloves when handling and skinning animals. Open wounds or scratches increase the risk of infection when protective gloves are not used.
- Always err on the side of caution. Use goggles and a skinning apron if possible.
- Clean tools with a disinfectant such as a 10% bleach solution.
- Wash thoroughly with soap and water, iodine solution or alcohol solution after handling and skinning animals.
- If bitten or otherwise possibly exposed to a rabid animal, thoroughly wash the area with soap and water and seek medical care as soon as reasonably possible.
- If attacked or bitten by a potentially rabies-carrying species, the animal may be required by law to be tested for rabies, depending on the species and the ability to retrieve it. The entire head of the animal will be needed for testing. The head should be kept on ice and double bagged. Report the incident as soon as reasonably possible to your local NMDGF officer. The officer will contact the New Mexico Department of Health to determine if testing is required.

Finally, the presence of rabies after skinning need not be a cause for concern, provided the skin(s) and tissues are dried completely. Drying renders the virus no longer viable or active.

Know the Difference between Bobcat and Lynx

Bobcat

- Underside of the tail is white to the tip.
- Ear tufts are less than 1 inch in length.
- Cheek tufts are not prominent.
- Brownish color with black spots (usually) on the belly.
- Total length from 25–37 inches.
- Feet appear small with no hair between pads.
- Track size is less than 2½ inches wide.
- Stride length is approximately 20 inches.



Lynx

- Tail has a black tip and is not white underneath.
- Ear tufts are at least 1½ inches long.
- Cheek tufts are prominent.
- Grayish color with no spots on belly.
- Total length is between 32–37 inches.
- Feet appear large with pads covered by hair.
- Track size is 3½–4½ inches wide.
- Stride length is approximately 28 inches.

