

Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department

**Annual Report to the Vermont Legislature on
Non-Target Animal Captures During Trapping Season**

Submitted to:

Vermont Legislature
House Committee on Environment and Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Energy

Submitted by:

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Introduction

This report fulfills the requirements of 10 V.S.A. § 4861.

§ 4861 states:

On or before January 1, 2024 and annually thereafter, the Commissioner of Fish and Wildlife shall submit in writing to the House Committee on Natural Resources, Fish, and Wildlife and the Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Energy information regarding the species and number of nontarget animals killed or injured by trapping in the preceding calendar year.

Data for this report is collected primarily through an annual trapper mail survey first established by the Department as a voluntary survey in 1990, and then later made mandatory by Fish and Wildlife Board rule in 2016 (*see* 10 V.S.A. App. § 44). In 2018, Act 170 mandated the reporting of all incidentally trapped cats and dogs, which had previously been voluntary (10 V.S.A. § 4254c). Subsequently, Act 159 in 2022 required the reporting of all “nontarget” animals captured by trapping to the Legislature, effective January 2024. Both the trapper mail survey and the warden’s computer aided dispatch system (i.e., VALCOR) must be queried to fulfill the requirements of 10 V.S.A. § 4861.

Vermont’s regulated trapping seasons run from the fourth Saturday in October until the end of March depending on the species being trapped. Animal damage control trapping can occur at any time during the year when a human-wildlife conflict occurs. To align with the trapping seasons and Department’s data collection processes, the data reported here covers the period from October 2023 to October 2024. The data reported in this first report to the legislature precedes the implementation of the amended furbearer rules (10 V.S.A. App. § 44) as mandated by Act 159.

Nontarget captures are separated into three categories in the tables below. Wardens often receive reports of nontarget catch that may not be included in trapper reports. Trappers may also report nontarget catches to both the warden and on their trapper report, leading to overlap. Domestic dog or cat captures are required to be reported to a warden within 24 hours. If the trapper has reported a nontarget catch to a warden, they do not need to include it in their trapper report. For accuracy, we separated the warden reported catch because including them in animal damage control or in-season nontarget capture data would result in an inflated count.

Definitions:

1. Animal Damage Control – Trapping activities that occur inside and outside of the normal regulated trapping season at the request of the landowner to address human-wildlife conflict.
2. Reporting Period – To align with the trapping seasons and the department’s data collection processes, the data presented in this report were collected from the fourth

Saturday in October to the Friday prior to the fourth Saturday in October of the following year, not on a calendar year basis.

3. Nontarget Capture – Any furbearer caught outside of its season, or any non-furbearer caught during the reporting period.

Table 1. Nontarget animals captured by species during animal damage control trapping activities, during the reporting period (source: trapper mail survey).

Species	Injured	Killed
*Cottontail Rabbit	0	2
*Gray Squirrel	0	2
Muskrat	0	2
Virginia Opossum	0	3
River Otter	0	3
*Porcupine	0	2
Raccoon	0	3
*Red Squirrel	0	7
Turtle sp.	0	2
*Woodchuck	0	49

***Species with asterisk are species likely targeted for animal damage control purposes, but the department’s reporting system does not make a distinction between whether they were the targeted species or not.**

Table 2. Nontarget animals captured by species during the 2023 – 2024 trapping season (source: trapper mail survey).

Species	Injured	Killed
Bobcat	0	2
Coyote	0	1
Raccoon	0	1
Woodchuck	0	1

Table 3. Non-target animals captured by species in the 2023 – 2024 reporting period, reported to the Warden Division.

Species	Injured	Killed
Otter	0	1
Marten	0	1
Bobcat	0	2
Domestic Cat	0	1