

**Iowa Department of Natural Resources
Natural Resource Commission**

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Decision Item

Chapter 108, Mink, Muskrat, Raccoon, Badger, Opossum, Weasel, Striped Skunk, Fox (Red and Gray), Beaver, Coyote, River Otter, Bobcat, Gray (Timber) Wolf and Spotted Skunk Seasons - Notice of Intended Action

The Commission is requested to approve the Notice of Intended Action – Chapter 108, “Mink, Muskrat, Raccoon, Badger, Opossum, Weasel, Striped Skunk, Fox (Red and Gray), Beaver, Coyote, River Otter, Bobcat, Gray (Timber) Wolf and Spotted Skunk Seasons.” The Department has completed the initial steps in Executive Order 71 prior to submitting the Notice of Intended Action.

Chapter 108 sets the season dates, bag limits, possession limits and areas open to hunting or trapping furbearers.

The proposed rule:

- Adds six counties to the open area for bobcats.
- Removes the statewide quotas for bobcats and river otters. This allows the season to run concurrently with the other furbearer seasons and allows fur takers more flexibility in the harvest of an animal.
- Removes the 24-hour reporting requirement for bobcat and river otters. Fur harvesters are still required to get a CITES tag by contacting a conservation officer or wildlife biologist within 7 days of harvesting the animal.
- Reduces the bag limit for river otters from 3 to 2 to prevent too many river otters being taken in any one area.

Populations of bobcats and river otters are at a level that will sustain this additional level of harvest and allow Iowa’s hunters and trappers additional opportunities without negatively impacting these populations.

Dr. Dale Garner, Wildlife Bureau Chief
Conservation and Recreation Division
April 11, 2013

Attached: Chapter 108, Mink, Muskrat, Raccoon, Badger, Opossum, Weasel, Striped Skunk, Fox (Red and Gray), Beaver, Coyote, River Otter, Bobcat, Gray (Timber) Wolf and Spotted Skunk Seasons – NOIA

NATURAL RESOURCE COMMISSION[571]

Notice of Intended Action

Pursuant to the authority of Iowa Code sections 481A.6, 481A.38, 481A.39, 481A.87, 481A.90, and 455A.5(6), the Natural Resource Commission hereby gives Notice of Intended Action to amend Chapter 108, "Mink, Muskrat, Raccoon, Badger, Opossum, Weasel, Striped Skunk, Fox (Red and Gray), Beaver, Coyote, River Otter, Bobcat, Gray (Timber) Wolf and Spotted Skunk Seasons," Iowa Administrative Code.

Chapter 108 sets the season dates, bag limits, possession limits and areas open to hunting or trapping furbearers. The proposed amendment adds six counties to the open area for bobcats, and removes the statewide quotas for bobcats and river otters. This allows the season to run concurrently with the other furbearer seasons. Since there is no longer a quota, the 24-hour reporting requirement is no longer needed. However, federal regulations require that a CITES tag must still be obtained for each bobcat and river otter. The number of river otters a fur harvester may take during the season was reduced from 3 to 2 to prevent too many river otters being taken in any one area. Populations of these furbearers are at a level that will sustain this additional level of harvest and allow Iowa's hunters and trappers additional opportunities without negatively impacting these populations.

Any interested person may make written suggestions or comments on the proposed amendment on or before May 23, 2013. Written comments may be directed to the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, Wildlife Bureau Chief, Wallace State Office Building, 502 E. 9th Street, Des Moines, Iowa 50319-0034; by E-mail at wildlife@dnr.iowa.gov; or by fax at (515)281-6794. Persons who wish to convey their comments orally may contact the Wildlife Bureau at (515)281-5034 or by visiting the fourth floor of the Wallace State Office Building during regular business hours.

There will be a public hearing on May 23, 2013, at 1 p.m. in the conference room on the fourth floor of the Wallace State Office Building. At the public hearing, persons may present their views either orally or in writing. Participants will be asked to give their names and addresses for the record and to confine their remarks to the subject of the amendment.

Any persons who intend to attend the public hearing and have special requirements, such as those related to hearing or mobility impairments, should contact the Department of Natural Resources and request specific accommodations.

The proposed rule is expected to have a positive impact on jobs by increasing overall trapping activity. By eliminating statewide quotas, trappers will be able to actually take bobcats and river otters each season. In the past, the quotas filled up quickly, and many trappers who had purchased licenses were not actually able to take a bobcat or river otter because the statewide quota was filled, even if their personal season limit was not yet met. Eliminating these quotas is consistent with sound wildlife management principles and allows fur harvesters more flexibility in when they take these animals. For example, trappers can now take furbearers later in the season when their pelts are more valuable. In addition, six additional counties have been added for the trapping of bobcats. This will increase trapping activities in these counties. Although the per-person river otter quota has been reduced from 3 to 2, the elimination of statewide quotas means that more otters statewide will be taken, to the benefit of trappers generally. This is because trappers will have more time to take two (versus less time to unsuccessfully try for 3); moreover, being able to take later in the season makes the pelts more valuable.

This likely means increased business for the private sector in the following areas: hunting and trapping gear and other related equipment, and taxidermy work. It could also lead to increased business for restaurants, hotels, and gas stations as people move around the state participating in the sport.

This amendment is intended to implement Iowa Code sections 481A.6, 481A.38, 481A.39, 481A.87, and 481A.90.

The following amendments are proposed.

Item 1. Amend subrule 108.7(2) as follows:

108.7(2) Open area. River otters may be taken statewide. Bobcats may be taken in the following counties: Adair, Adams, Appanoose, Audubon, Cass, Clarke, Crawford, Dallas, Davis, Decatur, Des Moines, Fremont, Guthrie, Harrison, Henry, Iowa, Jefferson, Keokuk, Lee, Louisa, Lucas, Madison, Mahaska, Marion, Mills, Monona, Monroe, Montgomery, Muscatine, Page, Pottawattamie, Poweshiek, Ringgold, Taylor, Union, Van Buren, Wapello, Warren, Washington, Wayne, and Woodbury.

Item 2. Amend subrule 108.7(3) as follows:

108.7(3) ~~Quotas and seasonal~~ Seasonal bag limit.

~~a. Seasonal bag limit.~~ The seasonal bag limit is ~~3~~ 2 river otters and 1 bobcat per person.

~~b. Quotas.~~ The quota for the number of river otters that may be taken is ~~850~~ statewide. The quota for the number of bobcats that may be taken is ~~450~~ in the open area. The season shall end for river otters when the number of river otters trapped, as determined by the harvest reporting system, reaches the quota. The season shall end for bobcats when the number of bobcats taken, as determined by the harvest reporting system, reaches the quota. Trappers shall be allowed a grace period that ends on midnight of the day after the quota is reached to clear their traps of river otters or bobcats. River otters or bobcats found in traps during the grace period may be kept even though the quota is exceeded provided that the trapper has not reached the trapper's personal bag limit. River otters or bobcats trapped after the grace period or in excess of the seasonal bag limit must be turned over to the department; the trapper shall not be penalized.

Item 3. Amend subrule 108.7(4) as follows:

108.7(4) Season Dates. The season for taking river otters and bobcats opens on the first Saturday in November and closes ~~when the quota has been reached, as explained in this rule, or~~ on January 31 of the following year, ~~whichever occurs first.~~

Item 4. Amend subrule 108.7(5) as follows:

108.7(5) Reporting requirements. ~~a.~~ Anyone, including a landowner or tenant not required to have a fur harvester license, who takes a river otter or bobcat must report the harvest to a DNR conservation officer or designated DNR employee within 24 hours. The fur harvester ~~must and~~ arrange to receive a CITES tag from the officer or designated DNR employee within seven days of the time the harvest is reported. The river otter or bobcat shall be skinned and the carcass lower jaw or skull turned over to the DNR conservation officer or designated DNR employee at the time the CITES tag is issued. If the specimen is to be kept whole for taxidermy purposes, a cut shall be made by the trapper between the gum line and eye so the CITES tag can be attached to the skin. It shall be the responsibility of the taxidermist to have the carcass turned over to a DNR conservation officer or designated DNR employee once that animal has been skinned for taxidermy purposes.

~~b.~~ Upon receiving a telephone report that a river otter or bobcat has been legally taken, the conservation officer or DNR employee will call the department's harvest reporting system. The number of river otters and bobcats taken will be updated daily, and a message will be recorded on the department's telephone system. The number taken will be available 24 hours a day. Fur harvesters may check the message daily to determine when the season closes and when the grace period begins and ends. The department will use all practical means to publicize these dates.

Chuck Gipp, Director

Date