

Fur-bearer Seasons

The following table lists the seasons in each Fur Management Zone (see map at left).

O – October • N – November • D – December • J – January • F – February • M – March • Ap – April • Ma – May

Species	Zone 1	Zone 2	Zone 3	Zone 4	Zone 5	Zone 6	Zone 7	Zone 8
Badger	CLOSED	CLOSED	D1 - Ap15	D1 - Ap15	D1 - Ap15	D1 - Ap15	D1 - Ap15	D1 - M31
Beaver	O1 - Ma15	O1 - Ma15	O1 - Ma15	O1 - Ma15	O1 - Ma31	O15 - Ma15	O15 - Ap30	O15 - Ap30
Bobcat	CLOSED	CLOSED	CLOSED	CLOSED	CLOSED	D1 - F15	CLOSED	N1 - F28
Coyote	O1 - F28	O1 - F28	O1 - F28	O1 - F28 ³	O1 - F28 ³	O1 - F28 ³	O1 - F28	O1 - F28
Fisher	N1 - J31 ^{2,4}	N1 - J31 ^{2,4}	N1 - J31 ²	N1 - J31 ²	N1 - J31 ²	CLOSED	CLOSED	CLOSED
Fox	O1 - J31 ⁴	O1 - J31 ⁴	O1 - F28	O1 - F28 ³	O1 - F28 ³	O1 - F28 ³	O1 - F28	O1 - F28
Lynx	D1 - F15 ²	D1 - F15 ²	D1 - F15 ²	D1 - F15 ²	D1 - F15 ²	D1 - F15 ²	CLOSED	CLOSED
Marten	N1 - J31 ⁴	N1 - J31 ⁴	N1 - J31 ²	N1 - J31	N1 - J31	N1 - J31	CLOSED	CLOSED
Mink	N1 - J31 ⁴	N1 - J31 ⁴	N1 - J31	N1 - J31	N1 - J31	N1 - J31	N1 - J31	N1 - J31
Muskrat	O1 - Ma15	O1 - Ma15	O1 - Ma15	O1 - Ma15	O1 - Ma15	O15 - Ma15	O15 - Ap30	O15 - Ap30
Otter	D1 - Ma15 ¹	D1 - Ma15 ¹	D1 - Ma15 ¹	D1 - Ma15 ^{1,6}	CLOSED	CLOSED	CLOSED	CLOSED
Squirrel	N1 - F28	N1 - F28	N1 - F28	N1 - F28	N1 - F28	N1 - F28	N1 - F28	N1 - F28
Weasel	N1 - F28	N1 - F28	N1 - F28 ⁵	N1 - F28	N1 - F28	N1 - F28	N15 - F14 ⁵	N15 - F14 ⁵
Wolf	O1 - M31	O1 - M31	O1 - M31	O1 - M31 ³	O1 - M31 ³	O1 - F28 ^{3,7}	O1 - F28	O1 - F28
Wolverine	N1 - J31 ^{1,4}	N1 - J31 ^{1,4}	N1 - J31 ¹	N1 - J31 ¹	N1 - J31 ¹	N1 - J31 ¹	CLOSED	CLOSED

- 1 This season is provided only for those who are authorized under the authority of a Registered Fur Management Licence.
- 2 This season is provided only for those who are authorized under the authority of a Registered Fur Management Licence, Indian Fur Management Licence or Métis Fur Management Licence issued under the *Métis Settlements Act*.
- 3 Seasonal Snaring Restriction: In order to reduce the potential for accidental harvest of Grizzly Bears, seasonal snaring restrictions will apply for Fur Management Zones 4, 5 and 6. **For the period October 01 through November 30, the use of snares is ONLY ALLOWED in the following WMUs of Fur Management Zones 4, 5 and 6 (WMUs 314, 316, 318, 320, 322, 324, 330, 332, 334, 336, 337, 338, 348, 360, 410, 412, 414, 416, 417, 418, 507, 508 and 521).**
- 4 Season extended to February 15, 2024 in WMUs 524, 532, 534, 536, and 539.
- 5 Weasel may not be harvested in that part of the province described as ranges 1 – 5, west of the 4th meridian, from the international boundary to the north boundary of township 63. This does not apply to Indian Reserves and Métis Settlements set aside under the *Métis Settlements Act*, which fall within the area described.
- 6 This season applies only to WMUs 330, 336 to 360, 507, 508 and 521.
- 7 This season does not apply in WMUs 314, 316, 318, 410, 412, 414, 416, 417 and 418. The season for wolves in these WMUs is from October 1 to March 31.

Black Bear Seasons and Baiting

Six black bear may be hunted but not trapped in each Registered Fur Management Area north of the Red Deer River during the open season for black bear. Registered trappers who are permitted to hunt black bear on their RFMA may use bait for that purpose in the following WMUs: 322, 330 – 338, 348, 358 – 360, 500 – 506, 509, 510, 512 – 520, 522, 523, 529 – 536, 539 – 544 and portions of 320, 324, 357, 507, 521, 526 and 528.

Baiting is prohibited within 1.6 km (1 mi) of occupied dwellings (owners or occupants of dwellings are exempted from this restriction if they have permission to bait from the owners or occupants of all other dwellings within 1.6 km of the bait), Provincial Parks that are not designated as Wildland Provincial Parks, provincial and forest recreation areas and some industrial sites. Each bait site must have

a readily observable sign legibly showing the owner's name or Registered Fur Management Area number. Furthermore, each bait must be posted with surrounding signs to warn other people of its presence. Also, baiting is restricted to the open season and preceding 2 weeks in each specific WMU.

During November in WMUs or partial WMUs where baiting is permitted, only meat or meat products may be used for bait. Any livestock dying other than through proper slaughter for human consumption must be disposed of in prescribed ways and may not be used for baiting bears.

See page 56 of the current **Alberta Guide to Hunting Regulations** for more information.

Limits

The various species of fur-bearers differ in abundance, distribution and opportunity to harvest. Registered Fur Management Areas (RFMAs) also vary in size. To allow trappers a greater opportunity to manage fur-bearers, varied limits exist.

Limits for fisher, lynx and otter within each RFMA have been linked to the size of the trapping area. A basic quota for these species will apply for all RFMAs up to two townships in size. Additional increments will be added for additional townships (or parts of a township).

These increments vary according to WMU, (please note: the higher limit applies when an RFMA falls into WMUs having different limits). The following table lists the limits and increments applicable to RFMAs lying in the designated FMZs or WMUs (see map).

Registered Fur Management Area Limits

Zones	Fisher		Canada Lynx		River Otter		Wolverine
	Basic Limit	Increase for excess Twp*	Basic Limit	Increase for excess Twp*	Basic Limit	Increase for excess Twp*	Basic Limit
Zone 1 WMU 511, 512, 516-519, 529	10	3	10	4	10	3	1
WMU 530-532	10	3	10	5	8	2	1
Zone 2 WMU 357-359, 522-527, 534-537, 539	10	4	12	5	2	1	1
WMU 520, 528, 540-542, 544	10	4	12	5	6	3	1
Zone 3	6	4	4	2	10	3	1
Zone 4 WMU 320-328, 332, 334, 429	3	1	5	2	0	0	1
WMU 330, 336-342, 348, 507, 508	3	1	5	2	1	0	1
WMU 344, 346, 347, 352	3	1	5	2	2	1	1
WMU 349, 353-356, 360, 521	10	4	6	3	2	1	1
WMU 350, 351	10	4	6	3	2	1	1
Zone 5	1	1	4	2	0	0	1
Zone 6	0	0	3	1	0	0	1
Zone 7 & 8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

* Increase for each Township (Twp), or part of it, in excess of two Townships.

Mandatory Registration

If fisher, lynx, otter or wolverine are killed during an open season they must be registered within 30 days of the close of that season. If they are killed outside of an open season they must be registered within 30 days of the kill. In all cases they must be registered before being sold, processed or exported.

To register fur-bearing animals the trapper must take the pelt in to a Fish and Wildlife District Office or another approved location.

Fisher, lynx, otter or wolverine killed by non-residents residing in or within 30 miles of Fort Smith, Northwest Territories, on a registered fur management area that is wholly situated both north of the northern boundary of Township 118 and east of Wood Buffalo National Park, are exempt from the mandatory reporting requirements. Further, an Alberta Provincial Export Permit is not required to export such fisher, lynx, otter or wolverine outside of Alberta.

All bobcat taken under any authority must be registered before the skin is sold, processed or exported from Alberta or within 30 days after the date of harvest.

Registration is a way of recording information about the harvest of fur-bearers. This information helps fur managers set seasons and quotas for following years. Registration provides information such as:

- the size and number of males, females and juvenile animals captured;
- the time of the season they were caught; and
- where they were caught.

Trappers benefit from the mandatory registration requirement because it allows for appropriate changes in quotas and seasons. Accurate data prevents the overharvest of sensitive species of fur-bearers, ensuring a viable resource for the future.

Primeness of Pelts

Furs that are at their peak in quality (their prime) offer trappers the greatest financial return. Successful trappers concentrate their efforts so that they collect most of their furs when pelts are in their prime.

The pelt of a fur-bearing animal is in its prime when the underfur is dense, deep and well covered by the longer guard hair. The leather side should be clear and white or slightly blue, and pliable. Each species reaches its prime during certain periods in the season. The grey shading in the following table shows the approximate time of the year when each species is in its prime.

Species	November	December	January	February	March	April
Badger						
Beaver						
Bobcat						
Coyote						
Fisher						
Fox (Red/Arctic)						
Canada Lynx						
Marten						
Mink						
Muskrat						
River Otter						
Squirrel						
Weasel (Ermine)						
Wolf						
Wolverine						

Summary of the Fisher Tooth Analysis – 2022-2023 Trapping Season

During the 2022-23 trapping season, Alberta's Registered Fur Management Licence holders continued to support the fisher monitoring efforts through the submission of heads. This program resulted in the analysis of 42 fisher heads from across the province, representing 6.3% of the seasons harvest of fisher.

Each sample was processed and the upper right canine tooth extracted. Where the upper right canine was broken or otherwise unusable, an alternate canine tooth was extracted. Teeth were measured for length and width dimensions and then radio-graphed (X-rayed) at the Bonnyville Veterinary Clinic. The amount of tooth pulp cavity observed on the X-ray plates was assessed to determine juvenile/adult age classification; a large pulp cavity equated to a juvenile animal (< 1 year of age) while teeth exhibiting a closed or narrow pulp cavity were classified as adult animals. Examination of pulp cavities included comparing samples to conclusively aged samples to ensure an accurate age class assignment. Sex was determined from tooth measurements where the tooth met the criteria in Table 1.

ANALYSIS OF SAMPLE DATA

The intent of fisher management is to maintain a juvenile to adult female ratio in a trapped sample near 3:1. The 2022-23 season yielded a juvenile to adult female ratio of 1.45 : 1, indicating a reproduction rate below the desired target of 3 : 1 juveniles to adult females for trapped samples.

Table 1. Sex assignment criteria for upper and lower canine teeth using tooth length and width measurements.

Measurement Type	Tooth measurement criteria (mm)	
	Male	Female
Upper canine – length	> 27.2	< 27.2
Upper canine – width	> 6.75	< 6.75
Lower canine – length	> 26.2	< 26.2
Lower canine – width	> 6.15	< 6.15

SAMPLE DATA

Analysed data was apportioned into sex (male, female), age cohorts (adult, juvenile), and age/sex cohorts. The number of samples per cohort is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Fisher tooth samples per cohort.

Fisher Cohort	Number of samples
Female	20
Male	22
Adult	26
Juvenile	16
Adult Female	11
Adult Male	15
Juvenile Female	9
Juvenile Male	7

Sale of Wildlife

In Alberta anyone may sell the following:

- processed (tanned or otherwise permanently preserved, but not dried, salted or frozen) skins of fur-bearing animals;
- black bear skins, provided they have been taken lawfully (black bear claws may only be sold if they remain attached to the whole skin);
- the skins of most animals, including skunk and raccoon, for which a licence is not required;
- unskinned beaver carcasses harvested outside the beaver trapping season; or
- all parts of lawfully taken fur-bearing animals, other than the unprocessed skin.

Sale of Pelts and Parts

No pelt of any fur-bearing animal, except one taken according to the regulations listed under Control of Problem Wildlife (page 20),

may be wasted, destroyed or spoiled. No raw skins of fur-bearing animals may be sold to anyone who is not a fur dealer. Anyone in legal possession of a beaver harvested outside the beaver trapping season may sell the unskinned carcass of the beaver to use as bait or animal food. Except as noted under Exporting (see below), it is unlawful to export from Alberta all, or any part of, the skin or pelt of a fur-bearing animal, without first obtaining a provincial Export Permit.

All parts of lawfully taken fur-bearing animals, other than the unprocessed skin, may be sold without restriction (note that black bears are not included as they are big game animals). These parts of fur-bearing animals may also be exported without a provincial export permit (note that Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna – CITES permits are required for exporting any part of a wolf, lynx, bobcat or otter across an international boundary).

Exporting

With some exceptions noted below, those wishing to export fur-bearing animals from Alberta must have a provincial export permit. These permits may be obtained from any Fish and Wildlife District Office (see page 6).

Persons exporting wolf, lynx, bobcat, otter or black bear products out of Canada must also obtain a federal export permit issued according to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). Information about CITES permits may be obtained at Environment Canada offices in Edmonton (780-951-8891) or Calgary (403-292-4103).

The following products* may be exported **without a provincial** export permit:

- beaver castor,
- beaver oil glands, claws, skulls and teeth of fur-bearing animals, and
- processed (tanned or otherwise permanently preserved, but not dried, salted or frozen) skins of fur-bearing animals.
- coyote skins lawfully possessed.

*The above products must have been harvested under a lawful authority in Alberta or elsewhere.

(**Note:** Black bear are classified as big game, not as fur-bearing animals. Most black bears taken from an RFMA require provincial export permits. For more information on export conditions for

black bear, please contact the nearest Fish and Wildlife District Office [see page 6]. CITES permits are still required for exporting any part of a black bear, wolf, lynx, bobcat or otter across an international boundary.)

*Persons exporting fur directly to the European Union without using the services of Canadian fur auction houses, should be aware that special documents may be required. Please contact the receiving jurisdiction for applicable information.

Fisher, lynx, otter or wolverine killed by non-residents residing in or within 30 miles of Fort Smith, Northwest Territories, on a registered fur management area that is wholly situated both north of the northern boundary of Township 118 and east of Wood Buffalo National Park, do not require an Alberta provincial export permit to export such fur-bearers from Alberta.

Commercial Export of Wildlife to the United States

The United States Fish and Wildlife Service (US FWS) regulates commercial shipments of wildlife that enter or leave the U.S. In particular, taxidermists, trappers and outfitter-guides may experience difficulties transporting wildlife to the U.S. unless such businesses are licenced with the US FWS for transporting commercial shipments of wildlife across the U.S. border. For more information, contact the US FWS at 1-800-344-9453 or view information at: www.fws.gov/



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