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**Kansas allows
small, furbearing**

By **Kevin Bottrell**

Colby Free Press
kbottrell@nwkansas.com

Hunters looking for a challenge or just something different may want to take a crack at hunting or trapping furbearers.

While most mammals technically bear fur, for hunting, the term "furbearers" refers to a specific subset of animals that have historically been hunted or trapped for their fur.

Beaver are one of the most well-known furbearing species, but other furbearing mammals include badger, bobcat, muskrat, opossum, raccoon, swift fox, red and gray fox, striped skunk and weasel. These animals are popular for both hunting and trapping because of their pelts.

In Kansas, furbearer season is from Nov. 18 to Feb. 15. There is no bag limit.

Beaver trapping season is from Nov. 18 to March 31. Running season, when hunters and their dogs can pursue furbearers for training purposes only, is from March 1 to Nov. 1. Running



is allowed 24 hours a day, but no furbearers can be killed during the running season.

According to the state hunting rules, hunters going after furbearers are allowed to use any type of firearm except for fully automatic, plus bows and crossbows. Trappers can use foothold, body-gripping, box, cage, snare, colony and deadfall traps, though there are additional rules for some types of traps.

Body-gripping traps bigger than eight inches can only be used if placed in a river, stream or lake. Snares are prohibited within 50 feet of a public road. Landowners can use snares in the

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trapping of many animal species

right-of-way next to their lands, and all trappers must have their name and address on a tag on their traps.

Trappers are also required to check and maintain their traps at least once every day.

Hunters may not use artificial light, and devices such as night-vision goggles are not allowed. However, hunters are allowed to use flashlights, hat lamps or lanterns to kill or trap furbearers. Hunters can also use calls, lures, baits and decoys.

The Kansas Wildlife and Parks Department requires that, before being able to hunt or trap furbearing animals, anyone born after 1966 must take the Kansas Furharvester Education course. The course covers hunting predators with and without hounds, night hunts and predator calling. The course can be taken online or in traditional instructor-lead classes.

Department of Wildlife and Parks maps show several walk-in hunting areas in northwest Kansas that are recommended for furbearer hunting.

- Northeast of St. Francis along the Republican River, Sept. 1 through Jan. 31.

- Northeast of Rexford across the Sheridan County line, Sept. 1 through Jan. 31. There is no firearms deer hunting allowed in this area.

- North of Selden, west of U.S. 83 just inside



the Decatur County line, Sept. 1 through Jan. 31.

- East of Selden, south of the Sheridan/Decatur County line, Nov. 1 - Jan. 31.

Furbearer hunting is not limited to these areas, but furbearing animals have been found to be common in them, the department says.

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