

## ISSUES SUBMITTAL FORM

Date: 4/15/2020

<b>ISSUE:</b>	<b>Should CPW require the purchase of a furbearer license or a furbearer permit in addition to a small game license for avocational harvest of all furbearer species except coyotes?</b>
<b>DISCUSSION (FACTS AND FIGURES, EXPLANATION OF ISSUE):</b>	
<p><u>Overall Situation:</u> Regulation W-03 #304 (B) states that “A small game or a furbearer license is required to take those species defined in #300 (A) as furbearers.” Therefore, CPW has multiple licenses that avocational furharvesters can purchase to harvest furbearer species: the annual furbearer license, the annual small game license, the youth small game license, the daily small game license, and the annual small game and fishing combination license. This situation has led to multiple challenges including furbearer harvest surveys, dual license purchases, increases in refund requests, and confusion regarding which products are qualifying licenses for purposes of entering the big game license draw. The rationale below explains how the preferred staff alternative of requiring either a furbearer license <u>or</u> a furbearer permit to allow take of furbearers would improve the situation presented by each challenge. The furbearer license (which already exists) and the furbearer permit (which would be new and would be available to anyone that holds some type of small game license) would be required to take all furbearer species except coyotes (which could continue to be taken on either a small game license or a furbearer license).</p>	
<p><u>Issue 1) Furbearer Harvest Surveys:</u> Except for bobcat, CPW does not use mandatory check or mandatory harvest reports to estimate annual harvest levels for furbearer species. Instead, CPW relies on harvest surveys where staff identify, contact and request information from furharvesters (hunters and trappers who take furbearers) to estimate statewide harvest, similar to how CPW estimates deer, elk and pronghorn harvest. The current survey method could be improved; therefore, CPW seeks to narrow the sampling frame to achieve smaller confidence intervals for furbearer harvest estimates.</p>	
<p><u>Issue 2) Dual License Purchase and Refund Requests:</u> The annual furbearer license is currently offered to both residents and non-residents at the same cost as the annual small game license. The furbearer license does not provide any additional benefits above what the small game license offers and, in fact, offers less, since upland game and migratory birds are not covered under the furbearer license. Customers frequently purchase the furbearer license mistakenly thinking they need it in addition to the small game license to harvest furbearers. In 2018, 84% of furbearer license buyers also purchased the small game license (962 of 1,148); there was a similar proportion in 2019. This causes increased workload on CPW staff fielding refund requests and customer complaints as annual licenses are non-refundable. Repeated attempts to inform customers and sales agents about the difference between the furbearer license and small game license have been unsuccessful.</p>	
<p><u>Issue 3) Confusion with Qualifying Licenses:</u> Customers have been confused over what constitutes a “qualifying license” when applying for big game licenses. Currently, the annual furbearer license is not a qualifying license, but an annual small game license is. In 2020, the furbearer license will not be available for purchase in IPAWS during the big game application period to minimize the confusion with qualifying licenses.</p>	
<p><u>Solution:</u> After being reinstated in 2020, the Furharvester Working Group discussed each issue and proposes the following solution. The Commission should:</p>	
<p>1) Require either (a) a furbearer license or (b) a small game license plus a furbearer <i>permit</i> to harvest all furbearer species, except coyote (coyotes could be taken with either a small game license without a permit or with a furbearer license). While the furbearer license currently exists, the furbearer <i>permit</i> will need to be created and could be purchased in addition to a small game license. Regulation W-03 #304(B) should be changed accordingly to allow the take of furbearers either with a furbearer license or with a furbearer permit in addition to a small game license, but <u>not</u> with a small game license alone. Implementation of this change would begin in the 2021</p>	

license year (April 1, 2021-March 31, 2022: the permit would be available for purchase at the time of the sale of the 2021-2022 small game license and 2021-2022 furbearer license). Requiring either a furbearer license or a small game license with a furbearer permit to harvest furbearers (except coyotes) would narrow the sampling frame used for furbearer harvest surveys, essentially excluding from the sample small game license buyers who are not interested in harvesting furbearers.

- 2) Set the newly created furbearer permit at a fee of \$10 to cover CPW administrative costs. A cost is also deemed necessary, as opposed to a free permit, to discourage small game license purchasers who are not likely to harvest a furbearer from obtaining a permit. Feedback from February 2020 Colorado Trappers and Predator Hunters Association (CTPHA) board and membership meetings showed broad support for a permit at a reasonable cost.

This solution effectively segregates furharvesters from small game hunters, which will improve furbearer harvest estimates. Annual surveys would be conducted on the maximum number of furbearer permit and furbearer license holders possible to estimate annual avocational furharvest.

Continuing to offer the furbearer license while having a furbearer permit add-on to a small game license should reduce the number of dual purchases of the small game and furbearer licenses and resulting refund requests, though this problem will likely persist at some level. However, it does not eliminate confusion and concern by some that the furbearer license is not currently a qualifying license for the big game drawing. That issue would have to be taken up separately by the Commission if there was a desire to change. CPW acknowledges it will have to undertake a concerted outreach effort about this change to minimize confusion – as with most license changes.

Coyotes would continue to be legally taken on an unfilled big game license, a furbearer license and a small game license (no change from today). A furbearer *permit* would not be required to take coyotes and therefore coyotes would not be included with the furbearer *permit* (it would be unnecessary). There are many small game hunters who take coyotes who are not interested in harvesting other furbearers, and including these small game hunters in the survey sample for furbearer harvest estimates (as we do today) can lead to wider confidence intervals (the situation we are trying to address).

Youth small game license holders would be exempt from the requirement to purchase a furbearer permit.

**STATE LAW REQUIRES CPW TO SOLICIT INPUT FROM STAKEHOLDERS THAT MAY BE AFFECTED POSITIVELY OR NEGATIVELY BY THE PROPOSED RULES. THE FOLLOWING STAKEHOLDERS HAVE BEEN ADVISED OF AND INVITED TO PROVIDE INPUT ON THE REGULATORY CHANGES PROPOSED IN THIS ISSUE PAPER:**

**\*IT IS ASSUMED THAT ALL NECESSARY INTERNAL PARTIES HAVE BEEN NOTIFIED\*.**

Internal Representatives: Furharvester Working Group, Terrestrial Section, License & Pass Administration Section, Policy and Planning Section, and Big Game Planning Team.

External Publics: CTPHA, Colorado Department of Agriculture, U.S. Department of Agriculture Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) Wildlife Services and feedback from the public via phone and email.

**ALTERNATIVES: (POSSIBLE OUTCOMES or POSSIBLE REGULATIONS):**

1. **\*Preferred Alternative\*:** Require either (1) a furbearer license or (2) a small game license (including an annual small game license, a daily small game license, an annual small game and fishing combination license, or an annual senior small game and fishing combination license) plus a \$10 annual furbearer permit for any resident or non-resident customer who wishes to hunt any of the 16 legal furbearer species (excluding coyote). This would be applicable to

beaver, bobcat, mink, pine marten, badger, red fox, gray fox, swift fox, raccoon, ring-tailed cat, striped skunk, western spotted skunk, long-tailed weasel, short-tailed weasel, opossum and muskrat. The youth small game license would be exempt from the requirement to purchase the furbearer permit. This requires a revision of regulation W-03 #304(B).

2. Status quo.

<b>Issue Raised by:</b>	<b>TERP and License &amp; Pass Administration Staff</b>
<b>Author of the issue paper (if different than person raising the issue):</b>	<b>Matt Eckert, Danielle Isenhart</b>
<b>CC:</b>	<b>CTPHA (D. Gates), Furharvester Working Group</b>
<b>APPROVED FOR FURTHER CONSIDERATION BY:</b>	<b>Danielle Isenhart</b>
<b>REQUIRES NEW SPACE IN THE BROCHURE?</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>YES</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>NO</b>
<b>ARE ADEQUATE STAFF AND FUNDING RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO IMPLEMENT?</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>YES</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>NO</b>
<b>REGION, BRANCH, OR SECTION LEADING IMPLEMENTATION</b>	<b>License &amp; Pass Admin</b>
<b>RECOMMENDED FOR CONSENT AGENDA?</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>YES</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>NO</b>