

Licensed Fur Trappers and Dealers Report  
1985-1986

Legislation enacted in 1974 requires every person who takes furbearing or nongame mammals for profit to purchase a trapping license. As of January 1, 1983, anyone being issued a trapping license must pass a test of trapping competence and proficiency and pay a fee of:

Adult: \$40.00      Juvenile: \$15.00      Nonresident: \$200.00

The price of licenses will be raised \$5 at the beginning of each fiscal year, until the price of an adult license reaches \$50.00.

A total of 1,417 trapping licenses were sold during the 1985-86 trapping season. This is a decrease of 14% from the 1,650 licenses sold for the 1984-85 season and was the third successive year which license sales were below 1,800. This level of license sales is well above the 450 to 1,000 licenses sold annually during the period 1950 to 1976 but below the 3,000 plus licenses sold annually right before license fees were raised and trappers had to pass a proficiency examination. Current fur prices are not likely to encourage license sales to reach 3,000 in the near future.

	<u>1984-85</u>	<u>1985-86</u>
Licensees who reported trapping effort	1,029	854
Licensees who reported but did not trap or were unsuccessful	296	273
Licensees not reporting	325	290
Total licenses sold	1,650	1,417

Revenue received by trappers from the sale of furs during the 1985-86 season, based on average prices paid by fur buyers, was \$907,898.46 (Table 1). This was the first season since 1976-77 that the reported fur revenue did not exceed \$1,000,000.00. This is also a 34% decrease in revenue from the 1984-85 trapping season, when a total of \$1,381,571.64 in revenue was received by trappers. The average income per trapper decreased 21% from \$1,342.64 in 1984-85 to \$1,063.11 in 1985-86.

Each year a portion of the fur harvest is reported as unsold. During the 1985-86 season 16% was unsold, compared to 14% unsold during the 1984-85 season. Unsold pelts still have value, and for the purpose of this report they have the same monetary value as marketed pelts. Therefore, the estimated value of the 1985-86 fur harvest was \$1,004,817.80, a decrease of 34% from the \$1,528,036.70 of the 1984-85 season.

The major cause for the dramatically reduced value of the 1985-86 fur harvest was the reduction in raw fur prices which in turn resulted in a smaller harvest. The average pelt price for all species except opossums was lower as was the take of all species except beavers.

Bobcats continued to be the most economically important animals providing fur, amounting to 77% of the total value of California's furs. Although 8,099 export tags were sold for bobcats taken during the 1984-85 season in a program requiring tags for the sale or shipment of bobcat furs, holders of trapping licenses only reported the take of 6,952. This is a 15% decrease from the reported take of 8,145 during the 1984-85 season. The average price paid per bobcat was \$107.86, a 12% decrease from the average price of \$121.96 paid during the 1984-85 season. The lower value of bobcat pelts, as well as the decrease in take, resulted in a 23% decrease in the overall value of bobcat pelts during the 1985-86 season.

Muskrats, historically the most economically important furbearer, were fourth in importance behind the gray fox and coyote during the 1985-86 season. The 36% decrease in average value of muskrat pelts, and the 44% decrease in take, resulted in a 61% decrease in the overall value of muskrats. The gray fox was the second most important furbearer, with a 58% decrease in pelt value and 15% decrease in take resulting in a 66% decrease in the overall value of gray foxes. Coyote was the third most economically important furbearer, with a 25% decrease in take, and a 3% decrease in average pelt value.

Once again more muskrats were taken than any other species. However, 26,223 muskrats taken during the 1985-86 season represented 48% of the total furbearer take, a decrease from the 57% that this species represented during the 1984-85 season.

Furs were reported taken in all counties except San Francisco and Santa Cruz (Table 2).

During the 1985-86 season there were 23 licensed fur dealers. Eighteen licensed fur dealers, 78%, reported on their 1985-86 activities; 12 dealers reported buying furs. Of the reporting dealers, 15 are from California and three are from other states. They reported buying 28,480 California amounting to a total purchase of \$475,848.31. This represents handling 52% of the furs reported sold by licensed trappers. This is similar to that portion of California furs sold to licensed fur dealers last year. Three fur dealers reported buying more than \$100,000 in furs and three reported buying \$12,000 to \$31,000 in furs. The average prices paid by the reporting dealers is used to calculate the fur value for each species and the value of furs reported bought by the dealers.

Table 1. Number of animals taken, average price paid, and revenue received  
by species during 1984-85 and 1985-86.

1984-85							
Species	Harvest			Fur Value			
	Sold	Unsold	Total	Maximum	Minimum	Average	Revenue
Badger	62	178	240	\$6.10	\$0.25	\$3.26	\$202.12
Beaver	490	414	904	\$20.05	\$1.09	\$9.53	\$4,669.70
Bobcat	7484	661	8145	\$368.00	\$11.00	\$121.96	\$912,748.64
Coyote	6188	1656	7844	\$38.00	\$7.00	\$16.41	\$101,545.08
Gray Fox	8193	519	8712	\$33.58	\$5.50	\$24.74	\$202,694.82
Mink	210	48	258	\$22.06	\$0.12	\$9.36	\$1,965.60
Muskrat	43092	3728	46820	\$4.17	\$0.32	\$2.73	\$117,641.16
Opossum	267	827	1094	\$0.73	\$0.02	\$0.50	\$133.50
Raccoon	3681	741	4422	\$26.00	\$5.00	\$10.75	\$39,570.75
Spotted Skunk	81	283	364	\$3.27	\$0.25	\$2.55	\$206.55
Striped Skunk	334	2759	3093	\$0.78	\$0.29	\$0.58	\$193.72
Weasel	3	7	10	Not calculated			
Total	70085	11821	81906				\$1,381,571.64

1985-86							
Species	Harvest			Fur Value			
	Sold	Unsold	Total	Maximum	Minimum	Average	Revenue
Badger	50	136	186			\$2.91	\$145.50
Beaver	770	249	1019			\$7.82	\$6,021.40
Bobcat	6611	432	7043			\$107.86	\$713,062.46
Coyote	3849	1708	5557			\$15.91	\$61,237.59
Gray Fox	6590	912	7502	N O		\$10.50	\$69,195.00
Mink	102	65	167			\$8.78	\$895.56
Muskrat	25018	1491	26509	D A T A		\$1.76	\$44,031.68
Opossum	246	667	913			\$0.62	\$152.52
Raccoon	2512	649	3161			\$10.03	\$25,195.36
Spotted Skunk	47	274	321			\$2.38	\$111.86
Striped Skunk	341	2368	2709			\$0.29	\$98.89
Weasel	1	2	3			No data	
Total	46137	8953	55090				\$920,147.82

Table 2. Number of animals reported taken by licensed fur trappers and by species and county during the 1985-86 trapping season.

County	Badger	Beaver	Bobcat	Coyote	Gray Fox	Mink	Muskrat	Opossum	Raccoon	Spotted Skunk	Striped Skunk	Weasel	Total
Alameda			9		29				1				39
Alpine		1	19	18	2					6	4		50
Amador			3		2				2		2		9
Butte		80	13	6	69		1941	15	107	26	46		2303
Calaveras			9	29	26			8	11		29		112
Colusa		7	33	33	154		2876	5	43	5	3		3159
Contra Costa		4		7	3	2	2194	4	70				2284
Del Norte		16	82		19		5		34				156
El Dorado		65	14	17	36	2	45	29	27	3	40		278
Fresno	14		303	178	185		7	18	22	10	67		804
Glenn	4	4	63	76	258		353	18	40	12	100		928
Humboldt	1	2	433	34	282				664	8	172		1596
Imperial	7	5	18	38	113				4				185
Inyo	4	22	316	207	83		36		5	2	30	1	706
Kern	26	20	764	411	472			20	69	16	104		1902
Kings			22	27	19				4		19		91
Lake	1	10	112	61	363	3	61	5	190	12	28		846
Lassen	3	18	70	254		3	508		17	4	19	1	897
Los Angeles	6		328	314	653			16	48	27	72		1464
Madera			25	57	56			31	21	4	87		281
Marin			22	5	13			39	46		56		181
Mariposa		1	86	111	143		1	9	35	2	63		452
Mendocino			82	19	127			12	120	1	12		373
Merced		63	21	87	24	12	284	32	115	15	48		701
Modoc	13	17	207	208		50	3006		47	16	18		3582
Mono	8	39	50	138	34	1			1				271
Monterey	8	3	480	122	325		2	92	58	10	382		1482
Napa	2		14	21	41			7	34		11		130
Nevada		58		19	2	1	44	13	21		24		182
Orange			22	12	43			3	5	3			88
Placer		80	5	7	27	3	47	13	22		22		226
Plumas	1	29	27	100	1		3		18		4		183
Riverside	3		181	309	340		150	11	23	3	43		1063
Sacramento		122		26	6	35	595	64	79		69		996
San Benito	5		96	78	50			8	27		127		391
San Bernardino	49	6	848	1075	465		4	20	37	14	92		2610
San Diego	3		215	295	392			80	33	6	98		1122
San Francisco													0
San Joaquin		32				3	462		64				561
San Luis Obispo	7		205	45	304			47	46	3	203		860
San Mateo				1					2				3
Santa Barbara	2		499	114	601			23	20	8	106		1373
Santa Clara			41	34	10			2	12		59		158
Santa Cruz													0
Shasta	1	33	174	169	357	24	4556	14	106	5	29		5468
Sierra		3	6		5								14
Siskiyou	4	39	274	152	51	20	5784		86	51	107	1	6569
Solano		2	12		8	1	273		22	2	25		345
Sonoma		1	56	7	61			42	149	7			323
Stanislaus	1	21	27	113	68	2	303	99	133		59		826
Sutter		85		11	3	2	2478	12	49		23		2663
Tehama	2	44	49	54	254		81	14	152	4	33		687
Trinity		6	30	21	93				32	6	26		214
Tulare	3		349	50	214			51	42	1	96		806
Tuolumne			42	57	125		1		43		20		288
Ventura	8		252	298	450			36	23	6	32		1105
Yolo		7	11	14	5		229		26				292
Yuba		74	24	18	36	3	180	1	53	23			412
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Total Animals Trapped	186	1019	7043	5557	7502	167	26509	913	3161	321	2709	3	55090
% Total Take	0.34%	1.85%	12.78%	10.09%	13.62%	0.30%	48.12%	1.66%	5.74%	0.58%	4.92%	0.01%	

Table 3. California furs purchased by fur dealers licensed in California, 1985-86.

Species	Range of Average Prices		# Furs Purchased	Total Spent
Badger	\$2.70	- \$5.00	11	\$32.01
Beaver	\$3.56	- \$8.09	199	\$1,556.18
Bobcat	\$45.00	- \$150.51	3367	\$363,164.62
Coyote	\$4.50	- \$25.00	1195	\$19,012.45
Gray Fox	\$11.80	- \$19.75	3990	\$41,895.00
Mink	\$7.00	- \$8.95	38	\$333.64
Muskrat	\$1.25	- \$2.25	17675	\$31,108.00
Opossum	\$0.16	- \$1.50	107	\$66.34
Raccoon	\$6.96	- \$17.15	1859	\$18,645.77
Spotted Skunk	\$1.89	- \$2.79	11	\$26.18
Striped Skunk	\$0.29	- \$0.29	28	\$8.12
Weasel	Not calculated		0	\$0.00
Total			28480	\$475,848.31