

State of California
Natural Resources Agency
Department of Fish and Wildlife
Wildlife and Fisheries Division
Wildlife Branch

2019-20 LICENSED FUR TRAPPERS' AND DEALERS' REPORT

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INTRODUCTION

The Department of Fish and Wildlife has been gathering information on the number of furbearing mammals harvested, their value, and the number of licenses sold in California since 1919. Early reports of take were gathered by compiling data from a sample of licensed trappers. Since the 1952-53 season, each licensed trapper has been required to report his/her annual take of furbearing or non-game mammals for profit in order to purchase a trapping license for the following season. As of January 1, 1983, anyone applying for a new trapping license must first pass a test of trapping competence and proficiency before they may purchase the license. For 2019-20 that license fee was:

Resident: \$121.00

Junior: \$40.50

Nonresident: \$607.25

Over the years, the number of furs taken and monetary return to trappers has varied greatly. The number of licenses sold increased during the 1920's to 5,243 in the 1927-28 season. Fur revenues were relatively high at that time as well. With the Depression and World War II, fur revenues and trapping license sales decreased dramatically. This decline continued until about 1970, when the fur value and take began to increase. The increase was rather dramatic over the next decade; the number of licensed trappers increased from less than 500 to more than 3,900, and the fur value increased from about \$50,000 to almost \$2,400,000. During the 1980s, the number of trapping licenses sold decreased from 3,021 to 834, and the take decreased from 131,491 to 21,046. License sales decreased by 42 percent in the 1998-99 season and 46 percent in the 1999-00 season after the passage of Proposition 4 on November 3, 1998. Passage of Proposition 4 eliminated the use of body-gripping traps for commercial purposes.

As of January 1, 2003, new legislation required persons who provided trapping services for profit (nuisance/pest control trappers) to obtain a trapping license certification as had historically been required of commercial fur/recreational trappers. Nuisance/pest control trappers were not allowed to participate in commercial fur trade, and from the 2004-05 license year through 2019-20, this report continued to provide trapping harvest data for only those commercial fur/recreational trappers. Effective January 1, 2020, new law prohibits all recreational trapping and any fur-trade or fur dealing in the state of California. This report contains harvest reporting for the period July 1, 2019 – December 31, 2019. No lawful recreational trapping harvest is allowed after January 1, 2020.

METHODS

Section 467, Title 14, California Code of Regulations, requires that all licensed commercial fur/recreational trappers report their season's harvest by the end of the trapping year (July 1). Since 2014, trappers have had the option to report their take electronically, utilizing CDFW's Automated License Data System (ALDS) accessible online at: [ALDS Harvest reporting](#).

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On these reports, trappers note the number of each species of furbearing or non-game mammal taken for commercial or recreational purposes, the number of each species sold, the county of take for each species, and the dealers to whom the furs were sold.

Trappers may also report their “catch-per-unit-effort”, for taking individual furbearing and non-game species. The catch per unit effort (CPUE) for a target species, is equal to the number of individuals captured, divided by the total number of “trap-nights” (trap-nights = number of traps set * number of nights traps were set). This index of trapping effort is commonly standardized to reflect the catch per 100 trap-nights.

Likewise, licensed fur dealers and their agents must report their purchases of furs. The dealers are required (Section 4040, Fish and Game Code) to report the number of furs of each species taken in California that they bought, and the average price paid per fur for each species.

The data from these reports are compiled to determine the take for each species, the distribution of that take, and the variations in that take from previous years. These compilations of data are presented herein.

RESULTS

A total of 63 trapping licenses were sold during the 2019-20 trapping season. This represents a decrease of 38% from the 101 licenses sold in the 2018-19 season (Table 1).

Table 1: Numbers of Fur Trappers Buying Licenses and Reporting Their Harvest

License group:	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020
Licensees who reported successful trapping effort	52	68	62	7
Licensees who reported, but did not trap or were unsuccessful	66	58	32	56
Licensees not reporting	2	7	7	0
Total Commercial Fur/Recreational Trapping Licenses sold	120	133	101	63

No purchases or revenues were reported by Licensed Fur Dealers or Trappers from the sale of furs during the 2019-20 season. (Table 2).

Each year a portion of the fur harvest is reported as unsold. During the 2019-20 season, all fur was unsold, compared to 28 percent unsold during the 2018-19 season. In comparison to the 2018-19 trapping season, the harvest of fur-bearing and nongame mammals decreased 88 percent in the 2019-20 season.

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More gray fox were taken during the 2019-20 season than any other species (Table 4). The 83 gray fox taken represented 95 percent of the total take.

Table 2: 2019-2020 Number of Animals Taken, Average Price Paid & Revenue Received by Species

Species:	Total Harvest	Harvest Unsold	Harvest Sold	Average Pelt \$	Estimated Revenue (sold)	Estimated Fur Value (taken)
Badger	0	0	0	NR	NR	NR
Beaver	0	0	0	NR	NR	NR
Coyote	0	0	0	NR	NR	NR
Gray Fox	83	83	0	NR	NR	NR
Mink	2	2	0	NR	NR	NR
Muskrat	0	0	0	NR	NR	NR
Opossum	0	0	0	NR	NR	NR
Raccoon	0	0	0	NR	NR	NR
Spotted Skunk	0	0	0	NR	NR	NR
Striped Skunk	2	2	0	NR	NR	NR
Weasel	0	0	0	NR	NR	NR
Total	87	87	0		NR	NR

Table 3: 2018-2019 Number of Animals Taken, Average Price Paid, & Revenue Received by Species

Species:	Total Harvest	Harvest Unsold	Harvest Sold	Average Pelt \$	Estimated Revenue (sold)	Estimated Fur Value (taken)
Badger	5	5	0	NR	NR	NR
Beaver	5	5	0	NR	NR	NR
Coyote	125	85	40	NR	NR	NR
Gray Fox	47	26	21	NR	NR	NR
Mink	11	9	2	NR	NR	NR
Muskrat	707	1	706	NR	NR	NR
Opossum	38	38	0	NR	NR	NR
Raccoon	32	32	0	NR	NR	NR
Spotted Skunk	0	0	0	NR	NR	NR
Striped Skunk	97	95	2	NR	NR	NR
Weasel	0	0	0	NR	NR	NR
Total	1067	296	771		NR	NR

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Table 4: 2019-2020 Trapper Take by County

County	Badger	Beaver	Coyote	Gray Fox	Mink	Muskrat	Opossum	Raccoon	Spotted Skunk	Stripped Skunk	Weasel	Total
Alameda												0
Butte												0
Colusa												0
Contra Costa												0
Fresno												0
Glenn												0
Humboldt												0
Inyo												0
Kern												0
Lassen												0
Los Angeles				83						2		85
Mendocino												0
Modoc												0
Mono												0
Monterey												0
Nevada												0
Orange												0
Placer												0
Plumas												0
Riverside												0
Sacramento												0
San Benito												0
San Bernardino												0
San Luis Obispo												0
San Mateo												0
Santa Clara												6
Shasta												0
Siskiyou												0
Solano					2							2
Sutter												0
Trinity												0
Tulare												0
Tuolumne												0
Ventura												0
Yuba												0
Unknown												0
Total	0	0	0	83	2	0	0	0	0	2	0	87
Percent	0%	0%	0%	94%	3%	0%	0%	0%	0%	3%	0%	100%

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Catch per unit effort can be considered an indirect measure of the relative abundance for a given target species. However, CPUE is influenced not only by the intrinsic density of a target species' local population, but also by other factors, including local variation in landscape characteristics, changes in trapping regulations, and the experience/skill level of individual trappers.

Reported capture rates during the 2019-20 season were highest for gray fox (0.0409, Table 5).

Table 5: Reported Trap Capture Rate (CPUE) by Species

Species	Trappers Reporting (2019-2020)	Reporting Trapper Take (2019-2020)	Total Trap-Nights (2019-2020)	Capture Rate/CPUE (2019-2020)
Badger, American	2	0	80	0
Beaver, American	0	0	0	0
Coyote	2	0	80	0
Fox, Gray	3	83	2,030	0.0409
Mink, American	0	0	0	0
Muskrat, Common	0	0	0	0
Opossum, Virginia	1	0	4	0
Raccoon	3	0	44	0
Skunk, Striped	5	2	1,994	0.0010
Skunk, Western Spotted	2	0	80	0
Weasel, Long-tailed	2	0	80	0

Licensed fur dealers reported that no pelts were purchased in California. The average prices paid by the reporting California dealers, in addition to sales reported by trappers (which may be out of state), are used to calculate the estimated fur revenue and value (Table 2) for each species. No fur price data was reported from either group for 2019-20.

The 2019-20 season was the final season that the CDFW issued recreational trapping licenses and those for commercial fur trade. The season ended when new law became effective January 1, 2020. There was a decrease in both the number of animals taken and licenses sold from the 2018-19 license year.