

State of California  
 THE RESOURCES AGENCY  
 California Department of Fish and Game

**Licensed Fur Trappers and Dealers Report  
 1986-1987**

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. For 1986-87, that fee was:

Adult: \$45.00      Juvenile: \$15.00      Nonresident: \$225.00

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 1,347 trapping licenses were sold during the 1986-87 trapping season, a decrease of 5% from the 1,417 licenses sold for the 1985-86 season (Table 1). This was the fourth successive year in 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 from 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.

**Table 1.** Numbers of trappers buying licenses and reporting their harvest.

	1984-85	1985-86	1986-87
Licensees who reported trapping effort	1,029	854	1,180
Licensees who reported but did not trap or were unsuccessful	296	273	256
Licensees not reporting	325	290	167
<b>Total licenses sold</b>	<b>1,650</b>	<b>1,417</b>	<b>1,347</b>

Revenue received by trappers from the sale of furs during the 1986-87 season, based on average prices paid by fur buyers, was \$1,948,897.28 (Table 2). This was the sixth season since 1976-77 that the reported fur revenue did not exceed \$2,000,000.00. However, this is a 112% increase in revenue from the 1985-86 trapping season, when a total of only \$920,147.82 was received by trappers. The average income per trapper increased by 53% from \$1,077.46 in 1985-86 to \$1,651.60 in 1986-87.

Table 2. Number of animals taken, average price paid, and revenue received by species during 1985-86 and 1986-87.

Species	1985-86			Fur Value			
	Harvest			Max.	Min.	Average	Revenue
	Sold	Unsold	Total				
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			\$10.50	\$69,195.00
Mink	102	65	167		N O	\$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				No data	
<b>Total</b>	<b>46137</b>	<b>8953</b>	<b>55090</b>				<b>\$920,147.82</b>

Species	1986-87			Fur Value			
	Harvest			Max.	Min.	Average	Revenue
	Sold	Unsold	Total				
Badger	78	116	194			\$12.50	\$975.00
Beaver	992	459	1451			\$17.36	\$17,221.12
Bobcat	8483	133	8616			\$167.33	\$1,419,460.39
Coyote	5659	1241	6900			\$22.74	\$128,685.66
Gray Fox	9585	602	10187			\$19.67	\$188,536.95
Mink	323	33	356		N O	\$11.82	\$3,817.86
Muskrat	33066	2380	35446		D A T A	\$3.54	\$117,053.64
Opossum	349	789	1138			\$1.82	\$635.18
Raccoon	4398	454	4852			\$16.18	\$71,159.64
Spotted Skunk	41	206	247			\$3.18	\$130.38
Striped Skunk	506	3083	3589			\$2.41	\$1,219.46
Weasel	2	13	15			\$1.00	\$2.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>63483</b>	<b>9417</b>	<b>72900</b>				<b>\$1,948,897.28</b>

Each year a portion of the fur harvest is reported as unsold. During the 1986-87 season 12% was unsold, compared to 16% unsold during the 1985-86 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 1986-87 fur harvest was \$2,046,325.17, an increase of 101% from the \$1,017,293.27 of the 1985-86 season.

Furs were reported taken in all counties except San Francisco and Santa Cruz counties (Table 3).

Bobcats continued to be the most economically important animals providing fur amounting to 73% of the total value of California's furs. Although 9,123 export tags were sold for bobcats taken during the 1986-87 season in a program requiring tags for the sale or shipment of bobcat furs, holders of trapping licenses only reported the take of 8,617. This is a 24% increase from the reported take of 6,952 during the 1985-86 season. The average price paid per bobcat was \$167.33, a 55% increase from the average price of \$107.86 paid during the 1985-86 season. The higher value of bobcat pelts, along with the increase in take, resulted in a 99% increase in the overall value of bobcat pelts during the 1986-87 season.

**Table 2. Number of animals reported taken by licensed fur trappers and by species and county during the 1986-87 trapping season.**

County	Badger	Beaver	Bobcat	Coyote	Gray Fox	Mink	Muskrat	Opossum	Raccoon	Spot. Skunk	Strip. Skunk	Weasel	Total
Alameda			2		10								12
Alpine		1	11	18	6					3	2		41
Amador			3	1	4					6	2		16
Butte		198	24	27	165	4	3578	34	345	1	26		4402
Calaveras		4	24	26	77			8	14		32		185
Colusa		14	79	50	178		2707	8	72		1		3109
Contra Costa		3	2	15	1	29	223	14	75		10		372
Del Norte		42	1		1		2		9				55
El Dorado		15	19	23	93		4	21	33		3	43	254
Fresno	5		388	307	202	2	34	12	71	10	69		1100
Glenn	3	52	93	79	403		3576	15	269	11	46		4547
Humboldt	2		399	29	369	1		3	676	5	110		1594
Imperial		12	35	34	91		10		8		2		192
Inyo	7	195	214	204	75	1			16		13		725
Kern	14	8	743	610	568			13	81	21	159	3	2220
Kings			37	27	5				6		25		100
Lake		2	122	66	530	26	402	15	186	6	145		1500
Lassen	4	60	120	267	32	3	1444		28	4	117	1	2080
Los Angeles	3		532	337	444			7	38	6	128		1495
Madera	1	3	69	77	76		3	24	29	1	74		357
Marin				3				40	32		61		136
Mariposa	7	6	182	110	277			26	150		137		895
Mendocino			149	30	278	6	13	44	414	9	89		1032
Merced	2	32		38	5	14	430	43	184		106	5	859
Modoc	13	39	229	309		42	4599		18		12		5261
Mono	12	23	68	356	84	2			1	1	2		549
Monterey	9	8	577	108	356		3	92	111	17	507		1788
Napa			39	24	89		1	1	27		2		183
Nevada				3									3
Orange			21	6	50			3	2	1	10		93
Placer		72	9	6	36	6	277	17	24		36		477
Plumas		44	45	212	29	1	18		7	1	4		356
Riverside	9	25	157	320	354		257	14	42	8	149		1335
Sacramento		152		21	18	61	1523	50	130		51		2006
San Benito	2		170	37	66			1	28	15	179		498
San Bernardino	55	12	802	1098	659	1	203	31	61	16	92		3030
San Diego			407	524	567			72	71	36	124		1801
San Francisco													0
San Joaquin		113	7	18	50	72	1178	23	118		10		1589
San Luis Obispo	11	6	339	89	445			97	55	11	301		1354
San Mateo			5	2	5			1	3				16
Santa Barbara	14		579	135	759			39	45	8	108		1687
Santa Clara			41	31	2				11		6		91
Santa Cruz				1					1		2		4
Shasta	6	33	178	233	631	28	4829	32	105	13	97	1	6186
Sierra													0
Siskiyou	2	39	296	141	26	31	7017		166		44	1	7763
Solano		13			3		363		32		4		415
Sonoma	5		75	10	71		18	93	227	6	58	1	564
Stanislaus		38	42	55	134	16	457	62	190		37	1	1032
Sutter		92	53	5	24	7	863	28	67		38		1177
Tehama		50	58	166	479		252	23	269	7	40		1344
Trinity		3	111	40	198	3			117	9	11		492
Tulare	1		395	110	385		1	77	46	15	108		1138
Tuolumne			68	50	132		2	3	16		13		284
Ventura	7		589	389	631		10	49	33	1	144		1853
Yolo		7	7	17	12		909		22		2		976
Yuba		35	2	7	2		251	3	65		3		368
<b>Total Animals Trapped</b>	<b>194</b>	<b>1451</b>	<b>8617</b>	<b>6901</b>	<b>10187</b>	<b>356</b>	<b>35446</b>	<b>1138</b>	<b>4852</b>	<b>247</b>	<b>3589</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>72991</b>
<b>% Total Take</b>	<b>0.27%</b>	<b>1.99%</b>	<b>11.81%</b>	<b>9.45%</b>	<b>13.96%</b>	<b>0.49%</b>	<b>48.56%</b>	<b>1.56%</b>	<b>6.65%</b>	<b>0.34%</b>	<b>4.92%</b>	<b>0.02%</b>	

Muskrats, historically the most economically important furbearer, were fourth in importance behind the gray fox and coyote during the 1986-87 season. The 101% increase in average value of muskrat pelts, and the 34% increase in take, resulted in a 166% increase in the overall value of muskrats. The gray fox was the second most important furbearer, with an 87% increase in pelt value and 36% increase in take resulting in a 172% increase in the overall value of gray foxes. Coyote was the third most economically important furbearer, with a 24% increase in take, and a 43% increase in average pelt value.

Once again more muskrats were taken than any other species. However, 35,446 muskrats taken during the 1986-87 season represented 49% of the total take, a slight increase from the 48% that this species represented during the 1985-86 season.

During the 1986-87 season there were 28 licensed fur dealers. Sixteen licensed fur dealers, 51%, reported on their 1986-87 activities; 14 dealers reported buying furs. Of the reporting dealers, 12 are from California. They reported buying 32,477 pelts in California, amounting to a total purchase of \$1,242,636.19. This represents handling 45% 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 of the reporting fur dealers reported buying more than \$100,000 in furs and five reported buying from \$13,000 to \$62,000 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 3. Furs Purchased by Dealers from Licensed Fur Dealer Reports, 1986-87.**

Species	Range of Average Prices	No. of Furs Purchased	Total Spent
Badger	4.00 - 25.00	18	225.00
Beaver	5.00 - 28.33	363	6,301.68
Bobcat	81.49 - 200.92	5,691	952,275.03
Coyote	5.00 - 43.36	2,231	50,732.94
Gray Fox	5.00 - 34.63	7,368	144,928.56
Mink	1.00 - 13.75	163	1,926.66
Muskrat	2.00 - 3.61	14,218	50,331.72
Opossum	1.25 - 3.00	166	302.12
Raccoon	8.00 - 18.06	2,191	35,450.38
Spotted Skunk	3.18	16	50.88
Striped Skunk	1.30 - 5.00	42	101.22
Weasel	1.00	10	10.00
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>32,477</b>	<b>\$1,242,636.19</b>