

**STATE OF CALIFORNIA  
DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME  
WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT DIVISION  
BIRD AND MAMMAL CONSERVATION SECTION**

**LICENSED FUR TRAPPERS' AND DEALERS' REPORT  
1994-95**

by

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November 1995

## INTRODUCTION

The Department of Fish and Game 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 nongame mammals for profit in order to purchase a trapping license for the following season. 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 1994-95 that fee was:

Adult: \$62.75                  Juvenile: \$21.00                  Nonresident: \$316.00

Over the years, the take and monetary return to trappers for their furs 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 1980's, the number of trapping licenses sold decreased from 3,021 to 834, and the take decreased from 131,491 to 21,046. License sales increased slightly in the 1994-95 season, but the take (compared to last year) decreased by 1,787 animals.

## METHODS

Section 467, Title 14, California Code of Regulations, requires that all licensed trappers report their season's harvest by the end of the trapping year (July 1) or not receive a trapping license for the next season. On these reports, the trappers note the number of each species of furbearing or nongame animal taken for commercial purposes, the number of each species sold, the county of take for each species, and the dealers to whom the furs were sold.

Likewise, licensed fur dealers and their agents annually 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.

After the trappers' and fur dealers' reports are received by the Department, the data from these 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

Three hundred thirteen trapping licenses were sold during the 1994-95 trapping season, an increase of 5 percent from the 300 licenses sold in the 1993-94 season (Table 1). Current fur prices are not likely to cause license sales to increase substantially in the near future.

TABLE 1 NUMBERS OF TRAPPERS BUYING LICENSES AND REPORTING THEIR HARVEST			
Reports	1992-93	1993-94	1994-95
Licensees who reported successful trapping effort	185	188	189
Licensees who reported but did not trap or were unsuccessful	122	76	52
Licensees not reporting	31	36	72
Total Licenses Sold	338	300	313

Estimated revenue received by trappers from the sale of furs during the 1994-95 season, based on average prices paid by fur buyers, was \$46,365 (Table 2). This is 41 percent below the revenue of \$77,670 received in 1993-94, and is well below the high of \$2,399,565 of 1978-79.

The average income per successful trapper decreased from \$413 in 1993-94 to \$245 in 1994-95.

Each year a portion of the fur harvest is reported as unsold. During the 1994-95 season, 12 percent was unsold, compared to 29 percent unsold during the 1993-94 season. Unsold pelts still have value, and for the purpose of this report are considered to have the same monetary value as marketed pelts. Therefore, the estimated value of the 1994-95 fur harvest was \$59,951 (Table 2) a decrease of 45 percent from the \$107,303 of the 1993-94 season.

Furs were reported taken in all counties except Alpine, Amador, Contra Costa, Del Norte, Madera, Marin, Monterey, Orange, Placer, San Francisco, Santa Clara, Santa Cruz, Solano, Yolo, and Yuba (Table 3).

Bobcats continued to be the most economically important animals, providing 41 percent of the total value of California's furs. Although 1,319 export tags were sold for bobcats taken during the 1994-95 season, in a program requiring tags for the sale or shipment of bobcat furs, holders of trapping licenses only reported a take of 1,018. Part of this difference is because some bobcat hides are retained for personal use. Therefore, no export tag purchase is required. Also, some trappers fail to send in their annual reports. The average price paid per bobcat was \$24.72, a 39 percent decrease from the average price of \$40.44 paid during the 1993-94 season.

Muskrats were second in value importance behind bobcats during the 1994-95 season. Gray Fox ranked third in estimated fur value. Coyote estimated fur value ranked fourth for the year.

Licensed trappers who did not send in their annual reports (Table 1) will have their 1995-96 license revoked pursuant to Section 467, Title 14, California Code of Regulations.

**TABLE 2**  
**NUMBER OF ANIMALS TAKEN, AVERAGE PRICE PAID, AND REVENUE**  
**RECEIVED BY SPECIES DURING 1991-92 AND 1992-93**

1994-95						
Species	Harvest			Pelt Average	Estimated Revenue	Estimated Fur Value
	Sold	Unsold	Total			
Badger	0	22	22	NR	0	0
Beaver	203	54	257	9.96	2,022	2,560
Bobcat	771	247	1,018	24.72	19,059	25,165
Coyote	620	434	1,054	8.32	5,158	8,769
Gray Fox	1,016	166	1,182	8.10	8,230	9,574
Mink	15	11	26	0.75	11	20
Muskrat	9,774	322	10,096	1.09	10,654	11,005
Opossum	19	108	127	0.88	17	112
Raccoon	247	108	355	4.72	1,166	1,676
Spotted Skunk	1	23	24	NR	0	0
Striped Skunk	17	365	382	2.80	48	1,070
Weasel	2	0	2	NR	0	0
Total	12,685	1,860	14,545	-	\$46,365	\$59,951
1993-94						
Species	Harvest			Pelt Average	Estimated Revenue	Estimated Fur Value
	Sold	Unsold	Total			
Badger	11	31	42	\$ 4.37	\$ 48	\$ 184
Beaver	238	271	509	8.21	1,954	4,179
Bobcat	956	149	1,105	40.44	38,661	44,686
Coyote	471	793	1,264	15.29	7,202	19,327
Gray Fox	1,145	261	1,406	9.53	10,912	13,399
Mink	63	10	73	9.15	576	668
Muskrat	8,097	2,032	10,129	1.91	15,465	19,346
Opossum	27	220	247	.65	18	161
Raccoon	498	288	786	5.47	2,724	4,299
Spotted Skunk	18	36	54	1.38	25	75
Striped Skunk	61	643	704	1.39	85	979
Weasel	11	2	13	NR	0	0
Total	11,596	4,736	16,332	-	\$77,670	\$107,303

NR = None reported sold

TABLE 3  
TRAPPING TAKE BY COUNTY 1993-94

County	BA*	BC*	BE*	CO*	GF*	MI*	MU*	OP*	RA*	SP*	ST*	WE*	Total
Alameda	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	10	-	-	9	-	19
Butte	-	-	161	3	62	-	952	8	149	-	-	-	1,335
Calaveras	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Colusa	-	22	5	12	1	-	293	-	10	-	-	-	343
El Dorado	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
Fresno	-	85	-	131	49	-	-	-	15	-	74	-	354
Glenn	-	10	6	3	11	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	32
Humboldt	-	54	-	4	55	-	-	-	12	-	6	-	131
Imperial	-	-	-	85	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	85
Inyo	-	11	-	10	10	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	32
Kern	1	78	2	138	23	-	10	5	42	4	58	-	361
Kings	-	-	-	30	2	-	-	2	7	-	-	-	41
Lake	-	5	-	4	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	14
Lassen	-	42	11	48	-	1	275	-	2	4	4	-	387
Los Angeles	-	69	-	66	69	-	-	-	-	-	8	-	212
Mariposa	-	10	-	8	30	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	51
Mendocino	-	15	-	-	56	-	-	3	3	-	-	-	77
Merced	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	2	-	1	-	6
Modoc	3	59	-	35	-	-	1,288	-	7	-	-	-	1,392
Mono	-	19	32	40	16	2	-	-	-	-	3	-	112
Napa	-	6	-	7	4	-	-	-	5	-	12	-	34
Nevada	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
Plumas	-	6	-	1	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	9
Riverside	1	19	-	11	76	-	-	10	4	11	14	-	146
Sacramento	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	2	5	-	2	-	12
San Benito	-	3	-	20	-	-	-	2	-	-	25	-	50
San Bernardino	2	124	-	152	111	-	-	3	3	-	12	-	407
San Diego	-	21	-	12	121	-	-	10	2	-	11	-	177
San Joaquin	-	-	3	7	5	-	6	10	7	-	8	-	46
San Luis Obispo	2	18	-	31	30	-	-	-	-	-	13	-	94
San Mateo	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6	-	-	11	-	17
Santa Barbara	1	83	-	21	213	-	-	-	-	1	20	1	340
Shasta	-	20	9	27	8	15	3,170	-	9	-	15	-	3,273
Sierra	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
Siskiyou	11	140	-	55	42	7	4,095	4	28	4	30	1	4,417
Sonoma	-	2	-	-	1	-	-	34	33	-	21	-	91

County	BA*	BC*	BE*	CO*	GF*	MI*	MU*	OP*	RA*	SP*	ST*	WE*	Total
Stanislaus	-	-	20	-	5	-	4	11	3	-	9	-	52
Sutter	-	-	8	-	1	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	11
Tehama	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Trinity	-	6	-	4	25	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	35
Tulare	-	42	-	2	38	-	-	4	-	-	12	-	98
Tuolumne	-	10	-	4	30	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	44
Ventura	1	38	-	77	82	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	200
Total	22	1,018	257	1,054	1,182	26	10,096	127	355	24	382	2	14,545

\* BA = Badger; BC = Bobcat; BE = Beaver; CO = Coyote; GF = Gray Fox; MI = Mink; MR = Muskrat; OP = Opossum; RA = Raccoon; SP = Spotted Skunk; ST = Striped Skunk; WE = Weasel

Once again, more muskrats were taken than any other species (Table 3). The 10,096 muskrats taken during the 1994-95 season represented 64 percent of the total take.

Nine licensed fur dealers reported on their 1994-95 activities, and six reported buying furs in California. They reported buying 1,444 pelts in California, amounting to a total purchase of \$11,066 (Table 4). This represents 11 percent of the 12,683 furs reported sold by licensed trappers (Table 2). The average prices paid by the reporting dealers are used to calculate the estimated fur value (Table 2) for each species and the value of furs (Total Spent in Table 4) reported bought by the dealers.

Species	Range of Average Prices	Number of Furs Purchased	Total Spent
Badger	NR	0	0
Beaver	9.96	75	747
Bobcat	12.00 - 35.00	148	3,660
Coyote	8.00 - 8.74	262	2,181
Gray Fox	6.00 - 10.00	431	3,492
Mink	.75	2	2
Muskrat	1.07 - 2.00	401	437
Opossum	.75 - 1.00	6	5
Raccoon	2.00 - 4.80	109	514
Spotted Skunk	NR	0	0
Striped Skunk	1.00 - 3.00	10	28
Weasel	NR	0	0
Total	-	1,444	\$11,066

NR = None reported sold