

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

**LICENSED FUR TRAPPERS' AND DEALERS' REPORT
1995-96**

by

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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 1995-96 that fee was:

Adult: \$64.25

Juvenile: \$21.50

Nonresident: \$323.00

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) increased by 436 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

Two hundred fifty seven trapping licenses were sold during the 1995-96 trapping season, a decrease of 10 percent from the 313 licenses sold in the 1994-95 season (Table 1). Current fur prices are expected to increase for beaver, bobcat, muskrat and raccoon. Therefore, an increase in license sales is expected for the 1996-97 trapping year.

TABLE 1 NUMBERS OF TRAPPERS BUYING LICENSES AND REPORTING THEIR HARVEST			
Reports	1993-94	1994-95	1995-96
Licensees who reported successful trapping effort	188	189	152
Licensees who reported but did not trap or were unsuccessful	76	52	81
Licensees not reporting	36	72	24
Total Licenses Sold	300	313	257

Estimated revenue received by trappers from the sale of furs during the 1995-96 season, based on average prices paid by fur buyers, was \$36,507 (Table 2). This is 21 percent below the estimated revenue of \$46,365 received in 1994-95, and is well below the high of \$2,399,565 for 1978-79.

The average income per successful trapper decreased from \$245 in 1994-95 to \$240 in 1995-96.

Each year a portion of the fur harvest is reported as unsold. During the 1995-96 season, 42 percent was unsold, compared to 12 percent unsold during the 1994-95 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 1995-96 fur harvest was \$64,111 (Table 2) an increase of 7 percent from the \$59,951 of the 1994-95 season.

Furs were reported taken in all counties except Alameda, Alpine, Del Norte, Kings, Nevada, San Benito, San Francisco, Solano, and Yuba (Table 3).

Bobcats continued to be the most economically important animals, providing 49 percent of the total value of California's furs. Although 660 export tags were sold for bobcats taken during the 1995-96 season, in a program requiring tags for the sale or shipment of bobcat furs, holders of trapping licenses reported the sale of 548. 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.

Muskrats were second in value importance behind bobcats during the 1995-96 season. Coyote ranked third in estimated fur value. Gray fox estimated fur value ranked fourth for the year.

Licensed trappers who did not send in their annual reports (Table 1) will have their 1996-97 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 1994-95 AND 1995-96

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	1 1,005
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
1995-96						
Species	Harvest			Pelt Average	Estimated Revenue	Estimated Fur Value
	Sold	Unsold	Total			
Badger	5	18	23	2.15	11	49
Beaver	103	196	299	5.80	597	1,734
Bobcat	548	171	719	33.66	18,446	24,202
Coyote	295	914	1,209	6.13	1,808	7,411
Gray Fox	507	344	851	8.01	4,061	6,817
Mink	23	19	42	3.00	69	126
Muskrat	7,145	1,545	8,690	1.50	10,718	13,035
Opossum	26	217	243	1.53	40	372
Raccoon	114	898	1,012	6.17	703	6,244
Spotted Skunk	5	28	33	2.59	13	85
Striped Skunk	19	1,858	1,877	2.15	41	4,036
Weasel	0	13	13	NR	0	0
Total	8,790	6,221	15,011		36,507	64,1 11

NR = None reported sold

TABLE 3
TRAPPING TAKE BY COUNTY 1995-96

County	BA *	BC*	BE *	CO*	GF*	MI*	MU*	OP *	RA*	SP *	ST*	WE *	Total
Amador	-	6	-	-	2	-	-	10	1	-	1	-	20
Butte	-	-	59	-	29	-	953	-	51	-	-	-	1,092
Calaveras	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1
Colusa	-	51	6	12	15	-	400	-	3	-	-	-	487
Contra Costa	-	-	2	-	-	-	10	-	-	-	-	-	12
El Dorado	-	22	2	1	4	1	-	1	1	-	4	-	36
Fresno	-	84	1	66	41	4	5	10	19	2	40	-	272
Glenn	1	6	7	2	26	-	82	2	13	-	7	-	146
Humboldt	-	49	-	32	32	-	-	33	40	-	53	-	239
Imperial	-	-	-	94	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	94
Inyo	-	6	75	15	11	13	-	-	11	2	-	1	134
Kern	-	81	20	191	36	-	-	1	25	4	54	-	412
Lake	-	4	-	-	10	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	14
Lassen	1	19	8	41	-	1	187	-	1	2	1	-	261
Los Angeles	1	10	-	20	20	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	53
Madera	-	-	-	1	-	-	5	-	6	-	-	-	12
Marin	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	5	-	8
Mariposa	-	-	-	1	20	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	21
Mendocino	-	16	-	15	9	-	-	5	12	1	5	-	63
Modoc	3	41	-	16	-	1	1,175	-	1	-	-	-	1,237
Mono	1	22	6	53	29	-	4	-	-	-	2	-	117
Monterey	-	-	2	24	-	-	1	-	-	-	47	-	74
Napa	-	24	-	30	65	-	-	3	23	-	19	-	164
Orange	-	-	-	-	17	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	17
Placer	-	-	-	7	2	-	-	32	11	-	46	-	98
Plumas	-	11	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	11
Riverside	-	16	-	14	97	-	-	10	3	15	24	-	179
Sacramento	-	-	-	12	0	-	-	5	-	-	7	-	24
San Bernardino	2	76	-	152	119	-	-	10	-	-	-	-	359
San Diego	1	23	-	33	86	-	-	10	-	-	25	-	178
San Joaquin	-	2	66	16	17	4	11	18	33	-	14	-	181
San Luis Obispo	9	6	-	44	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	65
San Mateo	-	2	-	2	-	-	-	36	659	-	1,349	10	2,058
Santa Barbara	-	4	-	11	10	-	-	1	-	1	3	-	30
Santa Clara	2	1	-	40	35	-	1	-	10	-	-	-	89
Santa Cruz	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1
Shasta	-	3	11	15	13	9	1,257	3	11	2	14	-	1,338
Sierra	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
Siskiyou	2	37	2	39	7	9	4,305	3	22	4	-	2	4,432
Sonoma	-	3	-	3	6	-	-	24	24	-	127	-	187
Stanislaus	-	-	17	-	1	-	25	18	13	-	11	-	85
Sutter	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	3	-	4
Tehama	-	-	15	7	19	-	-	2	2	-	10	-	55
Trinity	-	31	-	6	19	-	-	-	6	-	-	-	62
Tulare	-	21	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	23
Tuolumne	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	2	4	-	-	-	8
Ventura	0	42	-	190	46	-	-	-	5	-	4	-	287
Yolo	-	-	-	-	-	-	269	-	-	-	-	-	269
Total	232	719	299	1,209	851	42	8,690	243	1,012	33	1,877	13	15,011

* 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 8,690 muskrats taken during the 1995-96 season represented 58 percent of the total take.

Eight licensed fur dealers reported on their 1995-96 activities, and four reported buying furs in California. They reported buying 1,734 pelts in California, amounting to a total purchase of \$18,089 (Table 4). This represents 20 percent of the 8,790 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.

TABLE 4 FURS PURCHASED BY DEALERS, 1995-96			
Species	Range of Average Prices	Number of Furs Purchased	Total Spent
Badger	2.15	1	2.15
Beaver	5.00- 6.68	46	266.96
Bobcat	10.73- 37.61	401	13,496.78
Coyote	5.03 - 7.46	110	674.80
Gray Fox	7.00 - 8.11	323	2,588.45
Mink	3.00	7	21.00
Muskrat	1.50	198	297.00
Opossum	1.53	16	24.48
Raccoon	5.67 - 6.39	617	684.81
Spotted Skunk	2.59	1	2.59
Striped Skunk	2.15	14	30.10
Weasel	NR	0	0
Total	-	1,734	18,089.12

NR = None reported sold