

**State of California  
The Resources Agency  
Department of Fish and Game  
Wildlife Programs Branch**

**LICENSED FUR TRAPPERS' AND DEALERS' REPORT**

**2004-2005**

**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 non-game 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 2004-2005 that fee was:

Adult: \$81.25

Junior: \$27.25

Nonresident: \$408.00

Over the years, the take and monetary return to trappers for their furs has varied greatly. The number of licenses sold increased during the 1920s 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, 46 percent in the 1999-00 season, and one percent in 2000-01. The decrease in license sales is no doubt due to the passage of Proposition 4 on November 3, 1998. Passage of Proposition 4 eliminated the use of any body-gripping traps for commercial purposes. License sales increased to 211 during the 2001 -02 trapping year. Sales dropped to 133 in 2002-03, but increased 44 percent to 191 in 2003-04. License sales for the 2004-2005 year increased 10 percent to 211.

## 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). If the trapper's annual report is not received by July 1, the trapper's license will be revoked. On these reports, the trappers note the number of each species of furbearing or non-game 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 and eleven trapping licenses were sold during the 2004-05 trapping season, an increase of 10 percent from the 191 licenses sold in the 2003-04 season (Table 1).

<b>TABLE 1</b>			
<b>NUMBERS OF TRAPPERS BUYING LICENSES AND REPORTING THEIR HARVEST</b>			
Reports	2002-2003	2003-2004	2004-2005
<b>Licenses who reported successful trapping effort</b>	79	102	91
<b>Licenses who reported but did not trap or were unsuccessful</b>	54	52	43
<b>Licenses not reporting</b>	0	37	54
<b>Total licenses sold</b>	133	191	211

Estimated revenue received by trappers from the sale of furs during the 2004-05 season, based on average prices paid by fur buyers, was \$72,960 (Table 2). This is \$9,348 more than the estimated revenue of \$63,612 received in 2003-04. The average income per successful trapper increased to \$802 in 2004-05 from \$624 in 2003-04.

Each year a portion of the fur harvest is reported as unsold. During the 2004-05 season, 52 percent was unsold, compared to 62 percent unsold during the 2003-04 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 2003-04 fur harvest was \$80,960 (Table 2), a decrease of 7.5 percent from the \$87,537 in the 2003-04 season. In comparison to the 2003-04 trapping season, the harvest of fur-bearing mammals decreased by 33 percent. Take of all fur-bearing species excluding striped skunk, badger and, bobcat, decreased significantly during the 2004-05 season. The 2004-05 take of opossum was substantially less than in 2003-04.

Bobcats were the most economically important animals, providing 100 percent of the total revenue for California's furs (Table 2). Although 404 export tags were sold for bobcats taken during the 2004-05 season, in a program requiring tags for the sale or shipment of bobcat furs, holders of trapping licenses reported the sale of 456. Part of this difference is because some trappers hold pelts to be sold in the future.

**TABLE 2**  
**NUMBER OF ANIMALS TAKEN, AVERAGE PRICE PAID, AND REVENUE RECEIVED BY**  
**SPECIES DURING 2003-04 and 2004-05**

2003-04						
Species	Harvest			Pelt Average	Estimated Revenue	Estimated Fur Value
	Sold	Unsold	Total			
Badger	0	1	1	NR	0	0
Beaver	55	220	275	9.07	499	1,995
Bobcat	409	20	429	148.75	60,839	63,814
Coyote	54	582	636	14.86	802	9,451
Gray Fox	60	266	326	16.58	995	5,405
Mink	4	7	11	5.00	20	55
Muskrat	2,696	173	2,869	NR	0	0
Opossum	7	1,980	1,987	NR	0	0
Raccoon	85	1,267	1,352	5.38	457	6,816
Spotted Skunk	0	4	4	NR	0	0
Striped Skunk	20	1,008	1,028	NR	0	0
Weasel	0	1	1	NR	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,390</b>	<b>5,529</b>	<b>8,919</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>\$63,612</b>	<b>\$87,537</b>
2004-05						
Species	Harvest			Pelt Average	Estimated Revenue	Estimated Fur Value
	Sold	Unsold	Total			
Badger	4	4	8	NR	0	0
Beaver	37	131	168	NR	0	0
Bobcat	456	50	506	160.00	72,960	80,960
Coyote	115	328	443	NR	0	0
Gray Fox	122	120	242	NR	0	0
Mink	1	5	6	NR	0	0
Muskrat	2,083	76	2,159	NR	0	0
Opossum	2	341	343	NR	0	0
Raccoon	47	982	1,029	NR	0	0
Spotted Skunk	1	0	1	NR	0	0
Striped Skunk	13	1,079	1,092	NR	0	0
Weasel	0	0	0	NR	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,881</b>	<b>3,116</b>	<b>5,997</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>72,960</b>	<b>80,960</b>

**TABLE 3  
TRAPPING TAKE BY COUNTY 2004 - 2005**

County	BA*	BE*	BC*	CO*	GF*	MI*	MU*	OP*	RA*	SP*	ST*	WE*	Total
Alameda					1			3	74		26		104
Amador													0
Butte		60					407		28				495
Calaveras													0
Colusa		6					608		21				635
Contra Costa		58						21	344		120		543
El Dorado					4			33	31		89		157
Glenn	1	2	1	14					5		7		30
Humboldt			6		4				4	1			15
Imperial													0
Inyo		34	14										48
Kern			49		5								54
Kings													0
Lake			2		1								3
Lassen		2	30	32	7	2	174						247
Los Angeles			10	1	64			1	6				82
Marin								16	16		31		63
Mariposa			3	1	7			2	1		6		20
Mendocino			4		4								8
Merced													0
Modoc	6		135	26		1			2				170
Mono			13		3								16
Monterey				18					12				30
Napa								16	18		4		38
Nevada					2			3	1				6
Orange								3			20		23
Placer								43	38		76		157
Plumas			1										1
Riverside				2				2	1		4		9
Sacramento				7				88	92		292		479
San Benito													0
San Bernardino	1		74	215	6								296
San Luis Obispo			6	3	9			1	1		4		24
San Mateo								9	33		32		74
Santa Barbara			20	46	17				1				84
Santa Clara								68	198		315		581
Shasta		4	29	10	11		823		20		1		898
Sierra			1	3									4
Siskiyou			96	61	10	3	146	6	34		13		369
Solano		2					1	23	47		43		116

Sonoma			1					3			3		7
Tehama			1		73								74
Trinity				2	14				1		4		21
Tulare			10	2							2		14
Tuolumne													0
Yolo								2					2
Total	8	168	506	443	242	6	2,159	343	1,029	1	1092	0	5,997
Percent	0.1	2.8	8.4	7.3	4.0	0.1	36	5.7	17.1	0.1	18.2	0	

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

Licensed trappers who do not send in their annual reports by July 1 (Table 1) will have their licenses suspended pursuant to Section 467, Title 14, California Code of Regulations. This year, 54 licensed trappers failed to send in their annual reports by the required due date.

Once again, more muskrats were taken than any other species (Table 3). The 2,159 muskrats taken during the 2004-2005 season represented 36 percent of the total take.

Licensed fur dealers reported buying 34 pelts in California, amounting to a total purchase of \$5,440.00 (Table 4). The average prices paid by the reporting dealers are used to calculate the estimated fur revenue and value (Table 2) for each species.

Species	Average Price of Furs	Number of Furs Purchased	Total Spent
Badger	-	-	0.00
Beaver	-	-	0.00
Bobcat	160.00	34	5,440.00
Coyote	-	-	0.00
Gray Fox	-	-	0.00
Mink	-	-	0.00
Muskrat	-	-	0.00
Opossum	-	-	0.00
Raccoon	-	-	0.00
Spotted Skunk	-	-	0.00
Striped Skunk	-	-	0.00
Weasel	-	-	0.00
Total	-	34	\$5,440.00

**More trapping licenses were sold for the 2004-05 season, yet fewer animals were taken during this period. Bobcat pelt prices increased from \$148.75 last year to \$160.00 this year.**