

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

LICENSED FUR TRAPPERS' AND DEALERS' REPORT

2006-2007

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 2006-2007 that fee was:

Adult: \$86.75                  Junior: \$29.25                  Nonresident: \$435.25

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 2004-05, 05-06, 06-07 license years were 188, 85, and 111 respectively.

## 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

One hundred and eleven trapping licenses were sold during the 2006-07 trapping season, an increase of 31 percent from the 85 licenses sold in the 2005-06 season (Table 1).

TABLE 1				
Numbers of Fur Trappers Buying Licenses and Reporting Their Harvest				
	2003-2004	2004-2005	2005-2006*	2006-2007*
Licensees who reported successful trapping effort	102	91	53	71
Licensees who reported but did not trap or were unsuccessful	52	43	32	33
Licensees not reporting	37	54	0	7
<b>Total Recreational Trapping Licenses sold</b>	<b>191</b>	<b>188***</b>	<b>85**</b>	<b>111</b>

\*Beginning in 2005, the trapping license application changed recording method to differentiate between commercial fur/recreational trappers and nuisance/pest control trappers. This accounts for the reduced number of licensees not reporting in 2005 and 2006, as nuisance trappers are not required to submit trapper annual reports.

\*\*Previously Reported 2005-2006 Total Licenses sold, included Pest Control Operators

\*\*\*The 2004-2005 Licensed Fur Trappers' and Dealers' Report "Total Licenses Sold" was incorrectly totaled

Estimated revenue received by trappers from the sale of furs during the 2006-07 season, based on average prices paid by fur buyers, was \$93,321 (Table 2). This is \$20,515 less than the estimated revenue of \$113,836 received in 2005-06. The average income per successful trapper decreased from \$1,339 in 2005-06 to \$840 in 2006-07.

Each year a portion of the fur harvest is reported as unsold. During the 2006-07 season, 43 percent was unsold, compared to 29 percent unsold during the 2005-06 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 2006-07 fur harvest was \$118,818 (Table 2), a decrease of 5 percent from the \$124,932 in the 2005-06 season. In comparison to the 2005-06 trapping season, the harvest of fur-bearing mammals increased by 136 percent in the 2006-07 season. Take of beaver, bobcat, coyote, gray fox, muskrat, raccoon, and striped skunk increased significantly during the 2006-07 season.

Bobcats were the most economically important animals, providing 80 percent of the total revenue for California's furs (Table 2). Although only 745 export tags were sold for bobcats taken during the 2006-07 season, in a program requiring tags for the sale or shipment of bobcat furs, holders of trapping licenses reported the sale of 807. Part of this difference is due to some trappers holding pelts to sell in the future, when the market is more favorable.

TABLE 2 Number of Animals Taken, Avg Price Paid, & Revenue Received by Species 2005-2006						
Species	Harvest			Average Pelt \$	Estimated Revenue (sold)	Estimated Fur Value (taken)
	Total	Unsold	Sold			
Badger	7	7	0	NR	\$0	\$0
Beaver	62	46	16	NR	\$0	\$0
Bobcat	627	47	580	\$194.50	\$112,810	\$121,951
Coyote	133	89	44	NR	\$0	\$0
Gray Fox	276	181	95	\$10.80	\$1,026	\$2,981
Mink	19	14	5	NR	\$0	\$0
Muskrat	2,508	390	2,118	NR	\$0	\$0
Opossum	108	66	42	NR	\$0	\$0
Raccoon	209	191	18	NR	\$0	\$0
Spotted Skunk	0	0	0	NR	\$0	\$0
Striped Skunk	160	160	0	NR	\$0	\$0
Weasel	0	0	0	NR	\$0	\$0
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,109</b>	<b>1,191</b>	<b>2,918</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>\$113,836</b>	<b>\$124,932</b>
2006-2007						
Species	Harvest			Average Pelt \$	Estimated Revenue (sold)	Estimated Fur Value (taken)
	Total	Unsold	Sold			
Badger	15	9	6	NR	\$0	\$0
Beaver	276	154	122	NR	\$0	\$0
Bobcat	885	69	807	\$92.86	\$74,934	\$82,177
Coyote	226	146	79	\$12.50	\$988	\$2,825
Gray Fox	531	186	336	\$16.15	\$5,426	\$8,576
Mink	5	3	2	NR	\$0	\$0
Muskrat	6,643	2,560	4,083	\$2.78	\$11,351	\$18,468
Opossum	24	21	3	NR	\$0	\$0
Raccoon	588	506	82	\$6.56	\$538	\$3,857
Spotted Skunk	22	22	0	NR	\$0	\$0
Striped Skunk	486	472	14	\$6.00	\$84	\$2,916
Weasel	8	7	0	NR	\$0	\$0
<b>Total</b>	<b>9,709</b>	<b>4,155</b>	<b>5,534</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>\$93,321</b>	<b>\$118,818</b>
<i>NR = No Report</i>						

**TABLE 3**  
**Trapping Take by County 2006 - 2007**

County	BA	BE	BC	CO	GF	MI	MU	OP	RA	SP	ST	WE	Total
Alameda									185		150		335
Butte		127		1			604		13				745
Calaveras													0
Colusa		2					900	1	30				933
Contra Costa		85				2	55	2	302		251		697
El Dorado													0
Fresno			6	1	9								16
Glenn	3	1		18	5			4	2		2		35
Humboldt			2		16			1	1		1		21
Inyo			86		11								97
Kern			25	20									45
Lake					5		50						55
Lassen	10		81	47	11					22			171
Los Angeles			18		77						3		98
Madera			3	2	2								7
Marin													0
Mendocino			2		10								12
Modoc		5	186	25	12		1,050		7		41	1	1,327
Mono			27		6								33
Monterey				11							2		13
Napa													0
Nevada				4	18			1	14		9	7	53
Placer		23											23
Sacramento		8						4			7		19
San Bernardino			238	2	48								288
San Luis Obispo					34								34
Santa Barbara					24								24
Shasta		1	17		18	2	1,340	5	6		9		1,398
Siskiyou	2	7	163	66	139	1	2,373		11		6		2,768
Sonoma				2	2								4
Solano		15					9						24
Tehama			4	17	38			6			5		70
Trinity			7	1	31				1				40
Tulare			20										20
Yuba		2							14				16
Unknown				9	15		262		2				288
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>276</b>	<b>885</b>	<b>226</b>	<b>531</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6,643</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>588</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>486</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9,709</b>
<b>Percent</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>68%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>100%</b>

BA = Badger; BE = Beaver; BC = Bobcat; 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, 7 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 6,643 muskrats taken during the 2006-07 season represented 68 percent of the total take.

Licensed fur dealers reported buying 78 pelts in California, amounting to a total purchase of \$2,995 (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.

TABLE 4			
Furs Purchased by Dealers 2006-2007			
Species	Avg. Reported \$ Paid per Fur	# of Purchased Furs Reported	Est. Total Spent
Badger	\$0.00	0	\$0.00
Beaver	\$0.00	0	\$0.00
Bobcat	\$92.86	27	\$2,507.09
Coyote	\$12.50	4	\$50.00
Gray Fox	\$16.15	20	\$323.00
Mink	\$0.00	0	\$0.00
Muskrat	\$2.78	16	\$44.48
Opossum	\$0.00	0	\$0.00
Raccoon	\$6.56	9	\$59.04
Spotted Skunk	\$0.00	0	\$0.00
Striped Skunk	\$6.00	2	\$12.00
Weasel	\$0.00	0	\$0.00
<b>Total</b>	-	78	\$2,995.61

The 2006-07 season saw an increase in recreational trapping licenses sold from 2005-06, as well as an increase in animals taken. Bobcat pelt prices decreased from \$194.50 average pelt price in 2005-06 to \$92.86 average pelt price in 2006-07.