

State of California
The Natural Resources Agency
Department of Fish and Game
Wildlife and Inland Fisheries Division
Wildlife Branch

LICENSED FUR TRAPPERS' AND DEALERS' REPORT

2009-2010

By

Jesse R Garcia

October 2010

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 2009-2010 that fee was:

Resident: \$102.50 Junior: \$34.50 Nonresident: \$513.50

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.

After legislation was passed in 2002, beginning in 2003, persons who provided trapping services for profit (nuisance/pest control trappers) were also required to obtain a trapping license as has historically been required of commercial fur/recreational trappers. Therefore, the number sold in 2003-04 could be a combination of both groups. Beginning with the 2004-05 license year, this report only provides trapping data generated by commercial fur/recreational trappers.

License sales decreased nine percent from 181 in 2008-09 to 164 in 2009-10.

METHODS

Section 467, Title 14, California Code of Regulations, requires that all licensed commercial fur/recreational 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 suspended. On these reports, the trappers note the number of each species of furbearing or non-game mammal taken for commercial or recreational 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

A total of 164 trapping licenses were sold during the 2009-10 trapping season, a decrease of 9 percent from the 181 licenses sold in the 2008-09 season (Table 1).

TABLE 1				
Numbers of Fur Trappers Buying Licenses and Reporting Their Harvest				
	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010
Licensees who reported successful trapping effort	71	81	146	76
Licensees who reported but did not trap or were unsuccessful	33	35	28	79
Licensees not reporting	7	1	7	9
Total Recreational Trapping Licenses sold	111	117	181	164

*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.

Revenue received by trappers from the sale of furs during the 2009-10 season was not reported (Table 2). The average income per successful trapper (beginning in 2008-09) is based on numbers of successful trappers. Prior years were based upon total trapping licenses sold.

Each year a portion of the fur harvest is reported as unsold. During the 2009-10 season, 45 percent was unsold, compared to 51 percent unsold during the 2008-09 season. Unsold pelts still have value and, for the purpose of this report, are considered to have the same monetary value as marketed pelts. In comparison to the 2008-09 trapping season, the harvest of fur-bearing and nongame mammals decreased 28 percent in the 2009-10 season.

Although only 363 export tags were sold for bobcats taken during the 2009-10 season, in a program requiring tags for the sale or shipment of bobcat furs, holders of trapping licenses reported the sale of 421. 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						
2008-2009						
Species	Harvest			Average Pelt \$	Estimated Revenue (sold)	Estimated Fur Value (taken)
	Total	Unsold	Sold			
Badger	18	17	1	NR	0	0
Beaver	160	111	49	NR	0	0
Bobcat	623	131	492	78	38,376	48,594
Coyote	149	103	46	7	322	1,043
Gray Fox	732	239	493	18	8,628	12,810
Mink	1	0	1	NR	0	0
Muskrat	5,465	2,723	2,742	NR	0	0
Opossum	88	79	9	NR	0	0
Raccoon	555	474	81	1	81	555
Spotted Skunk	4	3	1	NR	0	0
Striped Skunk	276	248	28	NR	0	0
Weasel	0	0	0	NR	0	0
Total	8,071	4,128	3,943	-	47,407	63,002
2009-2010						
Species	Harvest			Average Pelt \$	Estimated Revenue (sold)	Estimated Fur Value (taken)
	Total	Unsold	Sold			
Badger	5	4	1	NR	N/A	N/A
Beaver	170	115	55	NR	N/A	N/A
Bobcat	457	36	421	NR	N/A	N/A
Coyote	82	56	26	NR	N/A	N/A
Gray Fox	491	159	332	NR	N/A	N/A
Mink	0	0	0	NR	N/A	N/A
Muskrat	3,597	1,313	2,284	NR	N/A	N/A
Opossum	16	11	5	NR	N/A	N/A
Raccoon	597	568	29	NR	N/A	N/A
Spotted Skunk	19	18	1	NR	N/A	N/A
Striped Skunk	328	317	11	NR	N/A	N/A
Weasel	0	0	0	NR	N/A	N/A
Other	20	20	0	NR	N/A	N/A
Total	5,782	2,617	3,165	NR	N/A	N/A
<i>NR = No Report</i>						

TABLE 3
Trapping Take by County 2009 - 2010

County	BA	BE	BC	CO	GF	MI	MU	OP	RA	SP	ST	OT	Total
Alameda									190		86		276
Butte		115					179						294
Calaveras													0
Colusa			4	2	8		761		8		2		785
Contra Costa		18							278		112		408
El Dorado													0
Glenn			1				60						61
Humboldt				10									10
Imperial			8	2			4		5		7		26
Inyo		3	91	1	18				3				116
Kern			93		18								111
Lake			6		21				6	1			34
Lassen	2	5	63		13				7		37		127
Los Angeles			14	1	95				6		7		123
Mariposa													0
Mendocino			16		18								34
Modoc	3		40	4			1,222				20		1,289
Mono			12	1	6								19
Monterey				9						1			10
Nevada			1	2	4			2	9				18
Orange									4				4
Placer		8					2	2	4		9	2	27
Plumas													0
Riverside			1										1
Sacramento		15		4				6	13	8		17	63
San Benito													0
San Bernardino			15	3	6								24
San Luis Obispo			7										7
Santa Barbara			10										10
Shasta		1	12		29		683	4	16		7	1	753
Siskiyou		1	42	27	132		686		12	9	31		940
Solano		4		1							2		7
Sonoma			3		11								14
Sutter								2	36				38
Tehama			9	8	78						6		101
Trinity			1	7	28						2		38
Tulare			6										6
Unknown													0
Ventura			2		6								8
Yuba													0
Total	5	170	457	82	491	0	3,597	16	597	19	328	20	5,782
Percent	0%	3%	8%	1%	8%	0%	62%	0%	10%	0%	6%	0%	100%

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; OT = Other

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, 3 licensed trappers failed to send in his annual report by the required due date.

Once again, more muskrats were taken than any other species (Table 3). The 3,597 muskrats taken during the 2009-10 season represented 62 percent of the total take.

Licensed fur dealers reported buying zero pelts in California (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 2009-2010			
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	\$0.00	0	\$0.00
Coyote	\$0.00	0	\$0.00
Gray Fox	\$0.00	0	\$0.00
Mink	\$0.00	0	\$0.00
Muskrat	\$0.00	0	\$0.00
Opossum	\$0.00	0	\$0.00
Raccoon	\$0.00	0	\$0.00
Spotted Skunk	\$0.00	0	\$0.00
Striped Skunk	\$0.00	0	\$0.00
Weasel	\$0.00	0	\$0.00
Total	-	0	\$0.00

The 2009-10 season saw a decrease in the number of both commercial fur/recreational trapping licenses sold and animals taken from 2008-09.