

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

LICENSED FUR TRAPPERS' AND DEALERS' REPORT

2011-12

By

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September 2012

ABSTRACT

In order to track harvest that is the result of trapping activities, the California Department of Fish and Game (DFG) produces this report, which summarizes the harvest of furbearers and non-game species from trapping. The cost of a resident trapping license in the 2011-12 trap year was 111.50 if purchased from DFG offices. In February 2012, Senate bill 1480 was proposed. It would have mandated the creation of a second type of trapping license for pest control workers but it was vetoed by Governor Jerry Brown in late September. There was a 32% increase in the number of trapping licenses sold from 152 in 2010-11 to 200 in 2011-12. A total of 1,525 CITES bobcat pelt export tags sold. This year 19 trappers failed to report their annual take, resulting in the suspension of their trapping licenses for the 2012-13 season. Muskrats made up the largest proportion of take (65% of overall) totalling 6,985 animals. Bobcats were the second most frequently taken species (14% of overall) at 1,499 total animals.

INTRODUCTION

The California 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 the number furbearing or non-game mammals taken 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.

Starting in the 2007-08 trap year, licenses cost \$96.50 for Resident, \$32.50 for Junior, and \$483.50 for Non-resident. In the 2010-11 trap year, a fee increase resulted in trapping licenses costing \$103.50 for Resident, \$34.75 for Junior and \$518.00 for Non-resident. The fee schedule for 2011-2012 was:

Trapping Licenses 2011-12		
Type	DFG Price	Agent Price
Resident	\$111.50	\$116.90
Resident Duplicate	\$9.53	\$9.98
Junior	\$37.34	\$39.14
Junior Duplicate	\$9.53	\$9.98
Nonresident	\$549.25	\$576.35
Nonresident Duplicate	\$9.53	\$9.98

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 again. 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 was 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.

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/recreational fur trappers. Therefore, the number sold in 2003-04 could be a combination of both groups. However, beginning with the 2004-05 license year, this report only provides trapping data generated by commercial fur/recreational trappers.

In February 2012, SB 1480 was proposed. In addition to several components related to bat exclusion, the proposed law would have created a second class of trapping license specifically for those offering commercial pest trapping services. DFG would have been required to maintain a publicly accessible list of class 2 licensees. Additionally, the legal size of conibear traps would have been reduced to 6" x 6" except under certain conditions. Though the bill passed the state assembly and senate, Governor Jerry Brown vetoed it in late September 2012, saying "Expanding the Department's mission to include urban pest management is not an appropriate or effective use of Department resources."

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 revoked. Trappers are required to report 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.

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. This allows the department to monitor trends in annual take by licensed trappers.

RESULTS

A total of 200 trapping licenses were sold during the 2011-12 trapping season, an increase of 32 percent from the 152 licenses sold in the 2010-11 season (Table 1).

Each year a portion of the fur harvest is reported as unsold. During the 2011-12 season, 13.4 percent was unsold, compared to 45 percent unsold during the 2010-11 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 2010-11 trapping season, the harvest of fur-bearing and nongame mammals increased 86 percent in the 2011-12 season.

Tags are required for the sale or shipment of bobcat furs. While 1,525 CITES export tags were sold for bobcats taken during the 2011-12 season, holders of trapping licenses reported the take of only 1,499 bobcats. Because CITES export tags are only required for the export of bobcat pelts, the number of these tags sold likely reflect market fluctuations.

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, 19 licensed trappers failed to send in their annual report by the required due date.

Once again, more muskrats were taken than any other species (Table 3). In the 2011-12 season, a single species, the muskrat, represented 65 percent of the total take (6,985 animals). The second most taken species was bobcat at 1,499 animals, which represents 14% of overall take.

	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012
Licensees who reported successful trapping effort	146	76	90	128
Licensees who reported but did not trap or were unsuccessful	28	79	63	72
Licensees not reporting	7	9	38	19
Total Recreational Trapping Licenses sold	181	164	152	200

TABLE 2							
Number of Animals Taken by Species							
2010-2011				2011-2012			
Species	Harvest			Species	Harvest		
	Total	Unsold	Sold		Total	Unsold	Sold
Badger	6	5	1	Badger	16	0	16
Beaver	193	121	72	Beaver	129	3	126
Bobcat	893	137	756	Bobcat	1,499	11	1,488
Coyote	139	85	54	Coyote	209	0	209
Gray Fox	593	93	500	Gray Fox	657	1	656
Mink	11	2	9	Mink	15	0	15
Muskrat	5,550	321	5,229	Muskrat	6,985	1,424	5,561
Opossum	153	148	5	Opossum	165	0	165
Raccoon	562	446	116	Raccoon	609	4	605
Spotted Skunk	0	0	0	Spotted Skunk	1	0	1
Striped Skunk	457	435	22	Striped Skunk	517	6	511
Weasel	0	0	0	Weasel	4	3	1
Other	0	0	0	Other	3	0	0
Total	8,557	1,793	6,764	Total	10,806	1,452	9,354

TABLE 3 Trapping Take by County 2011-2012

County	BA	BE	BC	CO	GF	MI	MU	OP	OT	RA	SP	ST	Total
Alameda								61		190		163	414
Butte		90		1			388						479
Colusa		3	2		3		496						504
Contra Costa		18						75		284		214	591
El Dorado					1				3				4
Glenn			6										6
Humboldt				11				3		1			15
Imperial	2		22	9	1		2			12		2	50
Inyo			146	1	17								164
Kern			179	6	6					1			192
Lake			15	7	26					10			58
Lassen			56	12	2								70
Los Angeles			87	4	118			3		10		15	237
Madera			4										4
Mendocino			3		2								5
Merced				6									6
Modoc	2		197	4	1		1700			1		32	1937
Mono	1		47		7								55
Monterey			6		2								8
n/a	1		9	28	3							8	49
Nevada				3	4					12			19
Placer			2							4			6
Plumas			108					5					113
Riverside			30		5								35
Sacramento		5						2		11		34	52
San Benito			4		1					1		3	9
San Bernardino	8		226	9	69					1		3	316
San Diego			15	2	21					1			39
San Luis Obispo				42	2			11		3		2	60
Santa Barbara			35		30							8	73
Santa Cruz												1	1
Shasta		13	8		12	7	2728			6			2774
Siskiyou	2		237	60	237	2	1671	5		21	1	28	2264
Solano						6				36			42
Sonoma			2		1					3			6
Tehama			9	1	44								54
Trinity			8	2	23					1		1	35
Tulare			13	1	8								22
Ventura			23		11								34
Total	16	129	1499	209	657	15	6985	165	3	609	1	514	10802
Percent	0%	1%	14%	2%	6%	0%	65%	2%	0%	6%	0%	5%	100%

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