

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

LICENSED FUR TRAPPERS' AND DEALERS' REPORT

2012-13

Prepared By

Matthew Meshriy

September 2013

## INTRODUCTION

The Department of Fish and Wildlife 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 2012-2013 that fee was:

Resident: \$111.50      Junior: \$38.37      Nonresident: \$549.25

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.

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.

## 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. 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 216 trapping licenses were sold during the 2012-13 trapping season, an increase of eight percent from the 200 licenses sold in the 2011-12 season (Table 1).

TABLE 1				
Numbers of Fur Trappers Buying Licenses and Reporting Their Harvest				
	2009-2010*	2010-2011*	2011-2012*	2012-2013*
Licensees who reported successful trapping effort	76	90	128	118
Licensees who reported but did not trap or were unsuccessful	79	63	72	64
Licensees not reporting	9	38	19	37
<b>Total Recreational Trapping Licenses sold</b>	<b>164</b>	<b>152</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>216</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.				

Revenue received by trappers from the sale of furs during the 2012-13 season was not reported (Table 2). The average income per successful trapper (beginning in 2009-10) is based on numbers of trappers who indicated that they were successful during the current season. In prior years, average income was calculated based upon total trapping licenses sold.

Each year a portion of the fur harvest is reported as unsold. During the 2012-13 season, 2.5 percent was unsold, compared to 13 percent unsold during the 2011-12 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 2011-12 trapping season, the harvest of fur-bearing and nongame mammals decreased 11 percent in the 2012-13 season.

Although only 829 export tags were sold for bobcats taken during the 2012-13 season, in a program requiring tags for the sale or shipment of bobcat furs, holders of trapping licenses reported the sale of 1215. 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

2011-2012						
Species	Harvest			Average Pelt \$	Estimated Revenue	Estimated Fur Value
	Total	Unsold	Sold			
Badger	16	0	16	NR	0	0
Beaver	129	3	126	NR	0	0
Bobcat	1,499	11	1,488	\$362.68	\$539,667.84	\$543,657.32
Coyote	209	0	209	NR	0	0
Gray Fox	657	1	656	\$20.00	\$13,120.00	\$13,140.00
Mink	15	0	15	NR	0	0
Muskrat	6,985	1,424	5,561	\$2.92	\$16,238.12	\$20,396.20
Opossum	165	0	165	NR	0	0
Raccoon	609	4	605	NR	0	0
Spotted Skunk	1	0	1	NR	0	0
Striped Skunk	517	6	511	NR	0	0
Weasel	4	3	1	NR	0	0
Other				NR	0	0
Total	10,806	1,452	9,354	NR	0	0
2012-2013						
Species	Harvest			Average Pelt \$	Revenue (sold)	Fur Value (taken)
	Total	Unsold	Sold			
Badger	8	4	4	NR	0	0
Beaver	122	72	50	NR	0	0
Bobcat	1,214	-1	1,215	NR	0	0
Coyote	280	69	211	NR	0	0
Gray Fox	982	107	875	NR	0	0
Mink	11	5	6	NR	0	0
Muskrat	5,745	-1,058	6,803	NR	0	0
Opossum	164	148	16	NR	0	0
Raccoon	612	533	79	NR	0	0
Spotted Skunk	5	0	5	NR	0	0
Striped Skunk	426	357	69	NR	0	0
Weasel	1	0	1	NR	0	0
Other	3	1	2	NR	0	0
Total	9,573	237	9,336	NR	0	0
NR = No Report						

**TABLE 3**  
**Trapping Take by County 2012-2013**

County	BA	BE	BC	CO	GF	MI	MU	OP	OT	RA	SP	ST	Total
Alameda								26		216		111	353
Butte		101					213						314
Colusa		14					10	47		271		202	544
Contra Costa													0
El Dorado			2		4					4		17	27
Glenn			8	4	51			1				1	65
Humboldt													0
Imperial			8										8
Inyo			172	9	24					2		2	209
Kern	1		143		16			10		6		5	181
Lake			10		19								29
Lassen	2		32	56	21							28	139
Los Angeles			64	16	272							1	353
Mariposa					2					1			3
Mendocino			4		1								5
Merced	1	3	1	79			20						104
Modoc	2		151	16		1	1298			2		37	1507
Mono			51	4	6								61
Monterey													0
n/a			25	2	32		80		1				140
Nevada			23	2	3					4			32
Placer			3		2				3	6			14
Plumas									3				3
Riverside			15		43								58
Sacramento					1	1		25	1	15		3	46
San Benito			12		12				1	2		2	29
San Bernardino	2		214	3	81				4	1			305
San Diego								1		4			5
San Luis Obispo					4			44				6	54
Santa Barbara													0
Santa Cruz			8		8					24		3	43
Shasta			12	11	8	5	2124			8			2168
Siskiyou			217	42	310	1	976	2	2	26	3	1	1580
Solano				31	3	3	11	6		2			56
Sonoma			2		1		1	2					6
Sutter		2					1012			13			1027
Tehama		2	24	3	10								39
Trinity			8	2	39					4	2	5	60
Tulare			5		9								14
Tuolumne										1		1	2
Total	8	122	1214	280	982	11	5745	164	15	612	5	425	9583
Percent	0%	1%	13%	3%	10%	0%	60%	2%	0%	6%	0%	4%	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

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, 37 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 2). The 5,745 muskrats taken during the 2012-13 season represented 60 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 2012-2013			
Species	Avg. Reported \$ Paid per Fur	# of Purchased Furs Reported	Est. Total Spent
Badger	\$0.00		\$0.00
Beaver	\$0.00		\$0.00
Bobcat	\$0.00		\$0.00
Coyote	\$0.00		\$0.00
Gray Fox	\$0.00		\$0.00
Mink	\$0.00		\$0.00
Muskrat	\$0.00		\$0.00
Opossum	\$0.00		\$0.00
Raccoon	\$0.00		\$0.00
Spotted Skunk	\$0.00		\$0.00
Striped Skunk	\$0.00		\$0.00
Weasel	\$0.00		\$0.00
Total	\$0.00	0	\$0.00

The 2012-13 season saw an increase in the number of commercial fur/recreational trapping licenses sold but a decrease of the number of animals taken from 2011-12.