

**STATE OF CALIFORNIA
DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME
WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT DIVISION
NONGAME BIRD AND MAMMAL SECTION**

**LICENSED FUR TRAPPERS' AND DEALERS' REPORT
1993-94**

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 nongame 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 1993-94 that fee was:

Adult: \$61.25 Juvenile: \$20.50 Nonresident: \$308.00

Over the years, the take and monetary return to trappers for their furs has varied greatly. The number of licenses sold increased during the 1920's 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 1980's, the number of trapping licenses sold decreased from 3,021 to 834, and the take decreased from 131,491 to 21,046. License sales continued to fall in the 1993-94 season, but the take (compared to last year) increased by 2,563 animals.

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) or not receive a trapping license for the next season. On these reports, the trappers note the number of each species of furbearing or nongame 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

Three hundred trapping licenses were sold during the 1993-94 trapping season, a decrease of 11 percent from the 338 licenses sold in the 1992-93 season (Table 1). This was the 10th successive year in which license sales were below 1,800 and the lowest number of licenses sold since the 1975-76 season. Current fur prices are not likely to cause license

sales to increase substantially in the near future, although the market is expected to improve a little in 1994-95.

TABLE 1 NUMBERS OF TRAPPERS BUYING LICENSES AND REPORTING THEIR HARVEST			
Reports	1991-92	1992-93	1993-94
Licenses who reported successful trapping effort	201	185	188
Licenses who reported but did not trap or were unsuccessful	129	122	76
Licenses not reporting	41	31	36
Total Licenses Sold	371	338	300

Estimated revenue received by trappers from the sale of furs during the 1993-94 season, based on average prices paid by fur buyers, was \$77,669 (Table 2). This is 28 percent above the revenue of \$60,525 received in 1992-93, but is well below the high of \$2,399,565 of 1978-79.

The average income per successful trapper increased from \$327 in 1992-93 to \$413 in 1993-94.

Each year a portion of the fur harvest is reported as unsold. During the 1993-94 season, 29 percent was unsold, compared to 36 percent unsold during the 1992-93 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 1993-94 fur harvest was \$107,302 (Table 2) an increase of 15 percent from the \$92,968 of the 1992-93 season.

Furs were reported taken in all counties except Contra Costa, Del Norte, Mariposa, San Francisco, Santa Cruz, Sierra, Yolo, and Yuba (Table 3).

Bobcats continued to be the most economically important animals, providing 42 percent of the total value of California's furs. Although 1,153 export tags were sold for bobcats taken during the 1993-94 season, in a program requiring tags for the sale or shipment of bobcat furs, holders of trapping licenses only reported a take of 1,105. This difference between the two reporting systems continues to be a significant improvement over previous years. Part of this difference is because some bobcat hides are retained for personal use. Therefore, no export tag purchase is required. Also, some trappers fail to send in their annual reports. The average price paid per bobcat was \$40.44, an eight percent decrease from the average price of \$43.92 paid during the 1992-93 season.

Muskrats were second in value importance behind bobcats during the 1993-94 season. Coyote ranked third in estimated fur value. Gray fox estimated fur value ranked fourth for 1993-94.

Licensed trappers who did not send in their annual reports (Table 1) had their 1994-95 license revoked pursuant to Section 467, Title 14, California Code of Regulations.

TABLE 2
NUMBER OF ANIMALS TAKEN, AVERAGE PRICE PAID, AND REVENUE
RECEIVED BY SPECIES DURING 1991-92 AND 1992-93

1993-94						
Species	Harvest			Pelt Average	Estimated Revenue	Estimated Fur Value
	Sold	Unsold	Total			
Badger	11	31	42	\$ 4.37	\$ 48	\$ 184
Beaver	238	271	509	8.21	1,954	4,179
Bobcat	956	149	1,105	40.44	38,661	44,686
Coyote	471	793	1,264	15.29	7,202	19,327
Gray Fox	1,145	261	1,406	9.53	10,912	13,399
Mink	63	10	73	9.15	576	668
Muskrat	8,097	2,032	10,129	1.91	15,465	19,346
Opossum	27	220	247	0.65	18	161
Raccoon	498	288	786	5.47	2,724	4,299
Spotted Skunk	18	36	54	1.38	25	75
Striped Skunk	61	643	704	1.39	85	979
Weasel	11	2	13	NR	0	0
Total	11,596	4,736	16,332	-	\$77,669	\$107,302
1992-93						
Species	Harvest			Pelt Average	Estimated Revenue	Estimated Fur Value
	Sold	Unsold	Total			
Badger	16	9	25	\$ 4.82	\$ 77	\$ 121
Beaver	64	281	345	NR	0	0
Bobcat	831	270	1,101	43.92	36,498	48,356
Coyote	434	906	1,340	14.92	6,475	19,993
Gray Fox	1,005	464	1,469	6.90	6,935	10,136
Mink	209	19	228	13.00	2,717	2,964
Muskrat	5,866	663	6,529	1.05	6,159	6,855
Opossum	19	590	609	NR	0	0
Raccoon	403	697	1,100	4.13	1,664	4,543
Spotted Skunk	5	66	71	NR	0	0
Striped Skunk	3	947	950	NR	0	0
Weasel	0	2	2	NR	0	0
Total	8,855	4,914	13,769		\$60,525	\$92,968

* Furs taken in previous years sold this year.
 NR = None reported sold

TABLE 3
TRAPPING TAKE BY COUNTY 1993-94

County	BA*	BC*	BE*	CO*	GF*	MI*	MU*	OP*	RA*	SP*	ST*	WE*	Total
Alameda	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	20	-	-	-	21
Alpine	-	3	-	4	4	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	15
Amador	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
Butte	-	6	148	2	133	15	795	4	266	-	7	-	1,376
Calaveras	-	3	-	10	12	-	-	4	9	-	8	-	46
Colusa	-	32	10	5	5	1	700	-	81	-	-	-	834
Contra Costa	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Del Norte	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
El Dorado	-	3	-	4	5	-	-	-	-	-	7	-	19
Fresno	10	112	-	97	23	-	-	3	25	-	20	-	290
Glenn	2	23	25	-	4	-	122	-	33	-	10	-	219
Humboldt	5	73	-	53	55	-	-	3	39	19	50	-	297
Imperial	-	-	-	98	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	98
Inyo	-	-	78	10	-	-	-	-	4	-	-	1	93
Kern	4	51	-	143	77	-	4	-	24	10	81	-	394
Kings	-	-	-	17	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	17
Lake	-	7	-	13	10	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	32
Lassen	-	17	8	43	9	1	130	-	-	2	-	-	210
Los Angeles	2	78	-	45	98	-	-	40	26	1	48	-	338
Madera	-	-	-	53	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	53
Marin	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	160	-	160
Mariposa	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Mendocino	-	10	-	12	17	1	-	9	13	1	29	-	92
Merced	-	-	16	-	-	-	-	-	5	-	-	-	21
Modoc	10	52	4	88	-	5	3,090	-	1	1	2	-	3,253
Mono	1	10	5	16	23	-	75	-	-	-	-	-	130
Monterey	-	16	-	19	15	-	-	-	5	-	21	-	76
Napa	-	14	-	36	40	-	-	4	30	-	20	-	144
Nevada	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
Orange	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	16	9	-	11	-	36
Placer	-	-	40	-	2	2	8	4	8	-	2	-	66
Plumas	-	15	-	11	5	15	-	-	-	-	-	-	46
Riverside	-	47	-	26	136	-	-	17	11	1	23	-	261
Sacramento	-	-	66	-	-	-	20	12	6	-	11	-	115
San Benito	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	1	5	1	3	-	12
San Bernardino	4	164	-	114	91	-	-	18	10	1	37	-	439
San Diego	1	22	-	20	97	-	-	38	1	7	20	-	206

**TABLE 3
TRAPPING TAKE BY COUNTY 1993-94**

County	BA*	BC*	BE*	CO*	GF*	MI*	MU*	OP*	RA*	SP*	ST*	WE*	Total
San Francisco	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
San Joaquin	-	-	38	13	-	5	64	13	8	-	-	-	141
San Luis Obispo	1	37	-	44	47	-	-	-	10	-	-	-	139
San Mateo	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	3	-	5	-	10
Santa Barbara	-	66	-	42	147	-	-	3	-	-	28	-	286
Santa Clara	-	5	-	9	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	-	19
Santa Cruz	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Shasta	1	6	17	15	36	-	2,106	2	12	-	4	11	2,210
Sierra	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Siskiyou	-	66	6	68	5	8	2,697	2	50	-	12	-	2,914
Solano	-	-	1	-	-	4	111	-	-	-	-	-	116
Sonoma	-	5	-	5	12	1	-	21	22	-	24	-	90
Stanislaus	-	-	37	1	3	11	97	22	25	-	8	-	204
Sutter	-	-	1	-	4	-	110	2	2	-	2	-	121
Tehama	-	53	9	28	149	-	-	3	12	-	42	-	296
Trinity	-	14	-	9	65	-	-	-	2	1	1	-	92
Tulare	-	42	-	10	12	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	66
Tuolumne	-	3	-	4	1	-	-	2	2	-	4	-	16
Ventura	1	49	-	72	63	-	-	2	2	1	6	-	196
Yolo	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Yuba	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Unknown	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	3
Total	42	1,105	509	1,264	1,406	73	10,129	247	786	46	712	13	16,332
Percent	0.2	6.8	3.1	7.7	8.6	0.4	62.0	1.5	4.8	0.3	4.3	0.1	100

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

Once again, more muskrats were taken than any other species (Table 3). The 10,129 muskrats taken during the 1993-94 season represented 62 percent of the total take.

Thirteen licensed fur dealers reported on their 1993-94 activities, and five reported buying furs in California. They reported buying 3,458 pelts in California, amounting to a total purchase of \$51,895 (Table 4). This represents 30 percent of the 11,596 furs reported sold by licensed trappers (Table 2) and a 500 percent increase of California furs sold to licensed fur dealers during this last year. The average prices paid by the reporting dealers are used to calculate the estimated fur value (Table 2) for each species and the value of furs (Total Spent in Table 4) reported bought by the dealers.

TABLE 4
FURS PURCHASED BY DEALERS, 1993-94

Species	Range of Average Prices	Number of Furs Purchased	Total Spent
Badger	\$4.37	3	\$13
Beaver	5.81 - 905.00	92	755
Bobcat	30.00 - 70.20	844	34,134
Coyote	13.54 - 70.20	260	3,976
Gray Fox	8.00 - 10.50	1,010	9,623
Mink	9.15	15	137
Muskrat	1.89 - 2.37	865	1,654
Opossum	.43 - 1.00	39	25
Raccoon	5.03 - 7.00	274	1,500
Spotted Skunk	1.38	8	11
Striped Skunk	1.25 - 1.51	48	67
Weasel	NR	0	0
Total	-	3,458	\$51,895

NR = None reported sold