

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

**LICENSED FUR TRAPPERS' AND DEALERS' REPORT
1992-93**

by

William E. Grenfell Jr.

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INTRODUCTION

The Department 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 their 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 1992-93 that fee was:

Adult: \$60.50

Juvenile: \$20.25

Nonresident: \$303.75

Over the years, the take and monetary return to the trapper 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 1992-93 season, and the take (compared to last year) decreased by 2,486 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 furbearer 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 thirty-eight trapping licenses were sold during the 1992-93 trapping season, a decrease of 9 percent from the 371 licenses sold in the 1991-92 season (Table 1). This was the ninth 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.

TABLE 1 NUMBERS OF TRAPPERS BUYING LICENSES AND REPORTING THEIR HARVEST			
Reports	1990-91	1991-92	1992-93
Licensees who reported successful trapping effort	223	201	185
Licensees who reported but did not trap or were unsuccessful	139	129	122
Licensees not reporting	149	41	31
Total Licenses Sold	511	371	338

Estimated revenue received by trappers from the sale of furs during the 1992-93 season, based on average prices paid by fur buyers, was \$60,525 (Table 2). This is 30 percent above the revenue of \$99,800 received in 1991-92, but is well below the high of \$2,399,565 of 1978-79.

The average income per successful trapper decreased from \$497 in 1991-92 to \$179 in 1992-93.

Each year a portion of the fur harvest is reported as unsold. During the 1992-93 season, 36 percent was unsold, compared to 23 percent unsold during the 1991-92 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 1992-93 fur harvest was \$92,968 (Table 2) a decrease of 31 percent from the \$152,839 of the 1991-92 season.

Furs were reported taken in all counties except Alameda, Contra Costa, Del Norte, San Francisco, San Mateo, and Santa Cruz, (Table 3).

Bobcats continued to be the most economically important animals, providing 52 percent of the total value of California's furs. Although 986 export tags were sold for bobcats taken during the 1992-93 season, in a program requiring tags for the sale or shipment of bobcat furs, holders of trapping licenses reported the take of 1,101. This difference between the two reporting systems continues to be a significant improvement over previous years. Last year 1,089 export tags were sold, but trappers reported taking 1,080 bobcats. The average price paid per bobcat was \$43.92, a 34 percent decrease from the average price of \$70.42 paid during the 1991-92 season.

Coyotes were second in value importance behind bobcats during the 1992-93 season. Gray fox ranked third in estimated fur value. Muskrat estimated fur value ranked fourth for 1992-93.

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

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
1991-92						
Species	Harvest			Pelt Average	Estimated Revenue	Estimated Fur Value
	Sold	Unsold	Total			
Badger	2	20	22	\$ 2.50	\$ 5	\$ 55
Beaver	203	348	551	8.00	1,848	4,408
Bobcat	955	125	1,080	70.42	67,251	76,054
Coyote	474	1,062	1,536	22.81	497	35,036
Gray Fox	807	523	1,330	8.23	6,642	10,946
Mink	228	-8*	220	21.80	4,970	4,796
Muskrat	9,368	570	9,938	1.73	16,207	17,193
Opossum	7	194	201	NR	-	-
Raccoon	366	280	648	7.04	2,380	4,561
Spotted Skunk	4	12	16	NR	-	-
Striped Skunk	24	689	713	NR	-	-
Weasel	0	2	2	NR	-	-
Total	12,438	3,817	16,255		\$ 99,800	\$ 152,839

* Furs taken in previous years sold this year.

NR = None reported sold

TABLE 3
TRAPPING TAKE BY COUNTY 1992-93

County	BA*	BC*	BE*	CO*	GF*	MI*	MU*	OP*	RA*	SP*	ST*	WE*	Total
Alpine				2	1	4							7
Amador		1											1
Butte			78	18	114	24	683	12	140		12		1,018
Calaveras		6		1					1				8
Colusa		22	3	9	7		1,030		54				1,125
El Dorado		66	10	16	9	1	6		10		12		70
Fresno		60		71	73				3	1	2		210
Glenn		20		2	80		1		18				121
Humboldt		56		42	68			4	103	21	20		314
Imperial				16					4				20
Inyo		33	125	40	9	7			6	1	4	1	226
Kern	3	35	2	106	34		2		24	4	63		273
Kings		2											2
Lake		14		7	10			3	12		15		61
Lassen	10	24	5	18		24	480		3	1	1	1	567
Los Angeles	1	24		42	8			329	349		308		1,061
Madera		15		48	9			8	8		6		94
Marin									12				12
Mariposa		2		2	3				2		2		11
Mendocino		6		2	13			3	18		10		52
Merced	6	5		29	9								43
Modoc		48		53					1				108
Mono		20	1	6	6	6			1				40
Monterey		14		32	9		8	39	16	1	91		210
Napa		24		38	35			4	31		20		152
Nevada				12									12
Orange		2			21			14	10		10		57
Placer			9			1	88	1	8		3		110
Plumas		5		2	7	74			61				149
Riverside		33	1	53	79			19	10		14		209
Sacramento			40	28	2	9	72	11	29		31		222
San Benito		7		30	9								46
San Bernardino	3	122		188	40			12	9		9		383
San Diego	1	91		26	218			60	11	5	70		482
San Joaquin		1	15	1		29	146	4	6		3		205
San Luis Obispo		2		38									40
Santa Barbara		58		64	148			7			17		294
Santa Clara		20											20
Shasta		21	5	23	56	38	1,013	1	40		11		1,208
Sierra			2	15									17
Siskiyou	1	99	4	50	12	6	2,603		22	30	2		2,829
Solano			3			2	107	15	5		15		147
Sonoma		2			7			28	20		169		226
Stanislaus			3	1			3	3					10
Sutter			10	1	1	1	195		3				211
Tehama		32	19	35	155		4	8	8	1	10		272
Trinity		12		6	38			3	29	4	3		95
Tulare		81		53	9								143
Tuolumne				2							1		3
Ventura		75		49	169			1		2	1		297
Yolo					1	2		20	13		15		51
Yuba			10				88						98
Unknown		1		63									64
Total	25	1,101	345	1,340	1,469	228	6,529	609	1,100	71	950	2	13,769
Percent	>.1	8.1	2.5	9.7	10.7	1.7	47.4	4.4	8.1	.5	6.9	>.1	100.0

* 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 6,529 muskrats taken during the 1992-93 season represented 47 percent of the total take.

Thirteen licensed fur dealers reported on their 1992-93 activities and three reported buying furs in California. They reported buying 691 pelts in California, amounting to a total purchase of \$11,346 (Table 4). This represents handling only 8 percent of the 8,855 furs reported sold by licensed trappers (Table 2) and a 32 percent decrease 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, 1992-93			
Species	Range of Average Prices	No. of Furs Purchased	Total Spent
Badger	8.27 - 11.00	4	\$ 19.00
Beaver	NR	0	0
Bobcat	38.00 - 94.00	194	8,520.00
Coyote	12.33 - 20.05	59	880.00
Gray Fox	5.37 - 8.00	198	1,366.00
Mink	2.00 - 35.00	2	26.00
Muskrat	.50 - 1.19	140	147.00
Opossum	NR	0	0
Raccoon	3.08 - 7.25	94	388.00
Spotted Skunk	NR	0	0
Striped Skunk	NR	0	0
Weasel	NR	0	0
Total		691	\$ 11,346.00

NR = None reported sold