

**Alaska Department of Fish and Game  
Division of Wildlife Conservation**

**Statewide Annual Report  
1 July 2003 to 30 June 2004**

# **TRAPPER QUESTIONNAIRE**

**Tim Peltier**



ADF&G photo

**May 2005**

# **CODE OF ETHICS**

## **A TRAPPER'S RESPONSIBILITY**

1. Respect other trappers' grounds particularly brushed, maintained traplines with a history of use.
2. Check traps regularly.
3. Promote trapping methods that will reduce the possibility of catching nontarget animals.
4. Obtain landowner's permission before trapping on private property.
5. Know and use proper releasing and killing methods.
6. Develop set location methods to prevent losses.
7. Trap in the most humane way possible.
8. Properly dispose of animal carcasses.
9. Concentrate trapping in areas where animals are overabundant for the supporting habitat.
10. Promptly report the presence of diseased animals to wildlife authorities.
11. Assist landowners who are having problems with predators and other furbearers that have become a nuisance.
12. Support and help train new trappers in trapping ethics, methods and means, conservation, fur handling and marketing.
13. Obey all trapping regulations and support strict enforcement by reporting violations.
14. Support and promote sound furbearer management.

This code of ethics was copied from the Alaska Trappers Manual. The manual was created through a joint effort between the Alaska Department of Fish and Game and the Alaska Trappers Association. The manual is available in Alaska book stores and from the Alaska Trappers Association for approximately \$20.00.

**STATE OF ALASKA**  
Frank H. Murkowski, Governor

**DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME**  
Kevin C. Duffy, Commissioner

**DIVISION OF WILDLIFE CONSERVATION**  
Matthew H. Robus, Director

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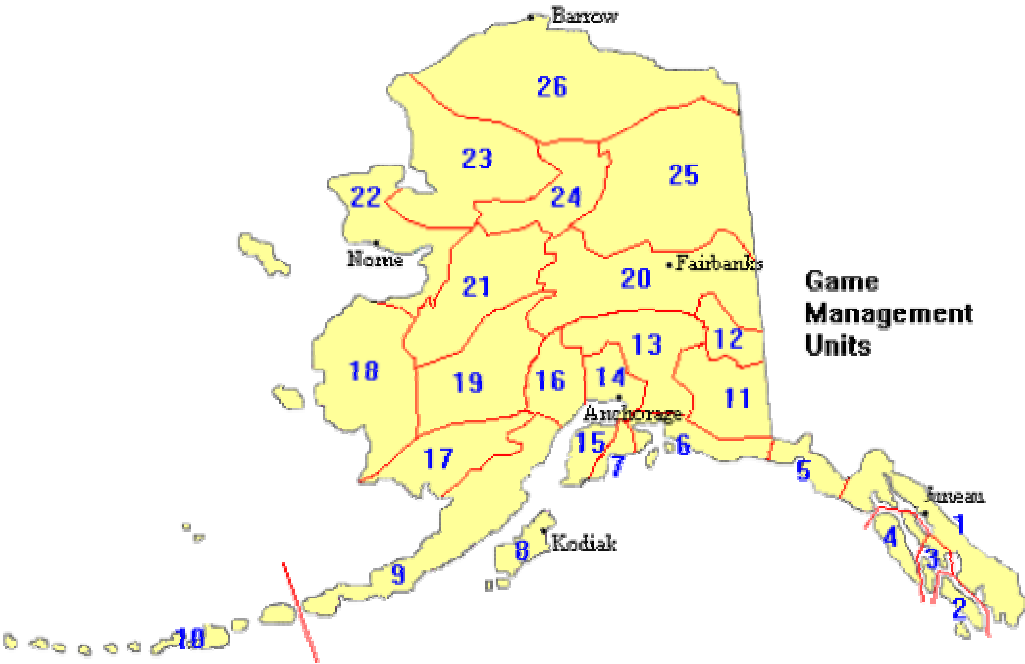
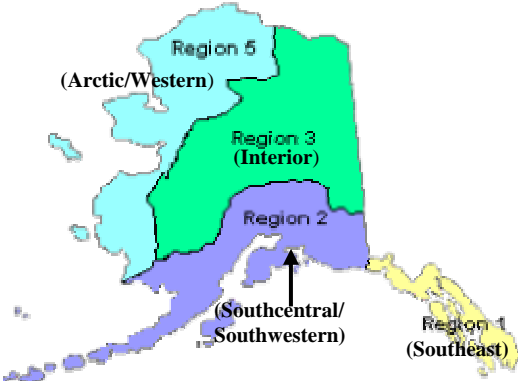
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# ALASKA'S REGIONS AND GAME MANAGEMENT UNITS

## REGIONS



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# ALASKA TRAPPER REPORT 2003–2004

## INTRODUCTION

The 2003–2004 Trapper Report includes information provided by Alaskan trappers through the annual Trapper Questionnaire. This year 1759 questionnaires were mailed throughout the state and 397 responses were received. Of these responses, 63% were actively trapping during the 2003–2004 season. Broken down by region, of the 253 respondents who trapped, 49 people trapped in Southeast (Region I), 82 trapped in Southcentral and Southwestern (Region II), 102 trapped in the Interior (Region III) and 20 people trapped in the Arctic and Western regions (Region V). Additional responses were received from individuals who did not trap during the 2003–2004 season. This report contains demographic data about Alaskan trappers, and information on methods of trapping, primary target species, trapping effort, numbers of furbearers trapped, fur disposition and prices. The Alaska Department of Fish and Game welcomes comments concerning the management of Alaska's wildlife resources and continues to publish trapper comments in this report.

In the interest of confidentiality, the names of individuals and references to specific traplines are not included. The Alaska Department of Fish and Game hopes you will find this report informative and welcomes suggestions for improving this publication.

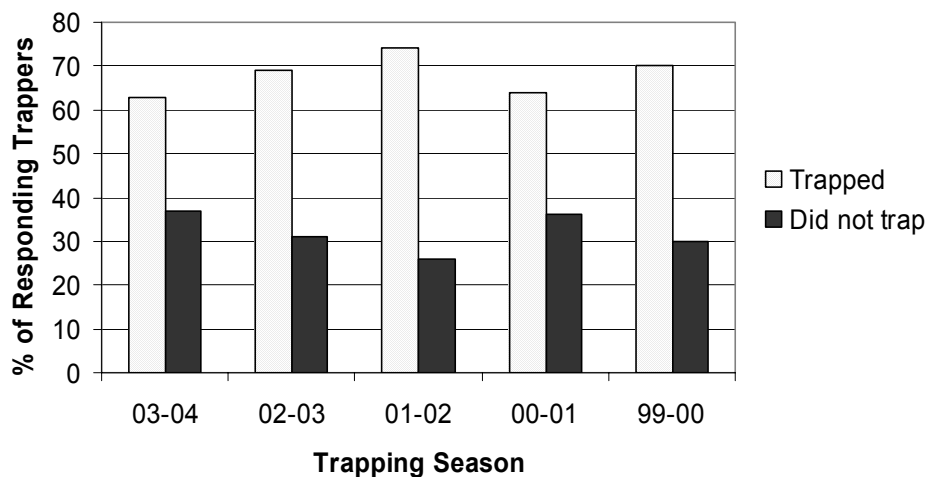


## Alaska's Trappers

### Did you trap in 2003-2004 Season?

Of the 397 trappers who responded to this questionnaire, 253 individuals or 63% said they trapped during the 2003–2004 season. Alaska experienced a decrease in the percent of respondents who trapped during the 2003–2004 season compared to 69% trappers the year before and 74% in 2001–2002. The percent of respondents to the trapper questionnaire was slightly lower this year (23%) compared to 2002–2003 (26%).

### Last Five Years of Trapping

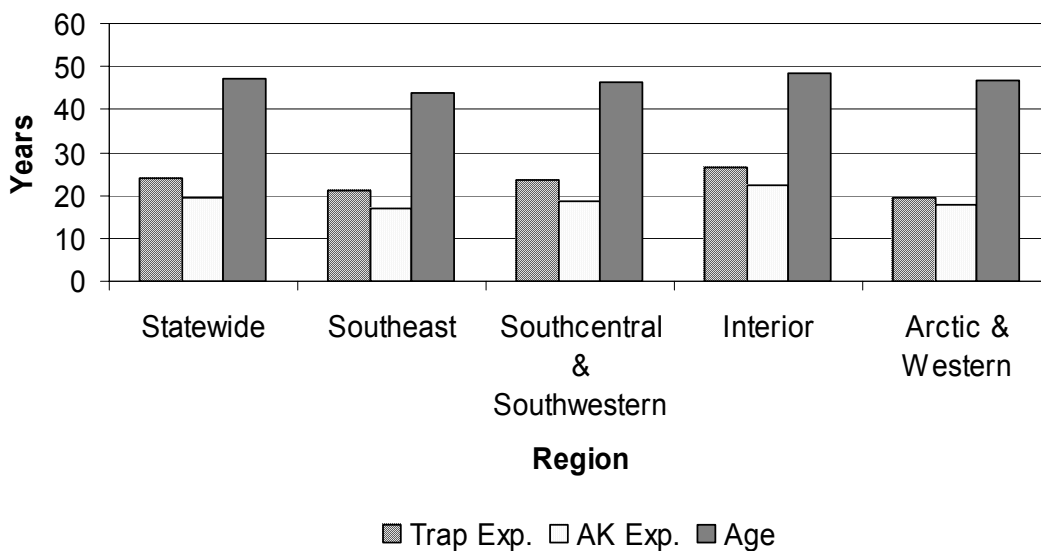


### Trapper Age and Experience

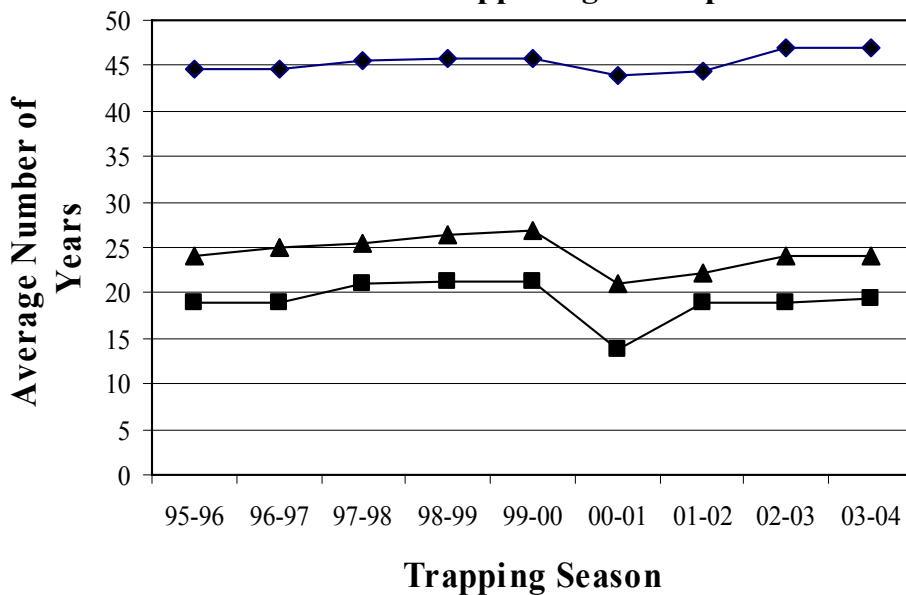
The average age of a trapper in Alaska who responded to this questionnaire is 47 years with 24 years total trapping experience and 19.5 years trapping in Alaska. The profile of this year's trapper remains unchanged from the 2002–2003 trapping season. The youngest responding trapper this year was 8 years old and the oldest was 90 years old. Eleven of this year's respondents were 16 or younger. It continues to appear that new generations are participating in trapping but **if you know a young trapper who would like to get this report, please send us their name and address with your questionnaire.**

The graphs on the next page illustrate the statewide and regional trapper average age, experience, and trends over the last several trapping seasons.

### Average Trapper Age & Experience



### Trends in Trapper Age & Experience



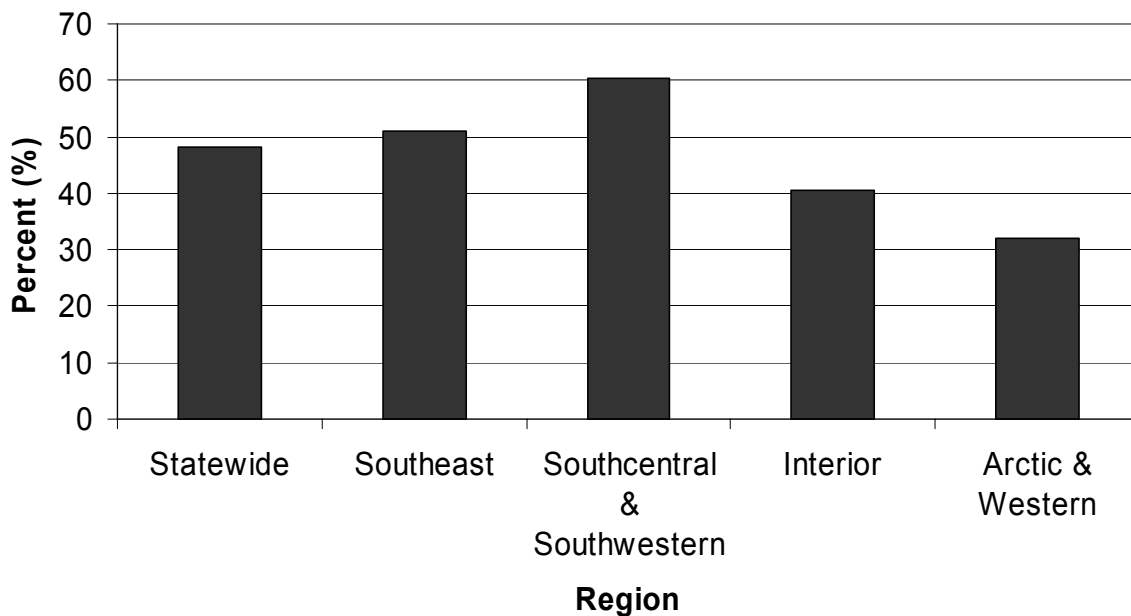
◆ Average Age    ■ Avg Years trapped in AK    ▲ Avg Years Trapped



### **Did you have a youngster (under 16) with you on your trapline this year?**

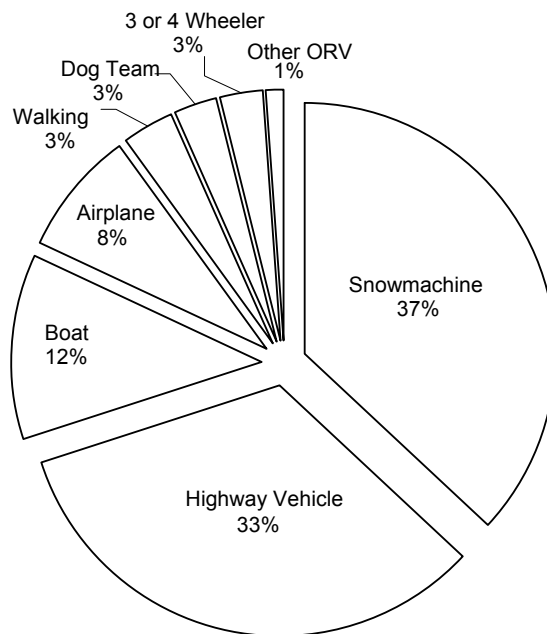
While age and experience trends indicate a shift to older trappers, the information below indicates more young people are being introduced to trapping. During the 2003–2004 trapping season, 48% of trappers statewide were accompanied by a young person. This is up 6% from last year. The following graph illustrates regional differences in young persons on a trapline.

**Percentage Of Trappers Who Took A Young Person (Under 16) With Them**



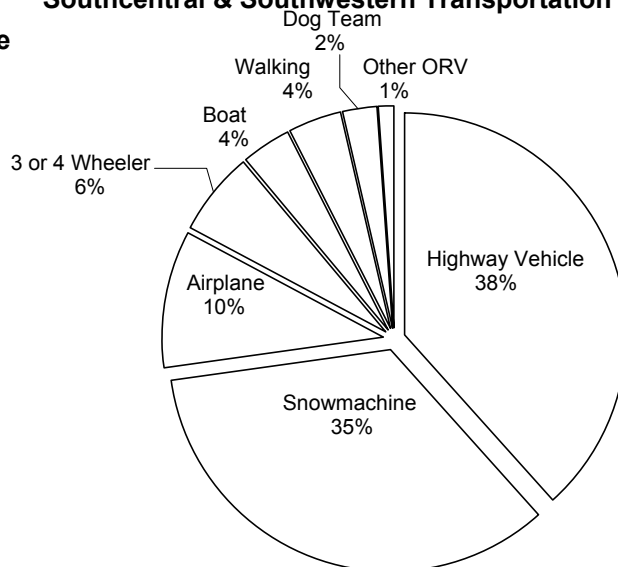
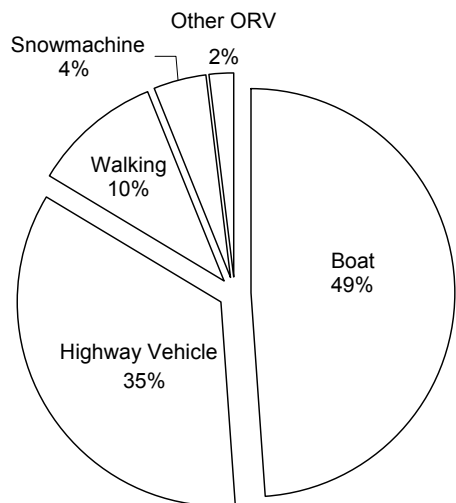


**What mode of transportation did you use to get to your main trapping area?  
Statewide Transportation To Trapline**

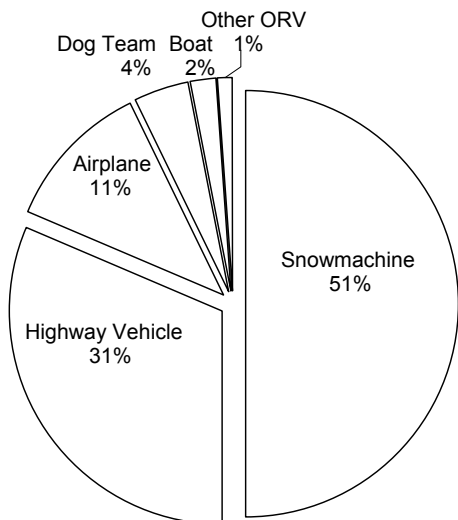


**Southcentral & Southwestern Transportation To Trapline**

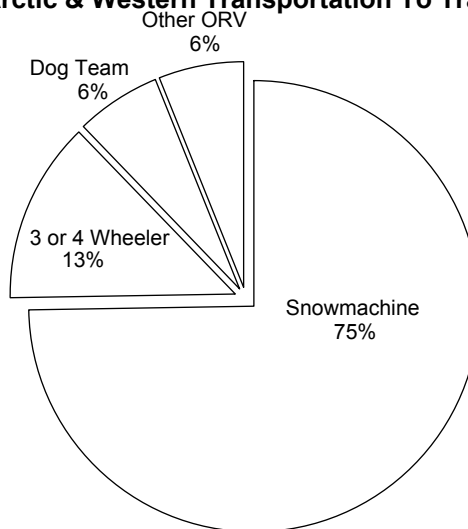
**Southeast Transportation To Trapline**



**Interior Transportation To Trapline**

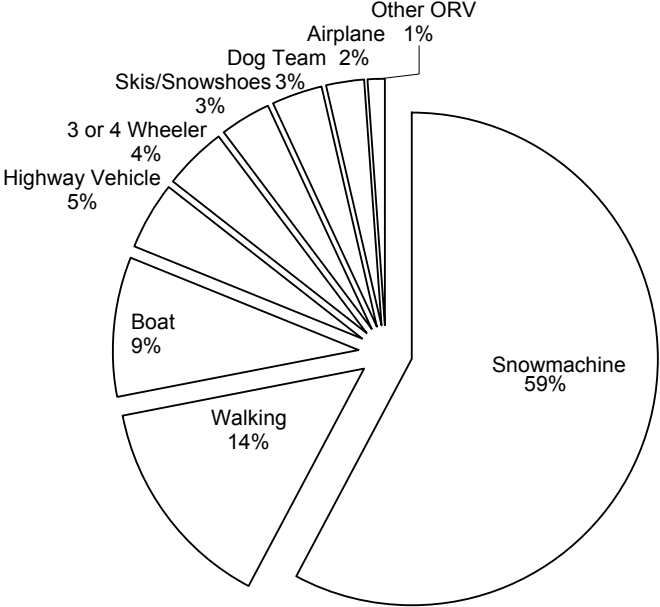


**Arctic & Western Transportation To Trapline**

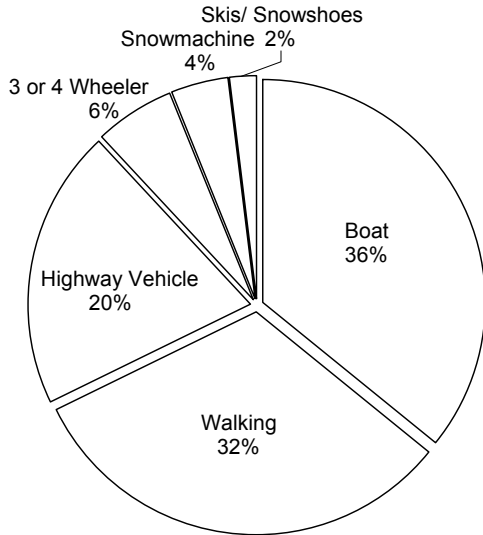


**What transportation did you use to run your main trapline?**

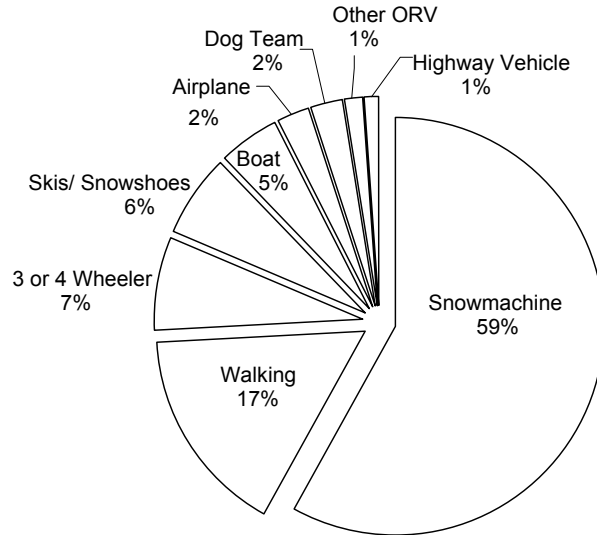
# Statewide Transportation To Run Trapline



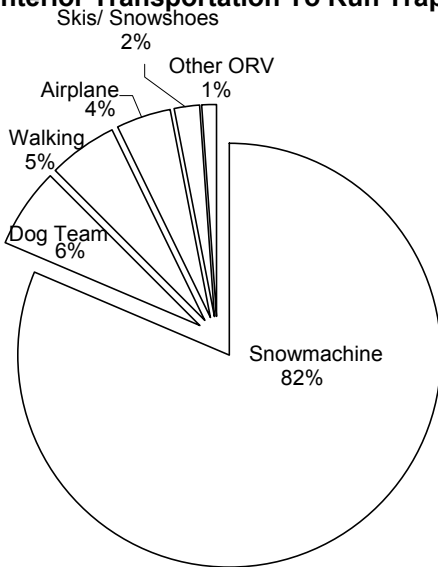
**Southeast Transportation To Run Trapline**



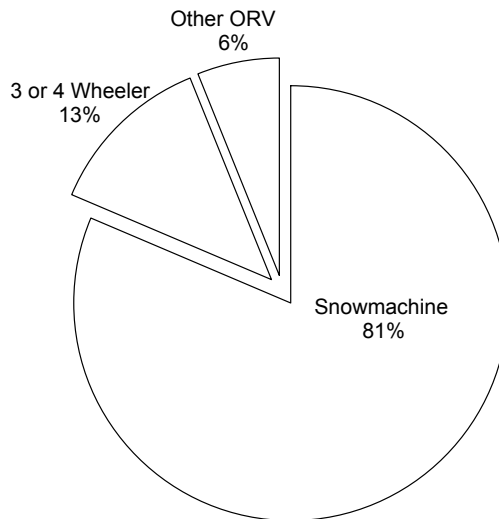
**Southcentral & Southwestern Transportation To Run Trapline**



**Interior Transportation To Run Trapline**

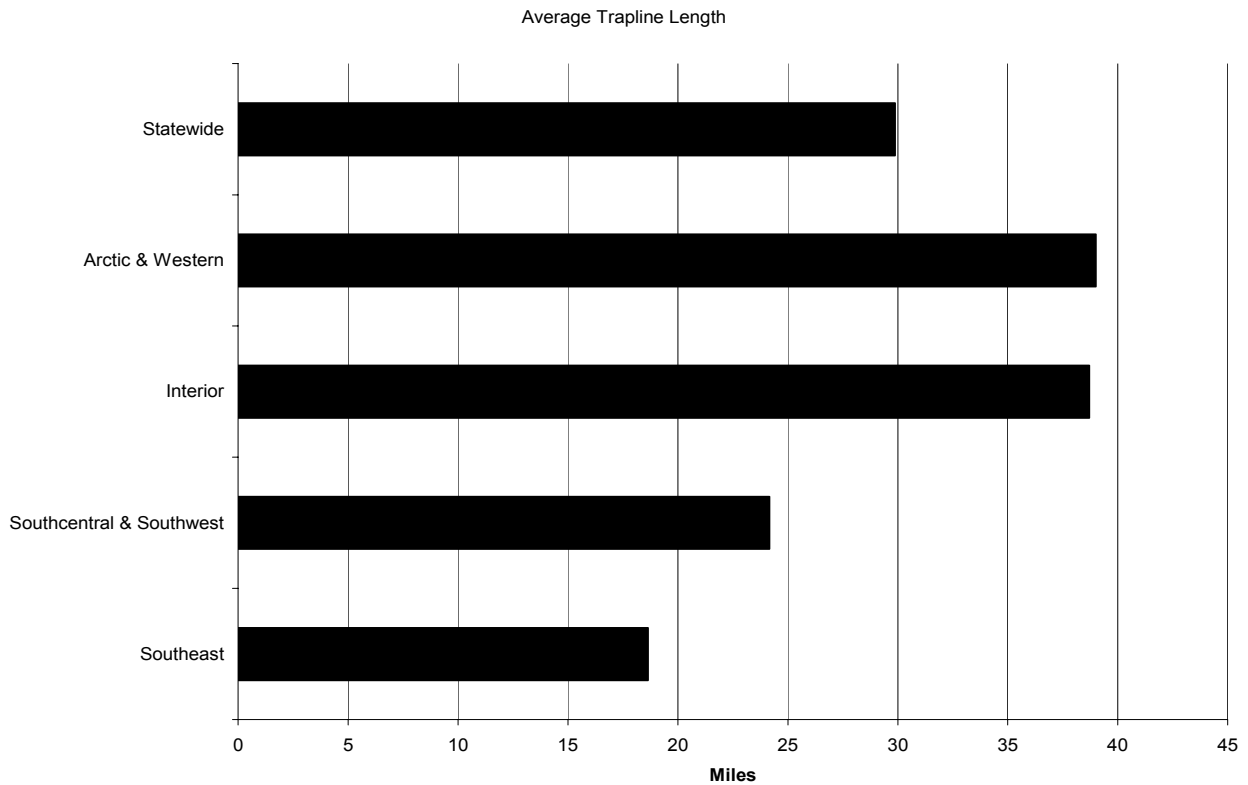


**Arctic & Western Transportation To Run Trapline**

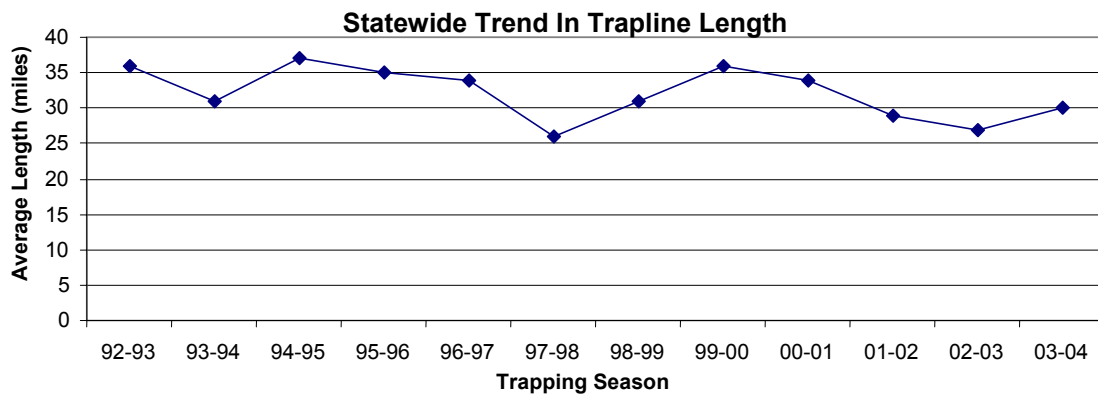


**How long was your main trapline in 2003–2004?**

The average trapline length in Alaska was 30 miles. Trapline lengths were variable throughout the state, running from less than 1 mile to 250 miles long. In Southeast, average trapline lengths were 19 miles and varied between 1 and 100 miles. In the Southcentral and Southwestern regions, the average trapline was 24 miles long and varied between 1 and 160 miles. In the Interior region, the average trapline length was 39 miles and varied between 1 and 250 miles. In the Arctic/Western region, the average trapline length was 39 miles and varied between 1 and 96 miles. Average trapline lengths did not change much from last year, and trappers continue to cover variable distances on their traplines.



Since the 1992–1993 season, the statewide average trapline length has remained between 26 and 37 miles. The longest trapline in the state has fluctuated between a low of 200 miles in 1999–2000 and a high of over 400 miles in 1992–1993. Changes in trapline length can be the result of many factors, including fur prices or abundance, trapping season changes, weather, and the addition or subtraction of reporting trappers.



### How many sets did you make on your trapline in 2003–2004?

The following table represents the number of sets reported by trappers from each region. Many of the reports received did not indicate the number of sets put out. The number of sets varies because intensity and effort is different for each trapper and region. Most trappers (85%) put out 100 or less traps. Thirty eight percent of trappers reported putting out fewer than 25 sets, down from 45% last

year. There was a slight decrease in the percentage of trappers with more than 300 traps (2%, 2003–2004 vs. 3%, 2002–2003). The data do not necessarily represent a measure of trapper effort; the number of sets may be a better indication of the reason a person traps (e.g., recreation or subsistence).

#### Number of Sets

Region	Less than 25 sets	20–50 sets	51–100 sets	101–200 sets	201–300 sets	More than 300 sets
Statewide	38%	29%	18%	9%	4%	2%
Southeast	42%	30%	22%	4%	2%	None
Southcentral & Southwest	43%	31%	15%	11%	None	None
Interior	30%	27%	19%	10%	8%	5%
Arctic/Western	53%	20%	20%	7%	None	None

### Most Important Species

Marten was the species listed statewide as the most important in the 2003–2004 questionnaire and the most important in each region with the exception of the Arctic/Western region, where wolf was the most important species. Marten has been the most important species since the 1992–1993 trapping season except during the 1999–2000 season, when wolf was listed statewide as most important. Targeted species change yearly, and these changes are based on many factors. Regional differences can be explained by furbearer availability, abundance, and fur market status.

#### Species

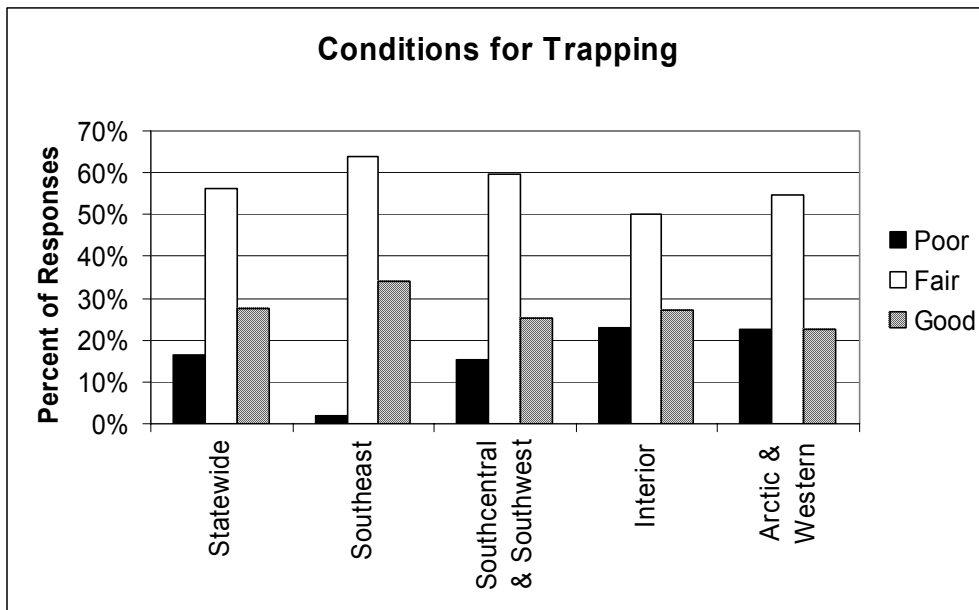
Region	Marten	Wolf	Beaver	River Otter	Lynx	Wolverine	Fox	Mink	Red Fox	Coyote	Ermine
Statewide <sup>1</sup>	40%	20%	10%	9%	7%	5%	4%	2%	2%	1%	>1%
Southeast	54%	8%	4%	24%	N/A <sup>2</sup>	2%	N/A <sup>2</sup>	8%	N/A <sup>2</sup>	N/A <sup>2</sup>	N/A <sup>2</sup>
Southcentral & Southwest	31%	23%	13%	8%	5%	6%	5%	3%	4%	4%	N/A <sup>2</sup>
Interior	47%	25%	10%	N/A <sup>2</sup>	10%	4%	4%	N/A <sup>2</sup>	N/A <sup>2</sup>	N/A <sup>2</sup>	1%
Arctic/Western	N/A <sup>2</sup>	20%	10%	9%	15%	10%	10%	N/A <sup>2</sup>	10%	N/A <sup>2</sup>	N/A <sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Statewide percentages listed in descending order of indicated importance.

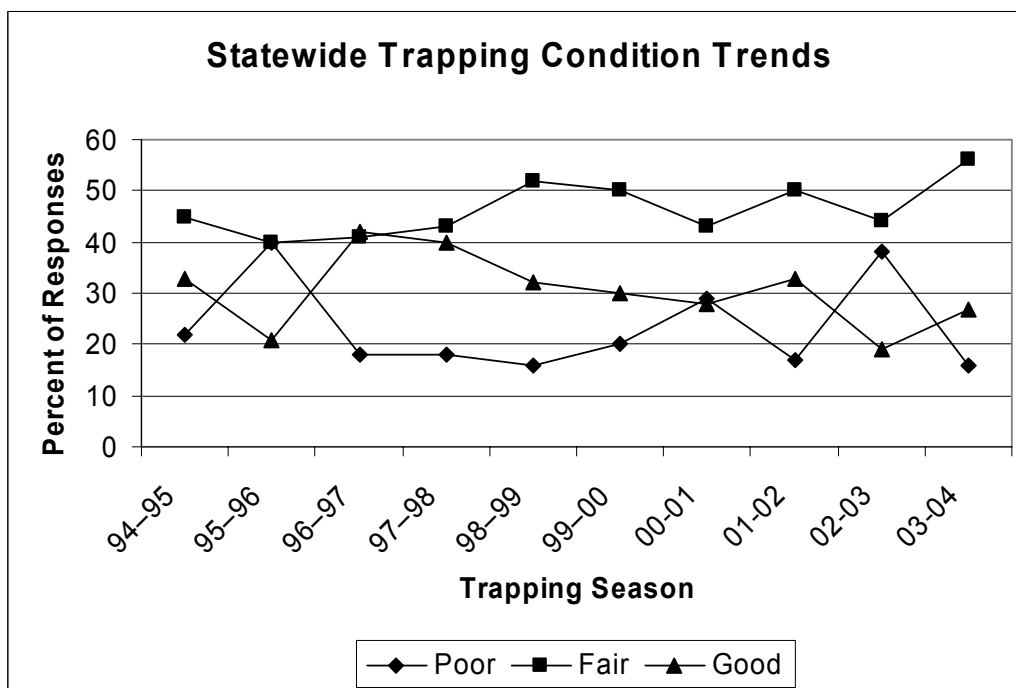
<sup>2</sup> N/A indicates no data available or no trapping effort.

### What were the trapping conditions on your trapline?

Over 80% of trappers who returned the 2003–2004 questionnaire indicated the conditions were fair to good. These charts illustrate condition responses by region and show a trend in condition responses for the last several trapping seasons.



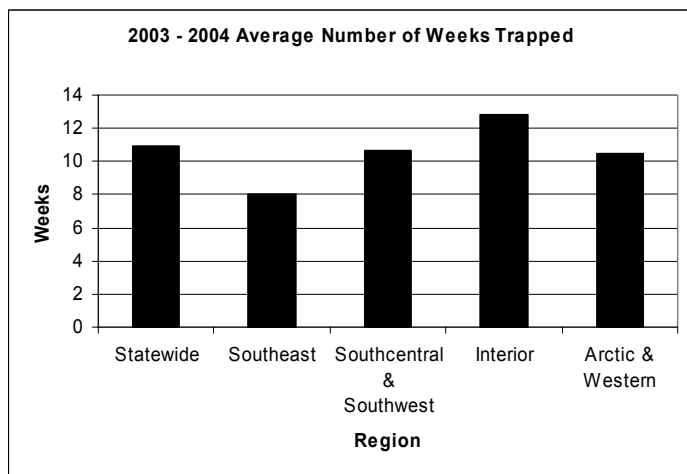
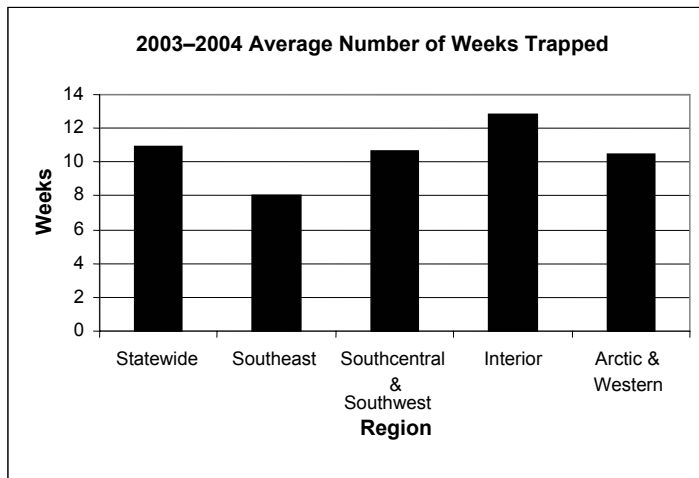
Trapping conditions have varied over the last 10 years. Colder and snowier weather throughout much of the state meant greatly improved trapping over the previous year. The graph below depicts the percent of responses for each condition category (poor, fair, and good) over the last 10 years. For example, during the 03–04 trapping season, approximately 56% of trappers felt conditions were fair.



**How many weeks did you trap during the 2003–2004 season?  
 How many years have you been trapping in the same area?**

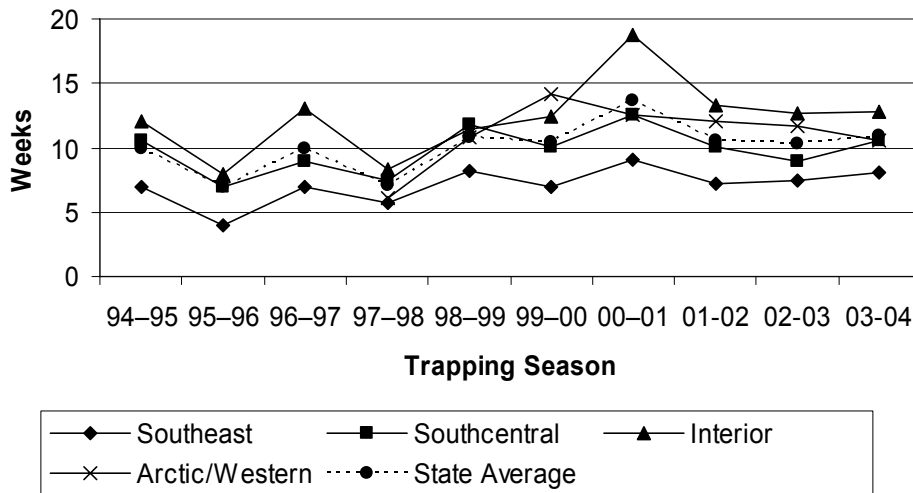


The average trapper in Alaska trapped for approximately 10.9 weeks, slightly more than the 2002–2003 season. Alaskan trappers have spent, on average, approximately 13 years trapping in the same area. The longest time in the same area is 59 years by a trapper in the Bethel area. Statewide, the average time trapping in the same area decreased.



The chart below illustrates trends in the length of time trapped in each region over the last several trapping seasons. During the 2003–2004 trapping season, trappers in every region except Arctic/Western trapped more weeks than the previous year. Statewide, over the last 8 years, the average number of weeks trapped has remained fairly stable at about 10 weeks per season.

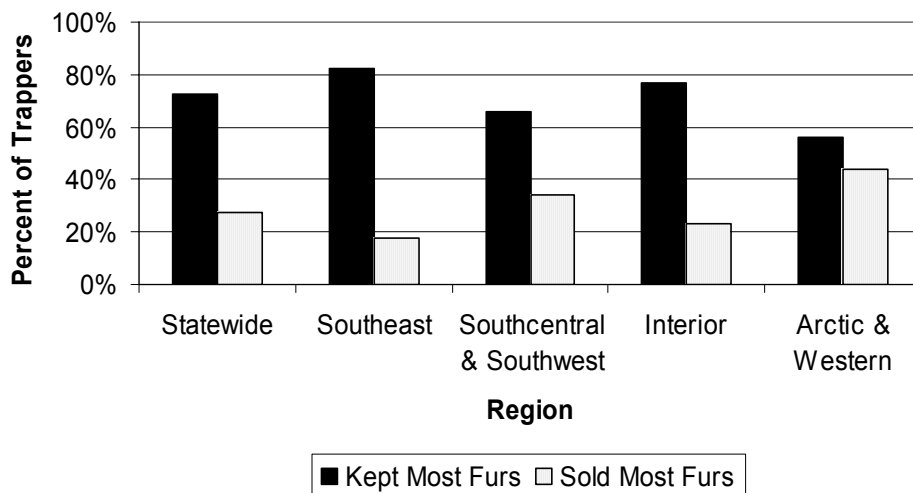
### Trend: Average Weeks Trapped



### Did you keep or sell most of your furs?

A greater percentage of trappers kept their furs in 2003–2004 than the previous year. This in combination with decreasing trends in the effect of prices on trapping effort, time spent trapping, and comments about the costs of trapping point toward a decrease in the number of trappers who use furs for cash income and an increase in the proportion of trappers who use fur for other purposes.

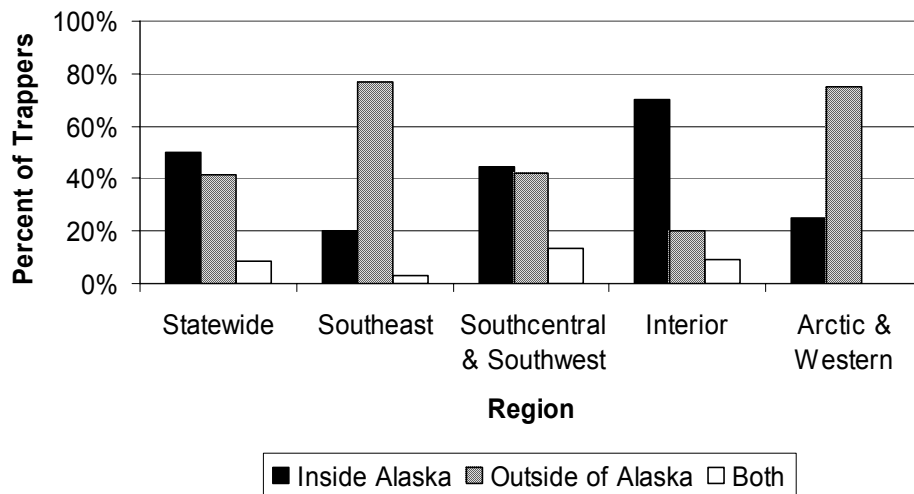
### Trappers Who Kept or Sold Most Furs



**If you sold your furs, did you sell to Alaskan fur buyers, or outside?**

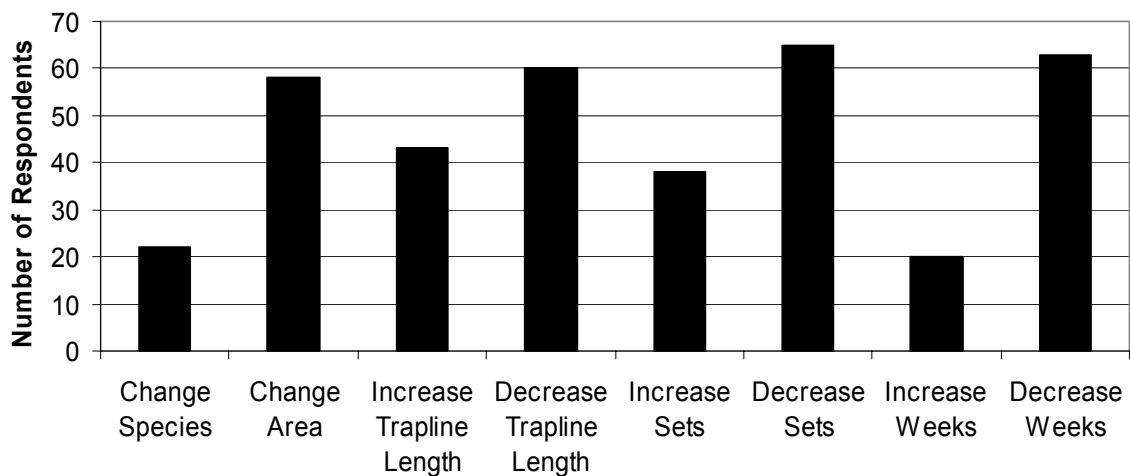
Statewide, trappers sold most of their furs to Alaskan fur buyers. Interior trappers sold more furs to Alaskan buyers, while Southeast and Arctic & Western trappers sold to the outside, and Southcentral and Southwestern trappers sold furs fairly equally to in-state and out-of-state furbuyers. The difference may be due to the proximity of fur buyers in Anchorage and Fairbanks making it easier for trappers in those areas to sell furs locally. In Southeast and the Arctic/Western Regions it may be more economic to sell furs outside of Alaska because of the lack of fur dealers.

**Location of Fur Sales**



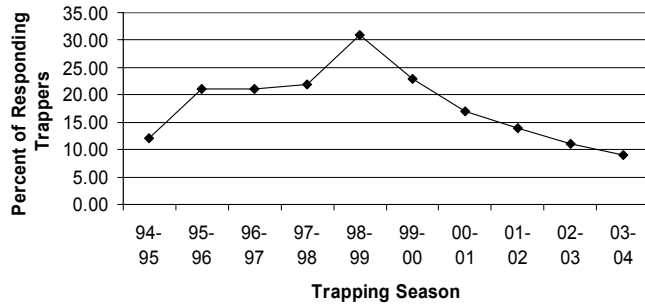
**How did you change your trapping effort for the 2003–2004 trapping season?**

**2003 - 2004 Changes in Trapper Effort**

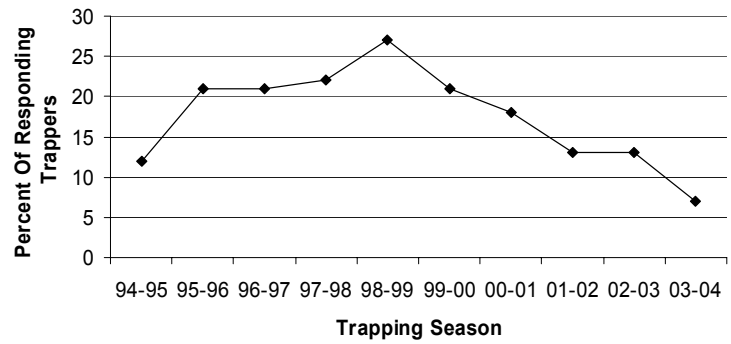


**Did last year’s fur prices or the pre-season advertised prices affect your trapping effort in the 2003–2004 trapping season?**

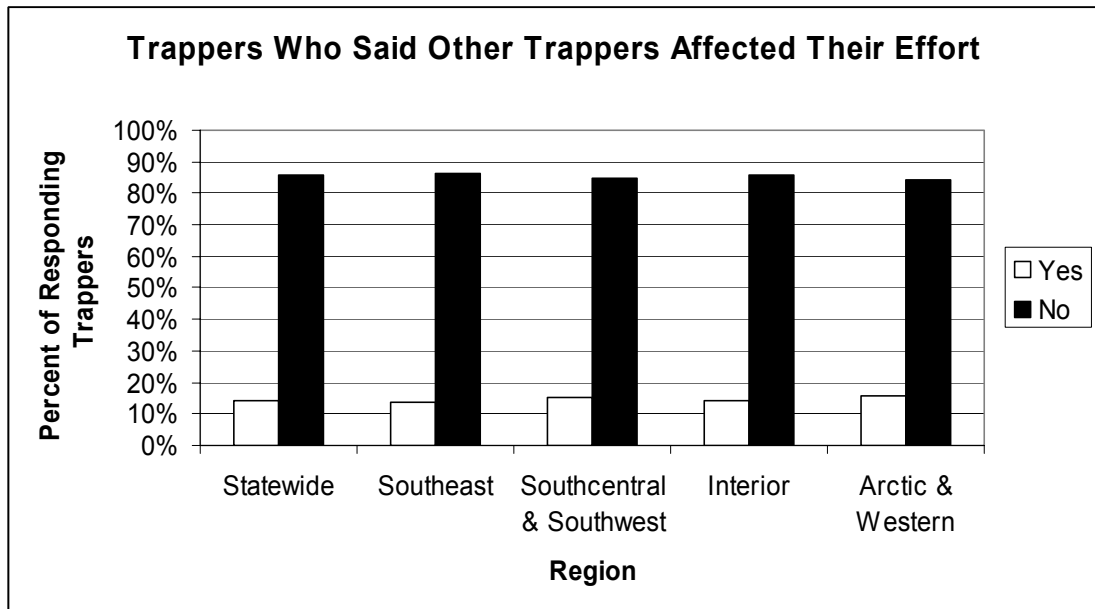
**Trappers Who Said Pre-Season Advertised Prices Affected Their Trapping Effort**



**Trappers Who Said Last Year's Prices Affected Their Trapping Effort**



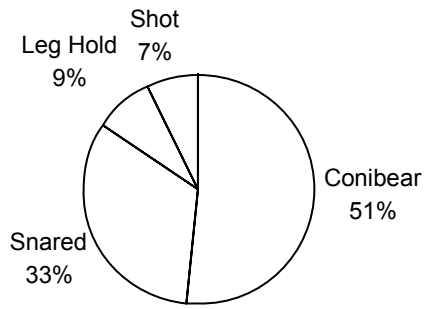
**Did the presence of other trappers in the area that you trap affect your trapping effort in 2003–2004?**



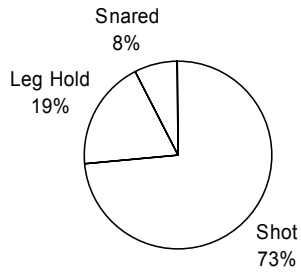
**Methods of Taking Furbearers**

We continue to ask trappers to document the approximate percentage of animals taken by a variety of methods allowed by a trapping license. This data provides us with information on trap type and trapping strategies for various species throughout the state. Pie charts displayed on the following pages represent the percentage of animals taken by method with a trapping license. The 5 choices for taking furbearers were shooting, leg hold, snare, conibear, and other. If a category does not appear on an individual pie chart, it is because less than 0.5% of the respondents reported using that method to take game.

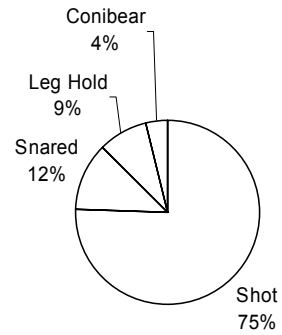
**Statewide Beaver Harvest**



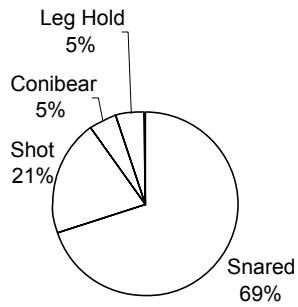
**Southeast Beaver Harvest**



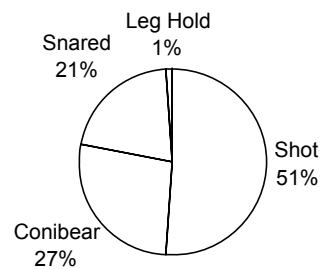
**Southcentral & Southwest Beaver Harvest**



**Interior Beaver Harvest**

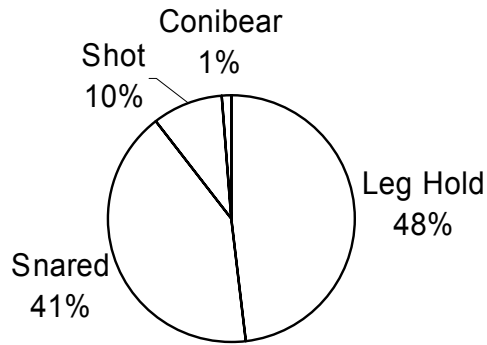


**Arctic/Western Beaver Harvest**

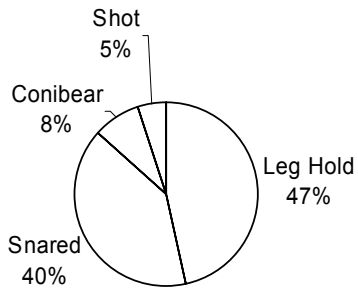


**Method of Taking Furbearers**

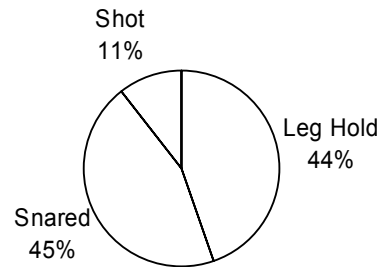
# Statewide Coyote Harvest



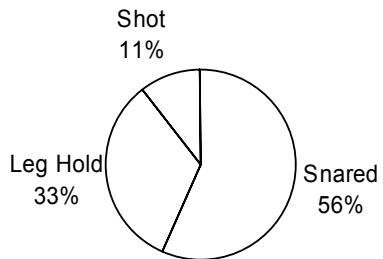
## Southeast Coyote Harvest



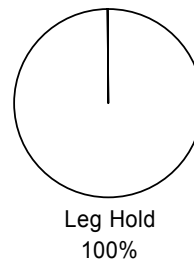
## Southcentral & Southwest Coyote Harvest



## Interior Coyote Harvest

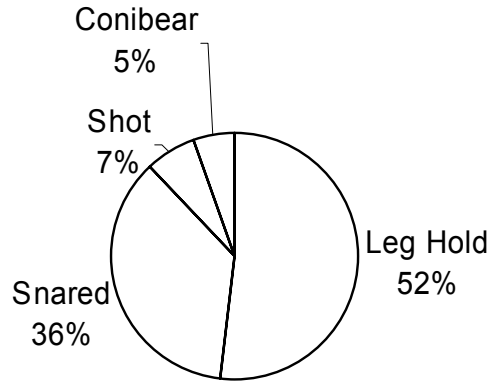


## Arctic/Western Coyote Harvest

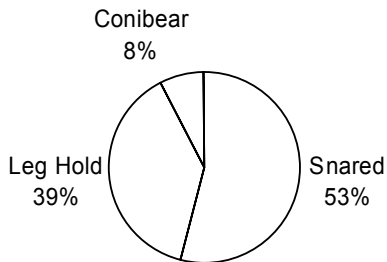


# Method of Taking Furbearers

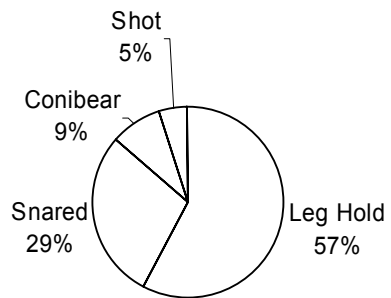
## Statewide Fox Harvest



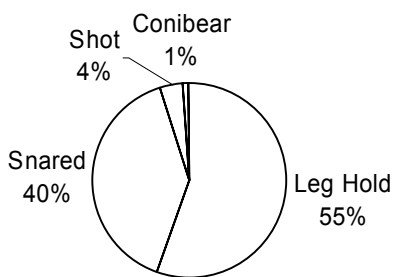
## Southeast Fox Harvest



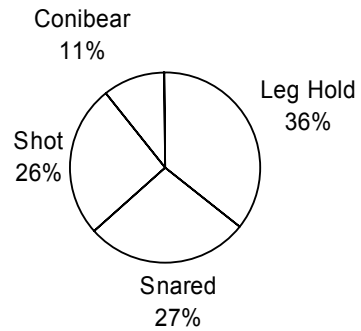
## Southcentral & Southwest Fox Harvest



## Interior Fox Harvest

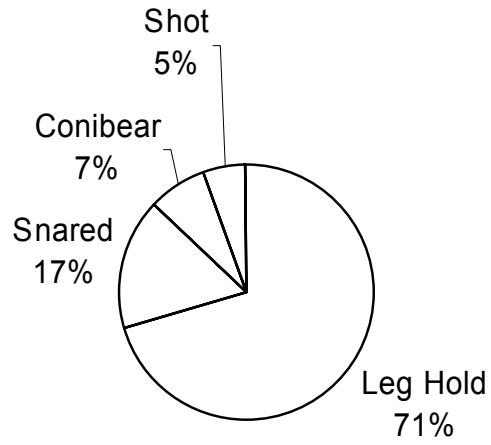


## Arctic/Western Fox Harvest

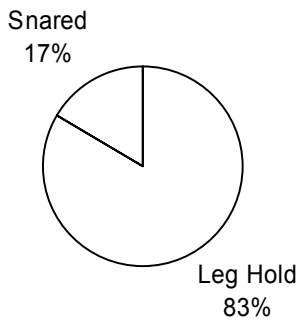


# Method of Taking Furbearers

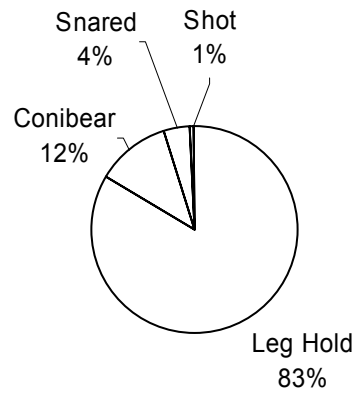
## Statewide Lynx Harvest



## Southeast Lynx Harvest

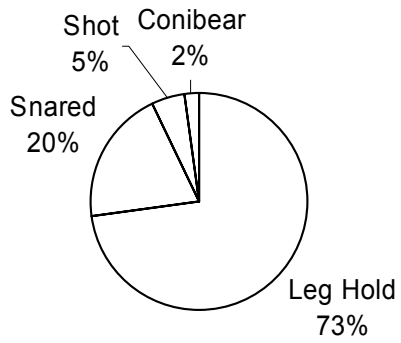


## Southcentral & Southwest Lynx Harvest

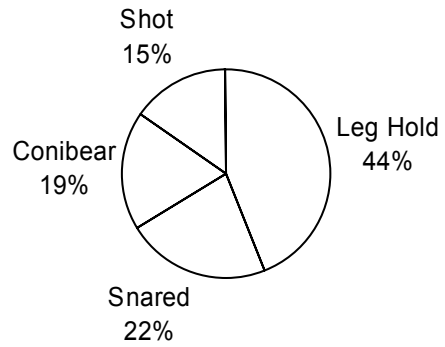




### Interior Lynx Harvest

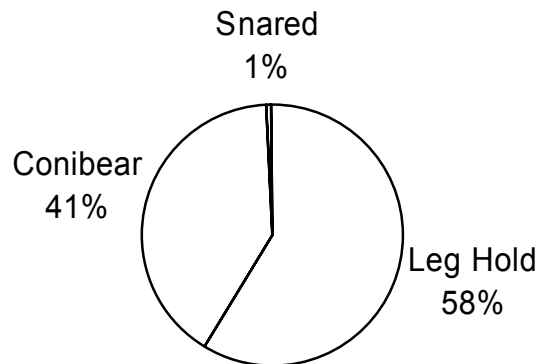


### Arctic/Western Lynx Harvest

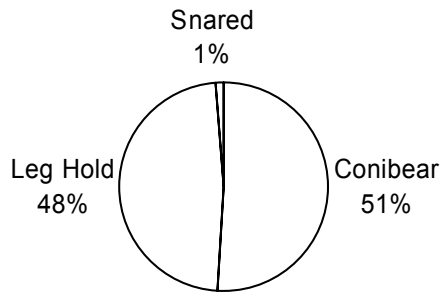


## Method of Taking Furbearers

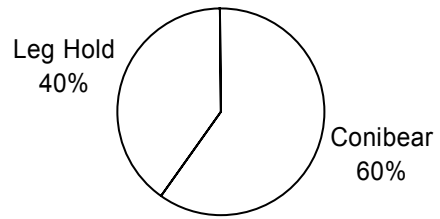
### Statewide Marten Harvest



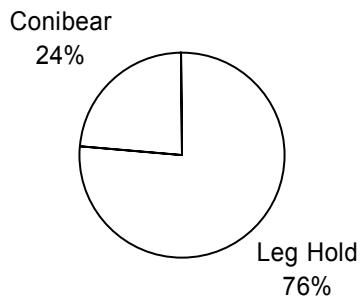
### Southeast Marten Harvest



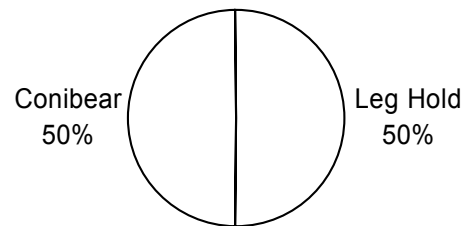
### Southcentral & Southwest Marten Harvest



### Interior Marten Harvest

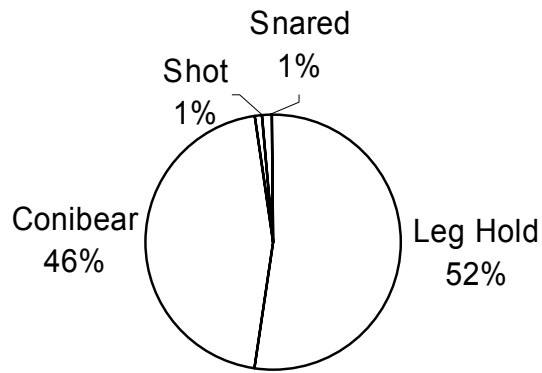


### Arctic/Western Marten Harvest

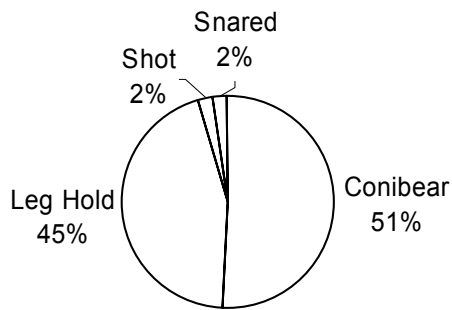


## Method of Taking Furbearers

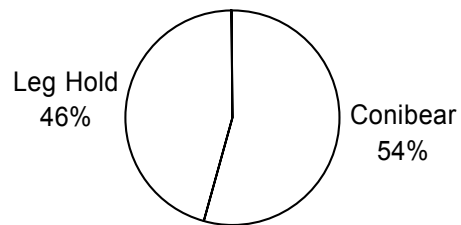
## Statewide Mink Harvest



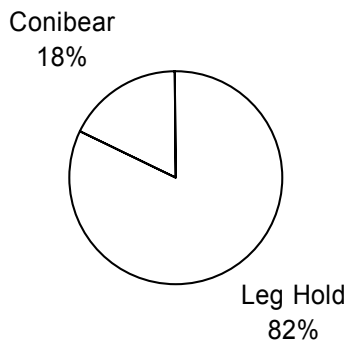
## Southeast Mink Harvest



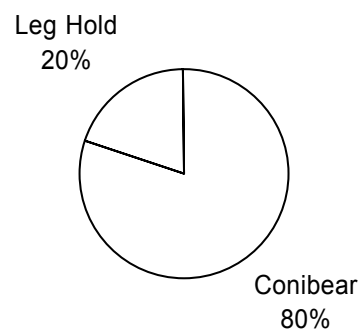
## Southcentral & Southwest Mink Harvest



## Interior Mink Harvest

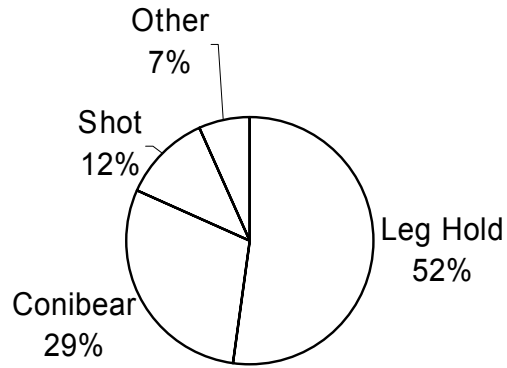


## Arctic/Western Mink Harvest

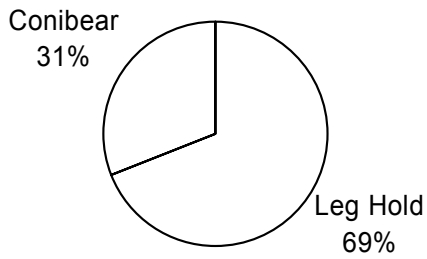


## Method of Taking Furbearers

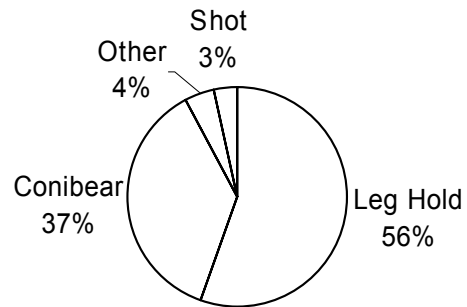
### Statewide Muskrat Harvest



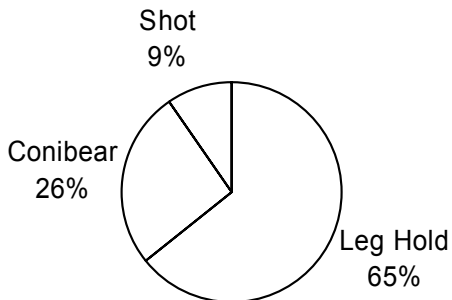
### Southeast Muskrat Harvest



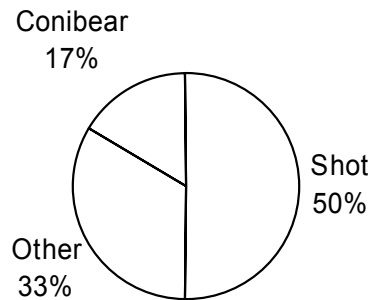
### Southcentral & Southwest Muskrat Harvest



### Interior Muskrat Harvest

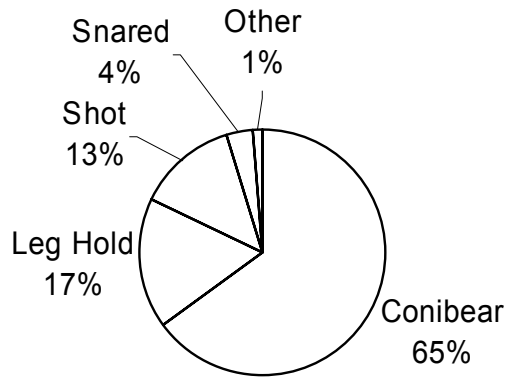


### Arctic/Western Muskrat Harvest

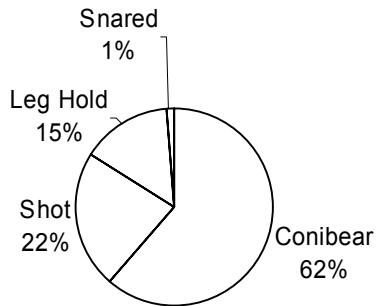


# Method of Taking Furbearers

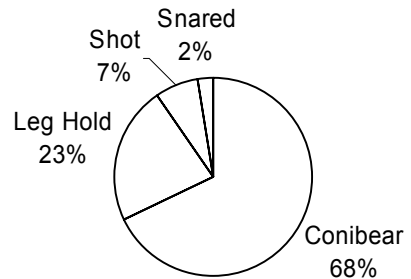
## Statewide River Otter Harvest



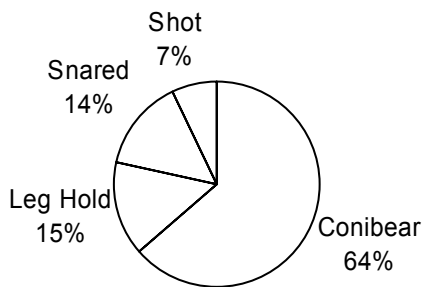
## Southeast River Otter Harvest



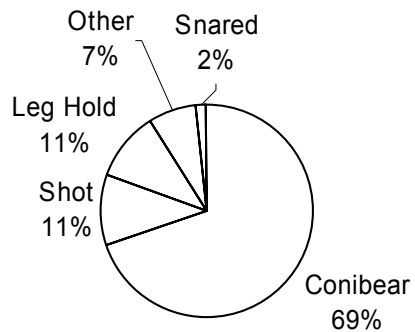
## Southcentral & Southwest River Otter Harvest



## Interior River Otter Harvest

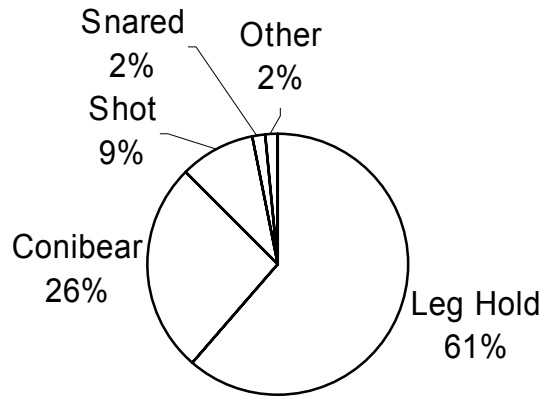


## Arctic/Western River Otter Harvest

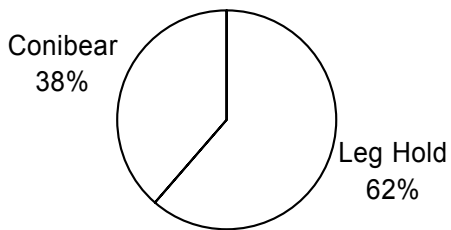


# Method of Taking Furbearers

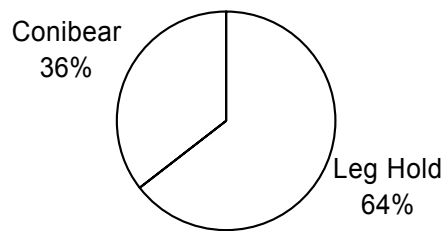
## Statewide Squirrel Harvest



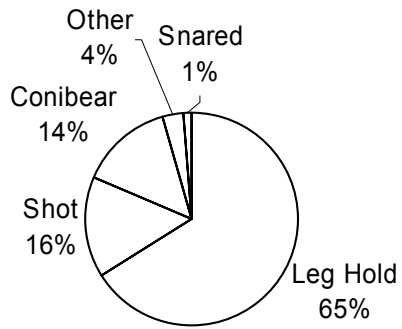
## Southeast Squirrel Harvest



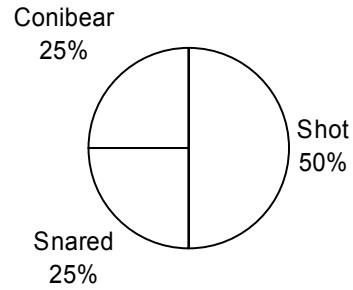
## Southcentral & Southwest Squirrel Harvest



**Interior Squirrel Harvest**

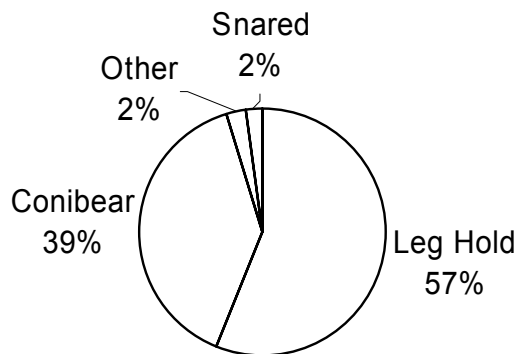


**Arctic/Western Squirrel Harvest**

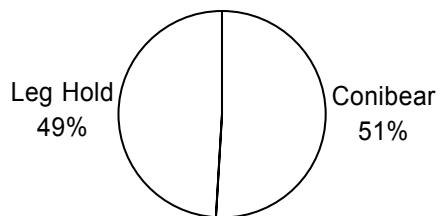


**Method of Taking Furbearers**

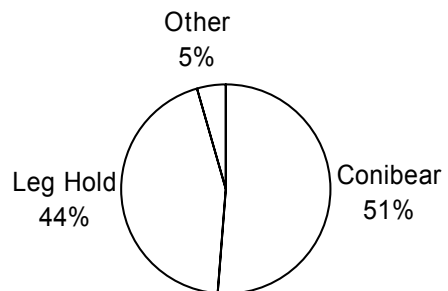
**Statewide Ermine Harvest**



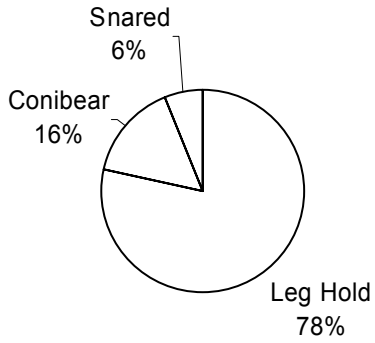
**Southeast Ermine Harvest**



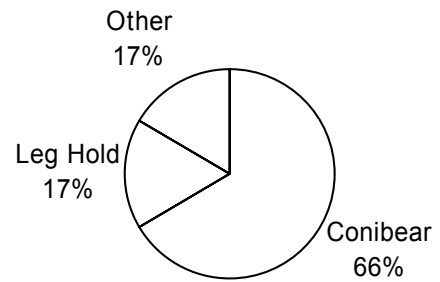
**Southcentral & Southwest Ermine Harvest**



**Interior Ermine Harvest**

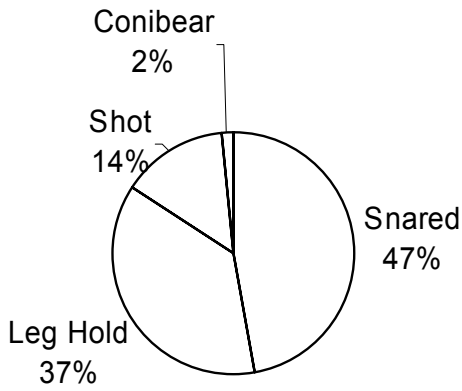


**Arctic/Western Ermine Harvest**

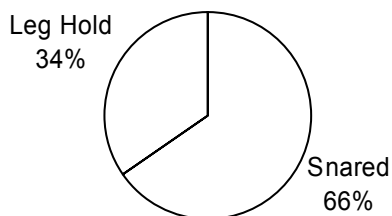


**Method of Taking Furbearers**

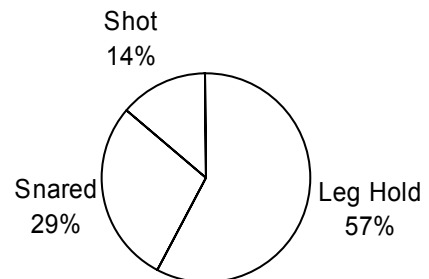
**Statewide Wolf Harvest**



**Southeast Wolf Harvest**

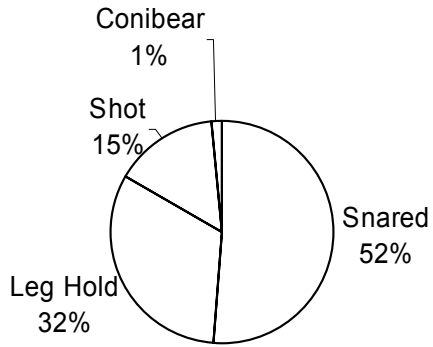


**Southcentral & Southwest Wolf Harvest**

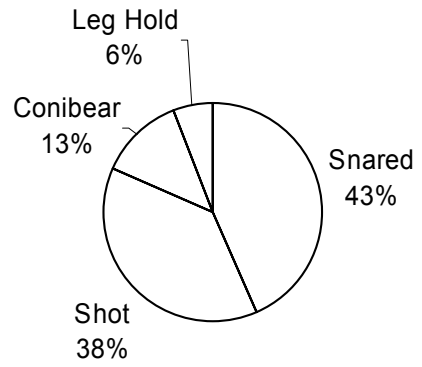




### Interior Wolf Harvest

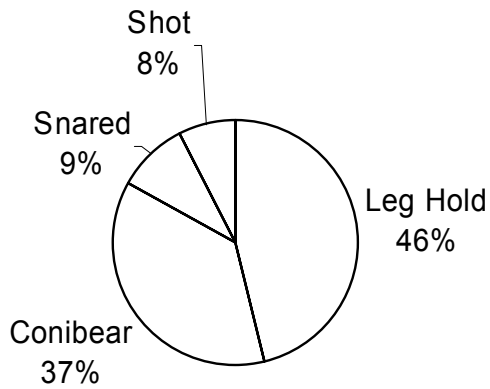


### Arctic/Western Wolf Harvest

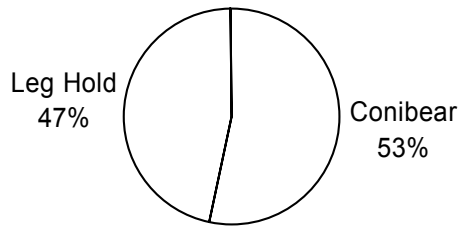


## Method of Taking Furbearers

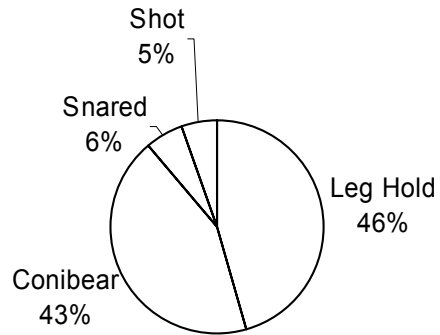
### Statewide Wolverine Harvest



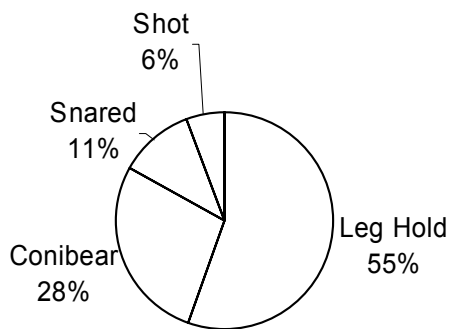
### Southeast Wolverine Harvest



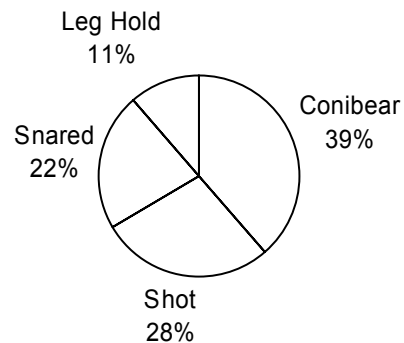
### Southcentral & Southwest Wolverine Harvest



### Interior Wolverine Harvest



### Arctic/Western Wolverine Harvest



## ALASKA'S FURBEARER POPULATIONS - TELL US WHAT'S HAPPENING

Only 4 of the 15 species defined as furbearers are required to be sealed throughout Alaska: lynx, otter, wolf, and wolverine. Marten and beaver are required to be sealed in some units but not statewide. Consequently, information on the numbers, distribution, and utilization of many furbearers is limited. On this year's trapper questionnaire we are asking trappers for harvest information on all Alaska furbearers. Thanks for your help!

## SPECIES RELATIVE ABUNDANCE AND POPULATION TRENDS

The species relative abundance index is based on work done with snowshoe hares in Alberta, Canada by Lloyd Keith and Christopher Brand. They compared the responses to a trapper

questionnaire with their estimates of hare densities based on their own fieldwork and found there was a good relationship between these 2 measures. They developed an index for the responses received from trappers on the questionnaire. A numerical value was assigned to each of 3 responses: 1 = scarce, 2 = common, and 3 = abundant. The value of the abundance index was derived from a mathematical equation that expresses the cumulative response value of trappers in a given region as a percentage of the range of possible values:

$$I = \left[ \left( \sum_{i=1}^n R_i - n \right) / 2n \right] \times 100$$

Where I = abundance index

R = numerical value (1 = scarce, 2 = common, 3 = abundant)

n = number of trappers reporting

The abundance index (I) ranges from 0% to 100%. Index values of 0–19% indicated animals were scarce, 20–50% indicated animals were common, and values greater than 50% indicated animals were abundant. In the following tables, we converted these values back to the appropriate category: scarce, common, or abundant.

We do not know if the same ranges of percentages are appropriate for animals in Alaska, because they were established for snowshoe hares in Alberta. However, this index does provide a way to generally compare trappers' interpretations of species abundance in a given area over time and can be very helpful when used in conjunction with other abundance indicators and sources of information.

**Relative abundance and trend of furbearer populations statewide and the Arctic & West Coast Region, 2003–2004 as reported by trappers.**

Furbearer:	Statewide Average		Arctic & West Coast Region GMUs 18,22,23,26A	
	Relative Abundance	Trend	Relative Abundance	Trend
Arctic Fox	scarce	more	scarce	same
Beaver	abundant	more	abundant	more
Coyote	common	more	scarce	fewer

Ermine	common	more	common	same
Lynx	scarce	same	common	more
Marten	common	more	scarce	same
Mink	common	more	common	same
Muskrat	common	more	common	more
Red Fox	common	same	abundant	more
Red Squirrel	common	more	scarce	more
River Otter	common	same	scarce	same
Wolf	common	more	common	more
Wolverine	common	more	common	more
<b>Prey</b>				
Grouse	common	more	scarce	same
Hare	common	more	abundant	more
Ptarmigan	common	same	abundant	more
Mice/Rodents	abundant	more	abundant	more



Relative abundance and trend of furbearer populations in Interior Alaska, 2003–2004 as reported by trappers.

Interior Region

Furbearers:	Lower Tanana Basin GMUs 20 ABCDF, 25C		Upper Tanana Basin GMUs 12, 20E		Upper Kuskokwim, Innoko & Nowitna GMUs 19,21A		Middle Yukon & Koyukuk GMUs 21BCDE, 24		Upper Yukon Basin GMUs 25ABD, 26BC	
	Relative Abundance	Trend	Relative Abundance	Trend	Relative Abundance	Trend	Relative Abundance	Trend	Relative Abundance	Trend
Arctic Fox	x	x	x	x	x	x	same	same	same	same
Beaver	abundant	more	common	same	abundant	same	abundant	same	abundant	same
Coyote	common	more	common	more	scarce	same	scarce	same	same	fewer
Ermine	common	more	common	more	common	same	common	same	common	same
Lynx	scarce	same	scarce	same	scarce	more	same	fewer	common	same
Marten	common	more	abundant	more	abundant	same	common	same	common	same
Mink	common	same	common	same	common	more	same	same	common	more
Muskrat	common	same	common	same	common	same	scarce	more	common	same
Red Fox	common	same	common	same	common	same	common	same	common	same
Red Squirrel	abundant	more	abundant	more	abundant	more	abundant	more	common	more
River Otter	common	same	scarce	same	common	more	common	more	scarce	same
Wolf	common	same	common	same	abundant	more	abundant	same	common	same
Wolverine	scarce	same	common	more	common	more	common	more	common	same
<b>Prey</b>										
Grouse	common	same	common	more	common	same	common	more	common	more
Hare	scarce	more	common	more	common	more	common	same	common	more
Ptarmigan	scarce	same	common	more	scarce	same	common	same	common	same
Mice/Rodents	abundant	more	common	more	abundant	same	common	same	common	more

X indicates no data available or species does not occur in the area.

Relative abundance and trend of furbearer populations in Southcentral Alaska, 2003–2004 as reported by trappers.

Southcentral Region

Furbearers:	Copper River & Upper Susitna River Basins GMU 11, 13		Lower Susitna Basin GMU 14 & 16		Prince William Sound & North Gulf Coast GMU 6		Kenai Peninsula GMU 7 & 15		Kodiak Archipelago GMU 8	
	Relative Abundance	Trend	Relative Abundance	Trend	Relative Abundance	Trend	Relative Abundance	Trend	Relative Abundance	Trend
Arctic Fox	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Beaver	common	same	common	same	abundant	same	common	same	common	same
Coyote	common	same	common	more	abundant	same	abundant	same	x	x
Ermine	abundant	same	common	same	common	more	common	more	x	x
Lynx	scarce	same	scarce	same	scarce	same	scarce	fewer	x	x
Marten	common	more	abundant	more	common	same	common	more	x	x
Mink	common	more	common	same	abundant	same	common	more	x	x
Muskrat	abundant	more	common	more	scarce	same	scarce	more	common	x
Red Fox	scarce	same	common	same	x	x	scarce	same	common	same
Red Squirrel	abundant	more	abundant	more	common	same	abundant	same	x	fewer
River Otter	common	more	common	same	abundant	same	common	same	common	same
Wolf	common	same	common	same	scarce	same	common	more	x	x
Wolverine	scarce	more	common	same	scarce	same	common	same	x	x
<b>Prey</b>										
Grouse	common	more	common	same	scarce	same	common	same	x	x
Hare	common	more	common	same	scarce	more	scarce	same	scarce	x
Ptarmigan	common	more	common	same	scarce	same	common	same	scarce	x
Mice/Rodents	abundant	more	abundant	same	abundant	same	common	same	common	x

X indicates no data available or species does not occur in the area.

Relative abundance and trend of furbearer populations for Southwestern and Southeastern Alaska, 2003–2004 as reported by trappers.

Southwest & Southeast Regions

Furbearer	Southwest Region				Southeast Region							
	Bristol Bay Area GMU 17		Alaska Peninsula GMUs 9, 10		Ketchikan, Prince of Wales & Vicinity GMUs 1B, 2		Petersburg, Wrangell, Kupreanof & Vicinity GMUs 1A, 3		Juneau, Douglas, Haines, Yakutat GMUs 1CD, 5		Admiralty, Baranof, Chichagof Islands GMU 4	
	Relative Abundance	Trend	Relative Abundance	Trend	Relative Abundance	Trend	Relative Abundance	Trend	Relative Abundance	Trend	Relative Abundance	Trend
Arctic Fox	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Beaver	abundant	same	abundant	more	abundant	same	common	same	common	more	common	same
Coyote	common	more	common	more	x	x	x	x	common	same	x	x
Ermine	common	same	common	same	scarce	same	common	more	common	more	scarce	same
Lynx	scarce	more	common	same	scarce	same	x	x	scarce	same	x	x
Marten	abundant	more	scarce	same	common	same	common	same	abundant	same	abundant	more
Mink	common	same	abundant	same	abundant	more	abundant	same	abundant	more	abundant	same
Muskrat	scarce	more	scarce	same	x	x	x	x	scarce	same	x	x
Red Fox	abundant	more	abundant	same	x	x	x	x	scarce	more	common	same
Red Squirrel	abundant	same	common	same	common	same	abundant	same	abundant	more	abundant	more
River Otter	abundant	same	abundant	more	common	same	common	same	abundant	same	common	same
Wolf	common	same	abundant	more	common	same	common	more	common	same	scarce	same
Wolverine	common	same	common	more	common	same	scarce	same	scarce	same	x	same
<b>Prey</b>												
Grouse	common	same	common	same	scarce	more	common	more	common	same	scarce	same
Hare	common	same	common	same	x	same	x	x	scarce	more	x	same
Ptarmigan	abundant	same	common	same	scarce	same	scarce	same	scarce	same	common	same
Mice/Rodents	abundant	more	abundant	more	abundant	same	common	same	common	same	common	same

X indicates no data available or species does not occur in the area.

## Wolf Harvest Methods

The following table is compiled from mandatory wolf-sealing certificates from 1999 through 2003.

### 1999–2000 Trapping Season

Region	Shot	Trapped	Snared	Unknown	Total Wolves Sealed
Southeast	59	107	55	3	224
Southcentral	324	143	100	12	579
Interior	193	225	241	17	676
Arctic	146	37	24	29	236
<b>Total</b>	<b>722</b>	<b>512</b>	<b>420</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>1715</b>

### 2000–2001 Trapping Season

Region	Shot	Trapped	Snared	Unknown	Total Wolves Sealed
Southeast	93	69	51	2	215
Southcentral	203	112	246	21	582
Interior	333	232	228	32	825
Arctic	65	32	79	6	182
<b>Total</b>	<b>694</b>	<b>445</b>	<b>604</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>1804</b>

### 2001–2002 Trapping Season

Region	Shot	Trapped	Snared	Unknown	Total Wolves Sealed
Southeast	42	72	17	3	134
Southcentral	256	156	174	4	590
Interior	166	245	328	28	767
Arctic	109	15	43	14	181
<b>Total</b>	<b>573</b>	<b>488</b>	<b>604</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>1672</b>

### 2002–2003 Trapping Season

Region	Shot	Trapped	Snared	Unknown	Total Wolves Sealed
Southeast	60	110	31	3	204
Southcentral	172	95	90	2	359
Interior	166	171	310	15	662
Arctic	103	18	7	0	128
<b>Total</b>	<b>501</b>	<b>394</b>	<b>438</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>1353</b>

### 2003–2004 Trapping Season

Region	Shot	Trapped	Snared	Unknown	Total Wolves Sealed
Southeast	37	43	36	3	119
Southcentral	278	134	114	137	663
Interior	118	124	239	27	508
Arctic	111	12	32	4	159
<b>Total</b>	<b>544</b>	<b>313</b>	<b>421</b>	<b>171</b>	<b>1449</b>



## Alaska's Furbearer Harvest

Lynx, river otter, wolf and wolverine are required to be sealed statewide. Marten are required to be sealed in Game Management Units 1–7, and 14–16, and beaver are required to be sealed in Units 1–11, and 13–17. Harvest estimates are based on fur sealing records.

Species	Region	Reported Harvest 1999–2000	Reported Harvest 2000–2001	Reported Harvest 2001–2002	Reported Harvest 2002–2003	Reported Harvest 2003–2004 <sup>†</sup>
Beaver*	Southeast	477	514	310	293	264
	Southcentral/Southwestern	1145	1601	1037	1797	1085
	Interior	1057	1348	1335	97	46
	Arctic/Western	397	151	23	127	136
	<b>Total Beaver</b>	<b>3076</b>	<b>3614</b>	<b>2705</b>	<b>2314</b>	<b>1531</b>
Lynx	Southeast	0	13	0	5	0
	Southcentral/Southwestern	755	876	425	137	150
	Interior	2191	2934	1742	752	723
	Arctic/Western	66	159	182	157	172
	<b>Total Lynx</b>	<b>3012</b>	<b>3993</b>	<b>2349</b>	<b>1051</b>	<b>1045</b>
Otter	Southeast	506	428	495	923	594
	Southcentral/Southwestern	358	470	511	653	723
	Interior	81	113	111	123	104
	Arctic/Western	75	165	99	376	345
	<b>Total Otter</b>	<b>1020</b>	<b>1176</b>	<b>1216</b>	<b>2075</b>	<b>1766</b>
Wolf	Southeast	225	215	132	200	119
	Southcentral/Southwestern	579	582	590	363	663
	Interior	676	825	765	662	508
	Arctic/Western	236	182	181	128	159
	<b>Total Wolf</b>	<b>1716</b>	<b>1804</b>	<b>1668</b>	<b>1353</b>	<b>1449</b>
Wolverine	Southeast	26	13	4	27	21
	Southcentral/Southwestern	162	168	204	99	269
	Interior	288	310	237	240	185
	Arctic/Western	76	133	99	87	152
	<b>Total Wolverine</b>	<b>552</b>	<b>625</b>	<b>544</b>	<b>453</b>	<b>627</b>
Marten**	Southeast	2891	3025	1758	2570	2438
	Southcentral/Southwestern	933	1395	1367	761	1263
	Interior	0	0	13	0	1
	Arctic/Western	0	0	1	0	0
	<b>Total Marten</b>	<b>3824</b>	<b>4420</b>	<b>3139</b>	<b>3331</b>	<b>3702</b>

\* Beaver are required to be sealed in Game Management Units 1–11 and 13–17.

\*\* Marten are required to be sealed in Game Management Units 1–7 and 14–16.

† Preliminary Data. Totals may change due to data entry.

## COMMERCIAL TRANSACTIONS INVOLVING FURS

### AVERAGE PRICES PAID FOR RAW FURS BY BUYERS IN ALASKA

Several fur buyers in Alaska were asked for the average and top prices they paid for furs. The values they gave were averaged to produce this table.

Species	1999-00 Average \$	2000-01 Average \$	2001-02 Average \$	2002-03 Average \$	2003-2004 Average \$	2003-04 Top \$
Beaver	\$21.77	\$20.65	\$45.00	\$28.25	\$24.00	\$45.00
Coyote	\$22.17	\$24.34	\$23.97	\$29.23	\$45.00	\$45.00
Fox	\$21.97	\$17.35	\$25.75	\$30.51	\$26.83	\$50.00
Lynx	\$54.75	\$60.25	\$91.00	\$134.39	\$100.67	\$350.00
Marten	\$26.89	\$35.36	\$45.50	\$39.07	\$37.50	\$60.00
Mink (wild)	\$13.14	\$7.36	\$15.84	\$14.46	\$14.33	\$24.00
Muskrat	\$1.47	\$1.33	\$1.73	\$1.45	\$1.62	\$2.60
River Otter	\$41.13	\$72.82	\$59.83	\$102.29	\$99.00	\$140.00
Squirrel	\$0.92	\$1.33	\$0.98	\$0.93	N/A	\$7.00
Weasel	\$4.00	\$4.35	\$3.47	\$2.07	N/A	N/A
Wolf	\$213.75	\$159.00	\$165.00	\$270.63	\$214.00	\$350.00
Wolverine	\$233.75	\$257.50	\$222.50	\$243.54	\$233.33	\$350.00



## FUR ACQUISITION AND EXPORT

The following table summarizes data from the Report of Acquisition of Furs and Hides filled out by fur buyers (dealers) and the Raw Fur Skin Export Permit (the blue card everyone must fill out when sending raw furs out of state.) These reports are a general indicator of harvest trends but are not actual records of the number of furbearers harvested in a trapping season. Both reports may include furs harvested in previous years, and many trappers keep their furs for tanning and use at home. In addition, some people may not fill out the required forms. If you want more information about fur harvest trends, contact your regional or statewide furbearer biologist. This year the way that the numbers were derived was changed. Only the Raw Fur Skin Export Permits that were filled out by individuals were used. This avoided the possibility of furs being accounted for twice. Also, numbers of furs were accounted for as opposed to a total count of forms submitted. This will account for the significantly higher number of furs reported sold. The 2001–2002 and 2002–2003 trapping seasons have been provided for a comparison.

### 2000–2003 Fur Acquisition and Export

	2001–2002		2002–2003		2003–2004	
	Raw Furs Exported	Furs Acquired by Alaskan Dealers	Raw Furs Exported	Furs Acquired by Alaskan Dealers	Raw Furs Exported	Furs Acquired by Alaskan Dealers
Beaver	586	579	617	607	830	350
Coyote	55	56	70	68	69	58
Fox, Blue	38	0	0	0	6	0
Fox, White	57	0	14	0	16	0
Fox, Cross	66	48	69	68	114	57
Fox, Red	216	281	244	399	951	639
Fox, Silver	29	1	20	1	33	5
Lynx	370	661	240	519	260	473
Marten	1954	4922	1789	5328	5858	9824
Mink	293	372	589	602	1044	677
Muskrat	511	391	992	475	1074	163
Otter, Land	320	385	554	916	1288	822
Red Squirrel	7	219	11	159	157	73
Weasel	136	138	114	218	184	120
Wolf	203	199	238	92	195	122
Wolverine	62	71	60	92	111	120
Other	44	0	48	0	245	0
Grand Total	4947	8323	5669	9544	12435	13503

## FUR VALUE

The following tables summarize the total estimated value of furs trapped during the 2002–2003 and the 2003–2004 trapping seasons. This table is intended to provide an estimate of fur values in Alaska and does not represent fur revenue. The estimated average price paid by Alaska fur dealers was used in this calculation. The number of furs was taken either from sealing records or from a combination of the furs acquired by dealers and the number of furs exported by hunter/trappers. All species of foxes were added together for these tables. Average price paid for red squirrels and weasels in 2002–2003 was used for the 2003–2004 calculation due to lack of data for this past season.

### 2002–2003 Fur Value in Alaska

Species	Total Number	Average Price Paid in Alaska	Total Estimated Value
Beaver*	2338	\$28.25	\$66,048.50
Coyote**	138	\$29.23	\$4,033.74
Fox**	813	\$30.51	\$24,804.63
Lynx*	1051	\$134.39	\$141,243.89
Marten**	7117	\$39.07	\$278,061.19
Mink**	1191	\$14.46	\$17,221.86
Muskrat**	1467	\$1.45	\$2,127.15
Otter*	2075	\$102.29	\$212,251.75
Squirrel, red**	170	\$0.93	\$158.10
Weasel (ermine)**	332	\$2.07	\$687.24
Wolf*	1353	\$270.63	\$366,162.39
Wolverine*	453	\$243.54	\$110,323.62
<b>Total:</b>	<b>15,213</b>		<b>\$1,223,124.06</b>

### 2003–2004 Fur Value in Alaska

Species	Total Number	Average Price Paid in Alaska	Total Estimated Value
Beaver*	1531	\$24.00	\$36,744.00
Coyote**	127	\$45.00	\$5,715.00
Fox**	1821	\$26.83	\$48,857.43
Lynx*	1045	\$100.67	\$105,200.15
Marten**	15682	\$37.50	\$588,075.00
Mink**	1721	\$14.33	\$24,661.93
Muskrat**	1237	\$1.62	\$2003.94
Otter*	1766	\$99.00	\$174834.00
Squirrel, red**	230	\$0.93	\$213.90
Weasel (ermine)**	304	\$2.07	\$629.28
Wolf*	1449	\$214.00	\$310,086.00
Wolverine*	627	\$233.33	\$146,297.91
<b>Total:</b>	<b>27,540</b>		<b>1,443,318.54</b>

\* From mandatory fur sealing records

\*\* From Furs Acquired by Alaskan Dealers + Furs Exported by Hunter/Trappers  
Records for 2004 may not be complete

## FUR SEALING REQUIREMENTS

Lynx, river otter, wolf, or wolverine taken anywhere in the state and marten in Game Management Units 1-7, 14-16, and beaver taken in Units 1-11 and 13-17 must be sealed by an authorized department representative. If you ship furs to a buyer or auction house out of the state, they must be sealed **before** you ship them.

All raw skins of wild furbearers shipped from Alaska just have a Fur Export Permit (blue shipping tag) attached to the shipment. Also a Fur Export Report (a postage-paid postcard attached to the permit) must also be completed and mailed to the Alaska Department of Fish and Game. The U.S. Post Office Domestic Mail Manual Regulation 124.65 also requires compliance with this regulation. This 2-part form is free from any Alaska Department of Fish and Game office or authorized fur sealer.

If there is no authorized fur sealer near you, contact the nearest office of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game. A list of area biologists is on the next page. We can help you make arrangements to seal your furs. If you or someone you know wants to become a fur sealer, contact one of the following Regional Fur Sealing Officers.

### Interior Region

Jackie Kephart  
Alaska Department of Fish and Game  
1300 College Road  
Fairbanks, Alaska 99701-1599  
(907) 459-7211

### Southcentral/Southwestern Region

Bruce Bartley  
Alaska Department of Fish and Game  
333 Raspberry Rd.  
Anchorage, Alaska 99518-1599  
(907) 267-2216

### Arctic/Western Region

Peter Bente  
Alaska Department of Fish and Game  
P.O. Box 1148  
Nome, Alaska 99762  
(907) 443-2271

### Southeast Region

Chris Frary  
Alaska Department of Fish and Game  
P.O. Box 240020  
Douglas, Alaska 99824-0020  
(907) 465-4265

**Division of Wildlife Conservation**  
**Area Management Biologists and Game Management Units**

<p><b>GMU 1(A), 2</b>  Boyd Porter  ADF&amp;G/Wildlife Conservation  2030 Sealevel Drive, Suite 205  <b>Ketchikan, AK 99901</b>  (907) 225-2475 phone  (907) 225-2771 fax  Region 1</p>	<p><b>GMU 9, 10</b>  Lem Butler  ADF&amp;G/Wildlife Conservation  P.O. Box 37  <b>King Salmon, AK 99613-0037</b>  (907) 246-3340 phone  (907) 246-3309 fax  Region 2</p>	<p><b>GMU 19, 21(A), 21(E)</b>  Toby Boudreau  ADF&amp;G/Wildlife Conservation  P.O. Box 230  McGrath, AK 99627-0230  (907) 524-3323 phone  (907) 524-3323 fax  Region 3</p>
<p><b>GMU 1(B), 3</b>  Rich Lowell  ADF&amp;G/Wildlife Conservation  P.O. Box 667  <b>Petersburg, AK 99833-0667</b>  (907) 772-3801 phone  (907) 772-9336 fax  Region 1</p>	<p><b>GMU 11, 13</b>  Bob Tobey  ADF&amp;G/Wildlife Conservation  P.O. Box 47  <b>Glennallen, AK 99588-0047</b>  (907) 822-3461 phone  (907) 822-3811 fax  Region 2</p>	<p><b>GMU 20(A),(B),(C),(F), 25(C)</b>  Don Young  ADF&amp;G/Wildlife Conservation  1300 College Road  <b>Fairbanks, AK 99701-1599</b>  (907) 459-7233 phone  (907) 452-6410 fax  Region 3</p>
<p><b>GMU 4</b>  Phil Mooney  ADF&amp;G/Wildlife Conservation  304 Lake Street, Room 103  <b>Sitka, AK 99835-7563</b>  (907) 747-8449 phone  (907) 747-6239 fax  Region 1</p>	<p><b>GMU 12, 20(E)</b>  Jeff Gross  ADF&amp;G/Wildlife Conservation  P.O. Box 355  <b>Tok, AK 99780-0355</b>  (907) 883-2971 phone  (907) 883-2970 fax  Region 3</p>	<p><b>GMU 20(D)</b>  Steve DuBois  ADF&amp;G/Wildlife Conservation  P.O. Box 605  <b>Delta Junction, AK 99737-0605</b>  (907) 895-4484 phone  (907) 895-4833 fax  Region 3</p>
<p><b>GMU 1(C), (D), 5</b>  Neil Barten  ADF&amp;G/Wildlife Conservation  P.O. Box 240020  <b>Douglas, AK 99824-0020</b>  (907) 465-4267 phone  (907) 465-4272 fax  Region 1</p>	<p><b>GMU 14(A), (B), 16(A), (B)</b>  Tony Kavalok  ADF&amp;G/Wildlife Conservation  1800 Glenn Highway, Suite 4  <b>Palmer, AK 99645-6736</b>  (907) 746-6300 phone  (907) 746-6305 fax  Region 2</p>	<p><b>GMU 21(B), (C), (D), 24</b>  Glenn Stout  ADF&amp;G/Wildlife Conservation  P.O. Box 209  <b>Galena, AK 99741-0209</b>  (907) 656-1345 phone  (907) 656-1345 fax  Region 3</p>
<p><b>GMU 6</b>  Dave Crowley  ADF&amp;G/Wildlife Conservation  P.O. Box 669  <b>Cordova, AK 99574-0669</b>  (907) 424-3215 phone  (907) 424-3235 fax  Region 2</p>	<p><b>GMU 14(C)</b>  Rick Sinnott  ADF&amp;G/Wildlife Conservation  333 Raspberry Road  <b>Anchorage, AK 99518-1599</b>  (907) 267-2185 phone  (907) 267-2433 fax  Region 2</p>	<p><b>GMU 22</b>  Kate Persons  ADF&amp;G/Wildlife Conservation  Pouch 1148  <b>Nome, AK 99762</b>  (907) 443-2271 phone  (907) 443-5893 fax  Region 5</p>
<p><b>GMU 7, 15</b>  Jeff Selinger  ADF&amp;G/Wildlife Conservation  43961 Kalifornsky Beach Road, Suite B  <b>Soldotna, AK 99669-8367</b>  (907) 262-9368 phone  (907) 262-4709 fax  Region 2</p>	<p><b>GMU 17</b>  Jim Woolington  ADF&amp;G/Wildlife Conservation  P.O. Box 1030  <b>Dillingham, AK 99576-1030</b>  (907) 842-2334 phone  (907) 842-5514 fax  Region 2</p>	<p><b>GMU 23</b>  Jim Dau  ADF&amp;G/Wildlife Conservation  P.O. Box 689  <b>Kotzebue, AK 99752-0689</b>  (907) 442-3420 phone  (907) 442-2420 fax  Region 5</p>
<p><b>GMU 7, 15</b>  Thomas McDonough  ADF&amp;G/Wildlife Conservation  3298 Douglas Place  <b>Homer, AK 99603-8027</b>  (907) 235-8191 phone  (907) 235-2448 fax  Region 2</p>	<p><b>GMU 18</b>  Roger Seavoy  ADF&amp;G/Wildlife Conservation  P.O. Box 1467  <b>Bethel, AK 99559</b>  (907) 543-2979 phone  (907) 543-2021 fax  Region 5</p>	<p><b>GMU 25(A), (B), (D), 26(B), (C)</b>  Bob Stephenson  ADF&amp;G/Wildlife Conservation  1300 College Road  <b>Fairbanks, AK 99701-1599</b>  (907) 459-7236 phone  (907) 459-6410 fax  Region 3</p>
<p><b>GMU 8</b>  Larry Van Daele  ADF&amp;G/Wildlife Conservation  211 Mission Road  <b>Kodiak, AK 99615-6399</b>  (907) 486-1880 phone  (907) 486-1869 fax  Region 2</p>	<p>Wildlife Management Coordinators  Region 1 Dale Rabe  Region 2 Gino Del Frate  Region 3 Roy Nowlin  Region 5 Peter Bente</p>	<p><b>GMU 26(A)</b>  Geoff Carroll  ADF&amp;G/Wildlife Conservation  P.O. Box 1284  <b>Barrow, AK 99723-1284</b>  (907) 852-3464 phone  (907) 852-3465 fax  Region 5</p>

# Regional Biologist Report

## SOUTHEAST REGION

Rod Flynn, Wildlife Biologist

In the Game Management Units of Region 1 (Units 1-5), harvest totals for furbearers during 2003-04 were generally lower compared with the previous year. The catches of beavers, martens, and wolverines remained about the same, but the harvests of river otters and wolves were about 50% of 2002-03. No Canada lynx were taken this year compared with 5 during last season. Lynx are only occasionally taken in Southeast Alaska because lynx generally do not reside in Region 1. The occurrence of lynx in the harvest is usually related to a decline in snowshoe hare populations in adjacent interior Alaska and Canada. At such times lynx travel widely in search of food.

The beaver harvest (264) dropped about 10% compared to 2001-02. Catches in Units 2 and 1B increased between years, but Unit 3 showed a substantial offsetting decline (50%). Units 2 (65%) and 3 (50%) have by far the highest harvests of beavers within the region. Beaver populations on Baranof and Chichagof Islands are small, but appear to be growing; trapping seasons in this portion of Unit 4 remain closed. Though harvest patterns shifted somewhat across the region, the overall harvest this year remained above the 10-year average of 216.

During 2003-04, the wolf harvest (119 animals) dropped substantially and below the long-term average of 204 for the region. The greatest declines were on the island units (Units 2 and 3) where wolves were thought to be the most abundant. The mainland portion of the region (Units 1 and 5) accounted for about 29% of the harvest and was similar to the previous year. Wolves have never been recorded from Unit 4, possibly excluded by the high brown bear populations on these islands.

Martens remained the most commonly trapped furbearer in the region with 2,438 animals taken during the 2003-04 trapping season, or 71% of all sealed furbearers. The total catch remained similar compared to the previous year, but remained significantly below the previous high years of 1996-97 and 1997-98 when over 3,700 were taken. Harvests increased significantly on some of the mainland Units, including 1A, 1D, and 5. In Units 1B, and 3, the catch was substantially lower. In Units 1C, 3, and 4, harvests remained comparable to the previous year. Marten populations fluctuate in response to food availability and this year's harvest was within the range recorded over the last 10 years. Martens principally prey on small mammals like voles. A survey of martens and small mammals during 2002 and 2003 found that marten numbers were correlated with long-tailed vole numbers. Also, population numbers and distributions of small mammals were found to vary greatly across the Region. Likewise, the abundance of martens varied greatly among the islands and mainland areas of Southeast Alaska with Chichagof Island having the largest numbers and Etolin Island the fewest.

River otter harvests decreased substantially (36%) between years 2002-03 and 2003-04, from 923 to 501. Previously, a trend of increasing harvests (over the past 3 years) was recorded. The most dramatic decreases occurred in Units 2 (54%) and 4 (22%), which accounted for 75% of the harvest in the region. Harvests in other parts of the region were much less and generally equivalent to the previous year. With the strong market for otter pelts, local populations should be monitored to look for possible overharvests.

The wolverine harvest of 21 was about the same as in 2002-03 and similar to long-term harvest average. Little is known about the status of wolverine populations in the region. Because

accessing their habitat can be difficult and because only a few trappers target wolverines, relatively few are taken in Southeast Alaska. Increased road construction in remote areas and better human access could have a substantial impact on some populations.

Numbers of furbearers sealed by Game Management Unit for 2003-04.

GMU	Beaver	Lynx	Marten	River otter	Wolf	Wolverine
1A	0	0	119	64	23	6
1B	19	0	62	24	8	3
1C	16	0	67	37	13	6
1D	5	0	169	2	2	9
2	172	0	491	222	29	0
3	43	0	153	30	36	0
4	3	0	1198	223	0	0
5	4	0	82	0	5	0
Totals	264	0	2438	594	119	21

**Rod Flynn, P.O. Box 240020 Douglas, AK 99824-0020, (907)  
907-465-4353**

## **SOUTHCENTRAL REGION**

Howard Golden, Southcentral Furbearer Biologist

Harvest of furbearers that must be sealed, except beavers, was higher in most areas of Southcentral Alaska during the 2003–2004 trapping season than last season. Fur sealing records showed beaver harvest was below the 5-year average. Beaver take was highest in the Dillingham/Nushagak Basin and Nelchina/Copper River Basin. River otter harvest was well above average. The Alaska Peninsula/Kodiak/Aleutians area had the highest otter harvest again, increasing from 284 to 384 (70%). The area with the next highest take of river otters was Prince William Sound, although harvest there was 40% lower than last year. For Southcentral overall, wolf harvest rose from 363 to 663 (83% increase) between 2002–03 and 2003–04. The greatest wolf harvest occurred in the Nelchina/Copper River Basin. Wolverine harvest jumped from 99 to 269 (172% increase) in the region, with the greatest increase in the Dillingham/Nushagak Basin. Marten harvests were also higher in all areas of the region. Marten harvest increased from 84 to 149 (77%) in Prince William Sound and from 36 to 115 (over 200%) on the Kenai Peninsula. The take of marten in the Matanuska-Susitna/Upper Cook Inlet area rose by 67% from 568 to 946 and accounted for 75% of all marten sealed in the region.

Lynx harvest rose just slightly from 137 to 150 across Southcentral Alaska. Harvests remained low due to closures and reduced season lengths that coincided with the low point in the lynx population cycle. The lower harvests followed along with the normal decline of the lynx population that happens every 8–12 years across the region. Snowshoe hare numbers also continued to remain low. This was the fourth year of the low phase of the cycle following the population peak in 1999–2000. The lynx population seems to have reached its peak in 2000–2001 and is still low. Lynx populations usually drop quickly within about the first 4 years after the peak. Kitten production and survival during the decline phase is generally very low. Lynx seasons will remain the same during the 2004–05 season as they were during the 2003–04



season. We expect to see snowshoe hare and lynx numbers begin to increase again during the next few years. This will allow longer lynx seasons as soon as populations can support the harvest. For an explanation about how our lynx tracking-harvest strategy works, please visit our web site at: [http://www.wildlife.alaska.gov/hunt\\_trap/trapping/lynx-ths.cfm](http://www.wildlife.alaska.gov/hunt_trap/trapping/lynx-ths.cfm).

Harvest of furbearers sealed in Southcentral Alaska, 2003–2004

AREA	Beaver	Lynx	River Otter	Wolf	Wolverine	Marten
Prince William Sound	83	0	107	0	16	149
Kenai Peninsula	69	9	26	45	16	115
Alaska Peninsula/Kodiak/Aleutians	141	51	384	119	54	5
Nelchina/Copper River Basin	199	78	54	261	44	48
Mat-Su Valley/ Upper Cook Inlet	358	0	71	97	52	946
Dillingham/Nushagak Basin	235	12	81	141	87	0
<b>Region Total for 2003–2004</b>	<b>1085</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>723</b>	<b>663</b>	<b>269</b>	<b>1263</b>
Total for 2002–2003	1797	137	653	363	99	761
Average over last 5 years	1333	469	543	555	180	1144

Howard Golden, 333 Raspberry Rd., Anchorage, AK 99518; (907) 267-2177;  
 howard\_golden@fishgame.state.ak.us.

## INTERIOR REGION

Interior Furbearer Biologist Craig Gardner

Most of our furbearer management efforts went toward tracking lynx population trends and toward developing a more efficient breakaway wolf snare. Again we want to thank the trappers of interior Alaska for their cooperative efforts in management of our furbearer resource, especially your contributions to lynx management and in the development of breakaway wolf snares.

Each year biologists examine carcasses from lynx provided by trappers. The information we collect during examination of those specimens helps us set annual trapping seasons. From 1997 to 2001 we examined between 315 and 600 lynx carcasses per year. That large sample size was possible because the lynx population was near the peak of the cycle. During winters 2002-2003, 2003-2004, and 2004-2005 as the lynx populations declined and reached their cyclic low and we purchased only 59, 36, and 90 carcasses from trappers. The good news is that productivity which was low during 2002-2003 and 2003-2004 increased in 2004-2005. We are expecting productivity to steadily increase resulting in increasing numbers of lynx over the next 4-5 years.

Reproductive performance is one of the most important pieces of information guiding the decision making process in setting season length. During the increasing phase up to 32% of the lynx harvested in the Tanana Valley were less than 1 year of age. That age structure indicates high reproductive success, and our examination of carcasses confirmed high reproductive rates. We estimated interior lynx produced an average of 1.7 kittens per adult female during the 1994 to 2000 period when the population was increasing or at the peak and only 0.78 kittens per female during 2001 and 2002 when the population was declining. We found no kittens in the samples collected in 2002-2003 and 2003-2004, indicating poor survival of kittens born during the declining phase of the cycle. During 2004-2005, pregnancy rates remained low to moderate,

42% of the adult females were pregnant but kit survival improved and once again became part of the harvest. Thirty-one percent of our sampled harvest this year was kittens.

When reproductive success is low, trapping could reduce lynx numbers to abnormally low levels which could then retard population recovery and result in lower peaks at the cyclic high. The Department of Fish and Game reduces lynx seasons during the cycle low to minimize effects of trapping. We feel it is especially important to maintain low lynx harvests during the first few years of population recovery. At that time reproductive success is high, but because the population is low there are relatively few adult females producing kittens. By allowing high survival of kittens during the initial years of population recovery, the recovery builds momentum quickly. Within 2 years, females born as kittens at the cycle low will be producing kittens themselves.

During the declining phase, the lynx season in both 2002-03 and 2003-04 in the road accessible portions of the Tanana Valley was reduced to 60 days, considerably shorter than the 120 day season we enjoyed in winters 2000-01 and 2001-02. The season has been further reduced to 31 days for the 2004 season. The season will be lengthened to 48 days during 2005-2006 but will start later (December 15) to allow kits to become more likely to survive on their own if the female is trapped. Although the actual season dates are dependent upon the data we collect from trappers each year, trappers can expect expanding seasons beginning in 2006-07 and the peak of the cycle with the longest seasons and highest harvests occurring between 2010 and 2012.

Many trappers reported marten numbers were low in many areas of the interior during 2000-2002 and possibly just recovering in 2003. To gain better insight on marten population trends, we collected marten carcasses throughout the interior during 2003-2004 and 2004-2005 and looked at sex, age structure and reproductive performance. We also collected samples that hopefully will give us an idea of marten diets and how diet might affect reproduction. Past research has found that the sex ratio and the ratio of juveniles to adult females in the harvest were good indicators of trapping pressure. Target levels are 60% male or higher and at least 3 juveniles per adult female. We are not finished analyzing the data but preliminary analysis indicates that in 2002-2005 percent male in the harvest exceeded 60% in both western and eastern interior and that productivity was high.

Looking at historic marten harvests, it is readily apparent that marten numbers fluctuate periodically. Many of the highest harvests of marten over the last century have occurred in the years just after the lynx crash. If that pattern holds true for this lynx cycle and marten productivity remains high, we should see increasing numbers of marten in the next few years. With the recent increase in marten prices that is good news!

With the help of many trappers we made substantial progress in developing several new breakaway wolf snare designs. The new designs were based on the following: 1) the holding strength necessary to restrain wolves in most situations appears to be lower than originally thought; 2) most moose caught by the leg can exert 550 pounds of breaking strength; and 3) stops can be placed on the snare that will reduce injury to moose and caribou and improve their chance of breaking free but without reducing the snares efficiency in holding wolves. Several trappers field tested one snare design that had a stop and a breaking strength of 550 pounds. Combined, they caught 7 wolves without any release and 3 moose that were able to break free. One moose was killed that was caught around the neck.

We are also testing snare designs that may reduce the vulnerability of moose and caribou to snares but not wolves. During field testing at the Kenai Moose Pens using snares with no locks, we learned that 19% of the moose that encounter a wolf snare are caught either by the leg or

nose. Preliminary tests indicate that moose vulnerability can be significantly reduced but more field testing is needed to measure the snares efficiency in catching wolves. More field work is planned for next winter.

## **UNIT 18 YUKON-KUSKOKWIM DELTA**

Roger Seavoy, Area Wildlife Biologist

As has been the case in Unit 18 for some time, furbearers are abundant throughout their habitats. Beaver populations are higher than ideal, and we documented dramatic increases in 2002. There is evidence that beaver are trying to occupy marginal habitat, and some areas have been logged excessively. Local residents regularly complain of too many beavers causing problems with boat travel and fish movements.

Fox populations remain high, though reports of rabies were lower than during previous years. Some trappers who worked to market their fox pelts report better prices than the current market would suggest.

Mink populations are high but trapping pressure is low. In the 1940s an average of 16,000 mink were taken and in one year during that decade, over 60,000 were taken. Now, fewer than 1000 are believed to be taken, though because there is poor tracking of mink harvest due to inadequate following of the fur acquisition reports, we no longer have a measure of mink harvest. The mink along the Kuskokwim are famous for their size and fur quality. At these low harvest levels, it is clear that this is a severely underutilized resource.

Otter populations are high and underutilized as well. This year there was keen interest in otter trapping, with averages of over \$100 per pelt commonly reported. We expect continued interest in trapping these abundant and valuable furs.

Suitable habitat for arctic fox, marten, and arctic ground squirrels is less extensive in Unit 18, but numbers of these furbearers are high where they occur.

Lynx numbers were just beginning to show that they have hit the bottom of their cycle. Few lynx were sealed in the Bethel office and nearly all of them were adults.

Wolf populations have increased and expanded due to the successes we've had promoting moose population growth and to the continued winter use of Unit 18 by a portion of the Mulchatna caribou herd. Table 1 shows the Unit 18 reported wolf harvest, which has increased greatly since the mid 1980s when an average of 6 wolves per year were reported. In 2002–03 and 2000–01, fewer wolves were taken due to the poor snow conditions making opportunistic wolf harvest more difficult.

Table 1 Unit 18 wolf harvest.

Year	Kuskokwim Shot	Kuskokwim Trapped	Yukon Shot	Yukon Trapped	Other	Total
2003–04	33	26	27	6	1	93
2002–03	0	8	4	0		12
2001–02	52	43	11	8		114
2000–01	14	15	3	0		32
1999–00	34	41	8	2		85
1998–99	14	23	12	1		50
Totals	147	156	65	17	1	386

Wolverine numbers have increased compared to a decade ago as well. This is most evident in the eastern part of the unit where caribou have taken up seasonal residence.

One furbearer species that isn't abundant in the unit is muskrat, but we still have adequate numbers. Coyotes are found in Unit 18, but the harvest is small.

The number of active trappers is low. Trappers have cited inadequate fur prices and their own increasing age as reasons for low trapping effort. Furbearers are still important for local uses. All furbearers, as well as marine mammals, are utilized for crafts and garments sewn locally. In addition, many furbearers are used for food. Beaver, otter, mink, and muskrats are common table fare in many villages with varying preferences. Lynx and arctic ground squirrels are also eaten. As such, furbearers are still an important part of the economy of Unit 18.

## **SEWARD PENINSULA (UNIT 22)**

Tony Gorn, Assistant Area Biologist

Most of the furbearer harvest in Unit 22 is by subsistence or recreational hunters or is done opportunistically by local residents while engaged in other activities. The reported harvest of furbearers in Unit 22 during the 2003–2004 trapping season was 61 lynx, 12 river otter, 57 wolverine, and 22 wolves. These are minimum harvest estimates; many of the furs taken are used locally and not presented for sealing, so harvest data is incomplete.

Wolf densities are highest in Units 22A and eastern Unit 22B, but harvest data and observations by staff, hunter/trappers and local residents indicate wolves are becoming more numerous in all parts of the unit. The increase is likely a result of the large number of Western Arctic herd caribou that have occasionally wintered on the central Seward Peninsula since 1996. The 2000–2001 reported harvest of 69 wolves was the highest ever reported in the unit.

Staff observations and reports from hunter/trappers around the unit indicate that beaver in Units 22A, 22B, 22C and 22D were common or abundant with numbers stable or increasing. Complaints about beaver continue throughout Unit 22. Boaters complain about blockage of waterways and concern that beaver dams are preventing salmon from returning to their spawning grounds. The Board of Game established a hunting season for beaver in Unit 22, but few hunters appear to be taking advantage of the season.

Hunter/trappers who responded to our trapper surveys indicated otters in Units 22B, 22C and 22D were common and their numbers stable. We have little information about otters in Unit 22E. Wolverines were thought to be common in Units 22B, 22C, and 22D with their numbers stable, and red fox were generally thought to be common or abundant throughout the unit with their numbers stable or increasing. Ptarmigan numbers were common and stable throughout the unit.

Reported lynx harvest reached a 10-year high during the 2001–2002 trapping season when 69 lynx were caught. Respondents reported lynx were generally common with stable or increasing numbers in the unit and that hares, their primary food source, were thought to be common and abundant with increasing numbers in Units 22A and 22B. In Units 22C, 22D, and 22E respondents reported lynx to be not present or scarce.

Our staff is grateful to the hunter/trappers who take the time to fill out the annual trapper questionnaires. The information you provide gives us a much better and timelier picture of

changes in furbearer abundance in different parts of the unit than we get on our own. The surveys also help document the importance of furbearer harvest to the subsistence way of life in Unit 22. Thank you for your help! **For more information about GMU 22, contact Tony Gorn at 1-800-560-2271 [tony\\_gorn@fishgame.state.ak.us](mailto:tony_gorn@fishgame.state.ak.us)**

## **KOTZEBUE SOUND AND WESTERN BROOKS RANGE**

(GOODHOPE RIVER TO CAPE LISBURNE – UNIT 23)

Jim Dau, Area Wildlife Biologist

### **Unit 23 Kotzebue Sound and Western Brooks Range [Goodhope River to Cape Lisburne].**

Area Biologist Jim Dau reports the population objective for furbearers in Unit 23 is to maintain furbearers at population levels capable of sustaining harvests similar to the period 1985–1995, recognizing that populations will fluctuate in response to environmental factors. Below is a summary of furs that require sealing in Unit 23; additional furbearers do not require sealing.

<b>Species</b>	<b>Total Furs Sealed</b>	<b>No. Ground Shot</b>	<b>No. Trapped</b>	<b>Unknown Take</b>
Lynx	36		36	
River Otter	3		3	
Wolf	41	29	9	3
Wolverine	44	1	41	2

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## **WESTERN NORTH SLOPE (UNIT 26A)**

Geoff Carroll, Area Wildlife Biologist

In Unit 26A the reported wolf harvest for 2003–2004 was 13 wolves (8 males and 5 females). Eleven were ground shot and 2 were snared. Snowmachines were used for transportation for 10 wolves and airplanes for 3. The number of wolves harvested and reported is highly dependent on whether a few key individuals are trapping and sealing their furs that year.

A wolf census in a 10,343 km<sup>2</sup> area in the foothills of Unit 26A indicated that the wolf density had dropped from a high of 4.2 wolves/1000 km<sup>2</sup> in 1992 to 1.6 wolves/1000 km<sup>2</sup> in 1998. During surveys flown in the same area in 2004, no wolves were seen during 11.5 hours of flight. Six sets of tracks were seen that indicated 11 wolves were present in the area. From observations during moose counts, it appears that wolf numbers may have increased slightly since 1998, but are still quite low.

Twenty wolverines were sealed (18 males and 2 females) in 2003–2004. Snowmachines were used for transportation for 19 of the wolverines and an airplane for 1. Seventeen were ground shot and 3 were trapped. Reported wolverine harvest has been relatively high most years since 1999 (21, 19, 21, 26, 11). The reason for the higher numbers is probably a combination of high wolverine population and more trapping pressure.

Several trappers reported that wolves and wolverines were scarce in areas where seismic oil exploration was occurring or had occurred that winter. During 2002–2003, when seismic exploration was extensive, harvest for both wolves (5) and wolverines (11) was the lowest in

recent years. During 2003–2004 there was much less seismic exploration, and reported harvest numbers were greater for both wolves (13) and wolverines (20).

The department sealing program is not an effective measure of harvest. Many people do not seal their furs because it is difficult to maintain fur sealers in most villages and many people home tan their furs. Village harvest documentation programs are more effective and indicate that about 25% of wolves and wolverines are sealed.

Three lynx were harvested in Unit 26A during 2003–2004. After many years of not being present, lynx moved onto the North Slope following a snowshoe hare irruption that took place during the 1990s. Seven lynx were harvested during 2001–2002 and 1 was harvested in 2002–2003.

Hunters and trappers are not required to seal foxes, so harvest data are not available for red or arctic foxes. Low fur prices have resulted in relatively few foxes being trapped for many years. Arctic fox density appeared to be quite low during 2003–2004 in Unit 26A for unknown reasons.

Rabid furbearers, particularly arctic foxes, continue to be a problem around human settlements. Rabid arctic foxes are destroyed when they are reported near villages and sent to a lab to be tested. The department assisted the North Slope Borough Public Health Department in a program to educate people about rabid animals and having their pets immunized.

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# Trapper Comments

## How Did Trapping Conditions Affect Your Trapping Effort?

### Southeast

- ✧ Having a snowmachine makes for a good thing.
- ✧ Warm weather required more frequent checks to avoid fur damage.
- ✧ A lot of snow made getting to trap difficult, and keeping everything working was also challenging.
- ✧ Very little, have adjusted my methods to the snow or lack of and the freezing and thawing conditions.
- ✧ It was good conditions last year.
- ✧ Too much rain. My traps on the other side of the river, too much water at times to cross over.
- ✧ The weather of the ocean affected it a little.
- ✧ I did real good the first month. January's first 2 weeks were super cold and my catch dropped way down and then my outboard blew a gasket and that ended my trapping.
- ✧ Trapped in new area where there was less trappers.
- ✧ Mild weather greatly improved access to beaver water - Made it possible to use my kayak.
- ✧ Fuel costs up so I did not trap as much.
- ✧ The weather changed extremely many times. Ice on creeks and frozen traps hampered me several times, plus high water conditions several times due to warm-ups, heavy rain, and snow/ice melt.
- ✧ Heavy frost and light snow made it easy to set on travel ways to target only certain animals (mink specifically) and eliminated the need for bait.
- ✧ Warm weather required shorter time between checks.
- ✧ Limited snow helped.
- ✧ Improved it substantially.
- ✧ Bays froze up making it impossible to check traps in some places for over a month. Poor salt ice, can't trust it to walk on.
- ✧ Saltwater bays froze up during cold snaps. High wind prevented me from taking boat to some areas. Deep snow made 4-wheeling difficult.
- ✧ Not enough snow to bring the animals down to the beach.
- ✧ Conditions were good. Full-time job affected my effort.
- ✧ The warmer weather early on the season kept the bear active till almost the end of December which cost me about 6 marten because they got to my set before I could and ate my marten.
- ✧ More snow & colder than normal - made it more fun to be out.
- ✧ They were OK, for a 4-week learning lesson-.
- ✧ Weather affects ability to check trapline.
- ✧ Rain or shine we checked our traps.
- ✧ The warm weather kept the marten high and otter up the creeks.

### Southcentral/Southwest

- ✧ I couldn't start setting until after mid December due to poor flying conditions. After that it was fine, good ski flying.
- ✧ A little more cautious for overflow and open water.
- ✧ Heavy snow made checking difficult.
- ✧ Did not effect effort. Job did.
- ✧ Family situation limited time available for trapping.
- ✧ Deep snow. Hard to walk.
- ✧ Weather was warm so river was open so could not get around - open water & overflow
- ✧ Lots of snow and wind. Had to make sets.
- ✧ The numbers of fox, coyote, marten, mink, beaver, and otter have steadily declined over the last few years.
- ✧ Often got warm weather, leg holds melted out, rained some, made travel conditions difficult.
- ✧ Cold weather and good ice made access to area easy.
- ✧ Didn't have a lot of extra time, so I only trap for recreation.

- ❖ Deep snow, wet weather.
- ❖ Conditions were good for getting to areas that are usually challenging. Lots of snow and ice.
- ❖ A lot of snow in 2003–2004 winter.
- ❖ Many calm days let me check my line on a regular schedule.
- ❖ Wind created trouble keeping traps working - blowing snow.
- ❖ Big meltdown in February made me pull most of my traps.
- ❖ Mild weather, good trapping.
- ❖ Conditions have more effect than the weather; if conditions are better, longer lines are used.
- ❖ Late freeze-up resulted in fewer weeks on trapline.
- ❖ Snow and ice conditions were conducive to running a long trapline. Travel was generally good w/ a snowmobile.
- ❖ Bare ground – ruff
- ❖ Poor conditions. Could not land in many areas due to a lack of snow and overflow.
- ❖ It made transportation a lot easier so I could get around better.
- ❖ Low snow earlier made access difficult.
- ❖ Deep snowfalls and drifting snow put sets out of commission too large a portion of days.
- ❖ Catch was drastically low = due to recreational snowmachiners, dog mushers, rain.
- ❖ Overflow, extreme cold, deep snow, fog and thin ice at various times through out my season. Limited productive time during time trapped.
- ❖ Not having the snow in the beginning of season.
- ❖ Cold temps kept animal activity to a minimum from December to February.
- ❖ For the most part conditions did not affect my trapping in a negative way.
- ❖ The weather was even at 10–15 degrees, just the right snow.
- ❖ Deep snow caused coyotes & wolves to leave area early.
- ❖ Had an early freeze that affected some water beaver trapping. This inhibited boat travel.
- ❖ We use half leg holds and half snares. Trying to keep leg holds working on the Kenai is tough due to warm conditions and loss of snow.
- ❖ Placed fewer sets due to poor winter conditions. Rivers and creeks not frozen over.
- ❖ Rain flooded out and swept away traps.
- ❖ Too much wet snow.
- ❖ Most tree sets were under about 2 feet of snow by end of season.
- ❖ Creeks flooded.
- ❖ Deep snow slowed down checking of traps.
- ❖ Late freeze-up made for good mink trapping.
- ❖ Check sets more. Better remakes of sets.
- ❖ Lack of ice early in the season limited the area I could use.
- ❖ Missed a lot of catches - due to freezing rain disabling foothold traps.
- ❖ Jan - Chinook sucks.
- ❖ Lack of freeze-up prevented travel.
- ❖ A lot of freezing and thawing makes it hard to keep sets open.
- ❖ Need cold weather to trap - Also have a problem with other members of the community trapping down my trapline.
- ❖ No snow or ice.
- ❖ Very little.

## Interior

- ❖ Good conditions make trapping even more enjoyable.
- ❖ Excellent snow last season. Had the typical thaws and winds that always cause problems but generally the snow was deep enough to run snowmachine. First time in several years.
- ❖ Deep snow and then icing caused keeping canine traps working a problem. Even snares became iced in.
- ❖ A whole lot less fur. I became more fascinated with trapping canines in this new area. Which meant catching a whole lot less marten.
- ❖ Frequent snows - sets covered
- ❖ No snow forced me to take 4-wheeler more than usual and resulted in less area trapped and less fur caught.
- ❖ Lack of snow. Other trappers in area.



- ✿ Low snow slowed down start of season.
- ✿ Light snow was good, made for sets staying longer.
- ✿ Had a hard time reaching most distant areas - as usual. Late freeze-up/too much snow before rivers froze up. Very few marten (main catch) so pulled a lot of line early or trapped lightly (fewer sets per mile).
- ✿ Poor ice and snow condition prevented me from doing as well as I have in the past.
- ✿ Not much snow, so getting out to some portions of the line was difficult.
- ✿ Normal snow and temperature made trapping easy.
- ✿ No animals due to fire I believe
- ✿ The line I'm on this last year is in a mountain area with high ridges running down to river valleys. So a good amount of snow & cold temps are needed to safely run this area. Good last year – not enough cold weather this year.
- ✿ Lost five days at the start due to freezing rain during which time I used Honda. However mid November to mid December was spent breaking trail through incessant drifts and removing blow downs.
- ✿ Lots of work. Early ice on spruce with lots of cones last year kept trees coming in on our trail as it snowed.
- ✿ Reduced the number of sets I made.
- ✿ No problem, limited overflow.
- ✿ Snowfall was good, i.e. was not as thick as previous years. More open water, otter were more dispersed. No otter catches.
- ✿ Shortened the lines, fewer sets than I would have done if conditions had been better.
- ✿ I like to trap on the shelf ice, so freeze-up time is not critical. Also because I use dogs, "poor" snow conditions are inconsequential.
- ✿ Lots of work since my partner spent the better part of the season bison hunting. Heavy snow & wind meant more trail maintenance and less time making sets. I'll take lots of snow vs. no snow any day though.
- ✿ Conditions didn't affect my effort. Conditions were good.
- ✿ There was no sign of critters and I got bored of driving all that way just to clear trail.
- ✿ Difficult access.
- ✿ Too warm, some rain/wind issues.
- ✿ Had to break new trail - very hard snow & brush conditions. I did very little trapping - only incidental to breaking trail to cabin.
- ✿ Caused reductions.
- ✿ Snows (wet) caused lots of brushing to occur, adding difficulty to trail passage.
- ✿ It was the same as always.
- ✿ Lots of mechanical trouble, but it was a good time and relaxing.
- ✿ Lack of snow in first part of season made it harder at first, warm weather made it difficult.
- ✿ It's hard to remember, but I think early season there was no snow & warm temps.
- ✿ Too much sports and adventure riders. Heavy traffic. 65 sno-gos one day.
- ✿ Warm weather - couldn't cross Yukon River till late in season.
- ✿ We had good conditions later in the season, effort was the same.
- ✿ Lots of long days. The trails keep getting growed over. The banks get caved in. Trees fell across trails. Old burn area.
- ✿ Too much snow.
- ✿ Sometimes it was harder, overflow, etc.
- ✿ Weather was warm, a lot of overflow.
- ✿ Snow was 22" at the apex. Travel was uninhibited.
- ✿ Fur prices weren't that great, so I didn't trap as hard as I normally do. There were a lot of wolves, but I'm not that experienced at wolf trapping so I didn't catch any.
- ✿ Did not start traveling by sno-go until end of November due to late freeze-up.
- ✿ Had good conditions, just no abundance of fur. Was slowed down some by a injury, did see a marten track at the edge of tree line - not common up this far.
- ✿ No, I don't think so.
- ✿ Not much effects at all really.
- ✿ Not much snow. Hard on equipment. Hard to see tracks.
- ✿ Late start, erratic checking of traps due to poor conditions, rain, thaw, overflow.
- ✿ The wet fall had drowned all voles over a huge area. I didn't see one or even sign of one all winter. Consequently the marten left the area.
- ✿ Warm weather causes a trapper to run traps more than necessary.
- ✿ Not much snow early in November '03 but enough to travel farther & set areas not trapped for several years. Ended season with lots of snow.

- ❖ Weather made it difficult to be out on trapline. Decrease of movement of species in area slowed harvest.
- ❖ The typical freeze/thaw trend of early winter results in difficult traveling by snowmachine.
- ❖ Conditions of line didn't influence my trapping as much as my health.
- ❖ The early season heavy snow made cutting trail lengthy & difficult to open the line. Much brushing for hours & hours to get the line open. Did not get sets out early due to the snow.
- ❖ Conditions don't matter when you need money.
- ❖ Deep snow and overflow on the lakes can make limited use of the smaller lakes for landing.
- ❖ The low snow conditions in Nov and part of Dec seem to hamper efforts as the trail is too rough.
- ❖ It was too cold to get out.
- ❖ Conditions were good enough to trap. It was the major price decline that is killing trapping. The prices you quoted are way/extremely higher than actual prices.
- ❖ Snow made it easier to target trails.
- ❖ Low snow, hard snaring conditions.

## **Arctic/Western**

- ❖ Travel was hard. The freeze and thaw kept me home more than I liked.
- ❖ Mobility completely depends on it. Too much easy traveling brings unwanted guests, but last year was just right.
- ❖ Late freeze up, little snow had to wait for safe ice and sign was hard to read with no snow.
- ❖ Warmer weather kept me home until the ice was safe to travel.
- ❖ Made things slow - snowshoe lines first before machines could move
- ❖ Very little snow made for rough trail & hard riding.
- ❖ Negative - warm weather lots of melting
- ❖ Easy trail.
- ❖ Limited snow depth & short duration of snow reduced my time afield.
- ❖ Bad weather kept me away for long periods of time.
- ❖ Lack of snow in January, February - early break up.
- ❖ Greatly unable to get to traps.
- ❖ Poor snow. Didn't trap long.

## **Did Other Trappers In Your Area Affect Your Trapping Effort?**

### **Southeast**

- ❖ New trapper in area caused decrease in marten catch.
- ❖ I did not leave expensive wolf traps set where other people might see them because of past theft.
- ❖ One other trapper in our new area thought it was his area only. He would find our traps and set them off so we couldn't catch anything.
- ❖ If others moved into the area I was trapping, I just pulled out and found new areas. I don't mind - it's good to see others trapping - that's what keeps our sport alive.
- ❖ I guess I have trained too many local kids - new young men.
- ❖ Last year there were lots of trappers and they really nailed all the animals. The trappers are mostly gone, but I still give the animals a good chance to replenish by only doing a very limited amount of trapping.
- ❖ I pulled out of the bay when I realized someone else was there.
- ❖ Other trappers were in areas that I have trapped in the past.
- ❖ With other prices up, more people are hunting and trapping otter.
- ❖ Stealing furs and stealing traps.
- ❖ Other trappers don't respect your set areas.
- ❖ No other trappers affected our trapline this year.

### **Southcentral/Southwest**

- ❖ Another trapper moved in and picked up few animals. Set sets close to mine.

- ✂ There are now 2 other airplane trappers in my area, so we take care not to overlap each other.
- ✂ Highway trappers.
- ✂ Trap theft.
- ✂ Two traps were stolen.
- ✂ There are trappers on all sides of me. I've lost a lot of territory to development & such. If I was 20 years younger, I would move again, away from the highway.
- ✂ No respect by others for established line.
- ✂ They would make sets in the vicinity of my sets.
- ✂ Lots of people in Aleknagik trap, so I find myself going to less desirable areas as to not intrude on other areas.
- ✂ Airplane "trappers" chasing wolves keep them from using predictable cycles.
- ✂ Increase people some trappers into my area, disrupting sets.
- ✂ Invaded early by 2 groups, as in past 7 years. Together with conditions, it was difficult to get much done.
- ✂ Some of my small lines - I had a few new trappers working areas that I have worked for over 10 years. I made fewer sets/ shared the fur in those areas.
- ✂ Only in that some beavers I planned to trap had already been trapped out.
- ✂ Neighbor kids are trapping some areas I used to trap with my blessing.
- ✂ Some trappers set same locations yearly for marten. Some have moved in adjacent to where I trap; therefore I have had to move lines some.
- ✂ Sprung traps, stealing traps.
- ✂ No other effort observed.
- ✂ More competition
- ✂ There is no one in this area that follows the code of ethics.

## Interior

- ✂ Knew people moved into the area and had no respect for me or family that has been running this line for 40 years.
- ✂ I rarely see anyone on the west side of Delta River.
- ✂ Over the past years I have discouraged others from using my area very strongly and have had few problems in last few years.
- ✂ Had problems with other trappers messing up sets made for beaver.
- ✂ I saw wolf tracks one time. After the season I heard of 2 other trappers that took 8 and 2 wolves respectively from the same area.
- ✂ Weekend warriors and newbies surrounding my area and educating fur.
- ✂ I'm working around a recreational, dog mushing main trail so I have a bunch of spur lines and working to connect off the beaten path. Two trappers showed up and managed to trap 270 degrees around me. The other 90 degrees is a railroad corridor. They advertised my snares with their signs. Made sets on the main trail. It took many weeks to put this together. When I finally did, the season was closed. Without their catch data I don't know what effect they had. Cats were down anyway. Nice to see them gone this year. Cats still down too.
- ✂ Several other trappers keep moving closer and closer to my line causing me to run less trail and keep me from increasing my line.
- ✂ Overtrapped.
- ✂ A couple other guys tried to come into the area.
- ✂ Lots of beginners looking for a place to trap and 1 or 2 outlaws that travel around looking for easy places to trap.
- ✂ I was given this line in October '03 and I was soon to learn there were "contested areas" within it. I had to deal with this, taking time, and chilling my enthusiasm.
- ✂ My line is registered with ATA. Signs identify each house.
- ✂ I have really good relationships with 2 other trappers around me. We share a lot of information about populations and fur movement, etc. However, there is another "trapper" who "claims" about 50 miles of valley with 2 marten traps without bait. His idea of trapping is going 75 mph on his snowmachine. There is also another trapper north of me who takes too many female wolverine.
- ✂ Younger trappers taking over area.
- ✂ A lot of rec trappers trying their luck out. Warmer winters have raised effort by some.
- ✂ Some of the beaver ponds I wanted to trap already had somebody trapping them.
- ✂ Had to explain to him I don't run his line & it is not healthy him runnin mine.
- ✂ But non trapper in my area made it a little harder. Our small trapline is heavily posted with pink ATA signs. We still had problems with loose dogs & people disturbing sets.

- ✂ Not knowing they were in the area or them coming in after me.
- ✂ Greedy "wanna be" trappers.
- ✂ We all keep the main trail open, but we all branch off here and there.
- ✂ People try to prevent trapping on land that they or their father, uncle, etc. trapped on years ago – sometimes as far back as the 60s, so the land is unused.
- ✂ Had good manners and pulled up a "claimed" marten line, though use questionable.
- ✂ Had no problems with other trappers - but one must keep vigil. With people like Ralph Seekins around and all his "knowledge" and determination to overrun this beautiful country with ATV & recreational terism.
- ✂ I avoid potential conflict.
- ✂ People who didn't respect others trapline.

## Arctic/Western

- ✂ Too many people disturbing the sets - had a couple of traps stolen.
- ✂ Not many trappers in the area at all.
- ✂ People checking & running over traps.
- ✂ Decreased due to others checking traps.
- ✂ I don't trap around other people's lines. Need to give the critters a chance.

## Do You Have Any Comments To ADF&G?

### Southeast

- ✂ I would have listed wolf as abundant in area 5, but several trappers are making a concerted effort this season (04-05) to reduce the wolf population. We'll see how it turns out.
- ✂ Please send questionnaire in spring of current season.
- ✂ I stopped trapping in about 1997 when a couple of fellows moved in on a section of my trapline where I previously experienced solitude and was able to manage the area. It is very disappointing when you have a few select wolverine sets that you have worked for years, then suddenly there is 2 fellows tending their own sets within 100 yards of you. Another contributing factor is that I preferentially guide mountain goat hunts thru December. That pretty well satisfies my drive to spend any more time in the woods for the season.
- ✂ I would like to see the marten season extended to March 1 in Unit 1D. The reasons are: I catch most of my marten as incidentals in my wolverine set. The marten are still prime in this area until that time. Usually marten are expired quickly in the larger traps that I use for wolverine.
- ✂ Thank you for sending the trapper survey report. I did not trap last year, and probably not this year, because of the warm, wet weather.
- ✂ During the season I saw 4 different grizzly on and off while trapping. Two of them came close to getting shot as they showed no fear of people. On both bear I fired several shots but it failed to turn them. I gave them the area and went around, coming back there later. I guess what I'm saying there are so many tourists here in the summer the bears are losing there fear of people. Also, I saw a wolf kill a bald eagle - wish I had a camera.
- ✂ Like to see law enforcement out checking trappers for licenses. I've trapped for 5 years and have never been checked for a trapping license. Also seeing them out might keep people from stealing traps and animals.
- ✂ I read other trappers comments from throughout the state with great interest. You learn something from the different weather conditions and personal opinions. A great job on the publication of the questionnaire. I did catch 4 mink that were getting fat on my local duck herd. I think the shortened wolf season on Prince of Wales is a bit out of line. Your wolf study man seems as much interested in his name in the local papers and how important his work is. Thank you.
- ✂ I appreciate the effort put into these surveys. I notice there is some whiners out there who want to close trapping to "hobby clowns" - just remember - a house divided - we need to stick together to defend our trapping heritage. Thank you.
- ✂ Got hurt, couldn't trap. Will have my son with me next year, so look forward to good season.
- ✂ Poor fur prices limited trapping effort. Fuel prices up.
- ✂ You folks are doing a Great job, keep up the good work.
- ✂ I trap because I just like to trap. I target mink mainly, as other trappers concentrate more on marten,

- which results in a little competition. I also like to target beaver during the general December to mid February season, too, as pelt quality seems to be far better than in the spring season (Mar–May).
- ✧ Can Fish & Game help to establish trapping associations in local areas to help prevent trapper territory disputes and help educate the public in trapping education (Benefits of trapping a renewable resource)? Also this would help youths get established in trapping from sets to fur handling and marketing of furs.
  - ✧ Please give better numbers on projected or actual numbers of trappers by GMU or region. Like how many licenses sold.
  - ✧ The 3 wolves I caught were within 2 miles of my house, and they had been attacking dogs and cats in the neighborhoods. All were killed within 200 yards of occupied residences. I will continue my efforts in the 2004–2005 season. Thanks.
  - ✧ My brother quit trapping in 2001 because of the decrease in the prices.
  - ✧ 1) Should make the season for catching animals coincide with when pelts are prime. For example, martens could be opened a few weeks earlier, but minks aren't prime here until January. 2) Might try to reward those who thin down the wolves by giving them a deer or moose tag to fill in the winter. After all, many deer/moose are saved by trappers that catch 5 or 6 wolves. Maybe a deer/moose tag for every 5 or 6 wolves sealed would be fair.
  - ✧ Keeping the leg bone attached to a wolf is very difficult and hard to remember. Having the ID tag attached to wolf snares is a pain. They fall off and are one more thing to spook a wolf. Plus, someone doing something illegal doesn't use them anyway.
  - ✧ The marten population seems to be in real decline on my line. The last 3 years I have caught mostly mature animals, very few immatures. I have decreased my effort to keep from catching breeding stock. I used to catch 50–120. The last 2 years I quit with 20. Some areas last year didn't have any marten at all.
  - ✧ Due to breakdowns with my boat, I was unable to trap last year.
  - ✧ Not enough fur to trap the whole season. Wanted to leave breeding stock for next season.
  - ✧ Froze and thawed several times. Made access more difficult.
  - ✧ Did not trap in 04. I get this questionnaire every year. The only reason for buying a trapping license is in case the opportunity occurs. Suggest you send trap license holders a simple yes/no form instead of a big package. If trapper answers yes, then send the whole package. This would save everyone time & money.
  - ✧ Good job in the office managing - feel more enforcement needed in field. I hear stories of other trappers in area having sets messed with/furs stold.
  - ✧ Most of my recent trapping has been recreational, setting a few traps while on hunting trips.
  - ✧ Keep up the good work. What is the likelihood of a beaver season being opened in the west side of Chatam? I'm seeing more move into certain areas.
  - ✧ I did not trap due to temperature. This was the third year in a row the temp was in the 40s opening week. This season is about to close and it's 40 degrees. I have said in the past our season needs to be put back one month.
  - ✧ It's hard to remember everything you ask for when the survey comes out this late. Even if the previous year's report isn't ready, I could provide better data if the survey was sent out soon after the end of the season. If the department wants to encourage more youngsters to trap in the Juneau area, they should see the city about creating some exemptions to prohibitions on trapping within a 1/2 mile of the road. These areas can be reasonably set for mink/ weasel/ marten with small traps without endangering any people or pets.
  - ✧ Sure looks silly for ADF&G biologists in Southeast. to refer to plural marten as martens. No one else does. Why not mooses, deers, minks, etc? What is the relationship between harvests reported on fur export permits and sealing records, F.E.P. have long since ceased to be of any value. Beaver are plentiful on N. Baranof, S. Chichagof, and Kruzz. No reason to continue the closed season.
  - ✧ Trapping is a wonderful experience and wish more kids would take it up.
  - ✧ I have lived in Alaska all my life. I hunt a lot for deer and goats. I thought it would be good to learn how to trap & teach my son of 11 years old. We only had 12 traps that a friend loaned us, and we just went off the road system. I felt we did good for the 4 weeks we trapped & not really knowing what we were doing! We tan our own hides for ourselves, and my son really enjoys checking traps to see what kind of surprise we have.
  - ✧ 1) This is a poor use of time for all involved and the most expensive way to gather and process data. Solutions: e-mail a request to fill out an online form. This will allow us to provide ADF&G with data Online, thereby eliminating postage costs. Also, the data would already be entered for data analysis. Currently you will receive this form and pay someone to do data entry. Again waste of resources. 2) I have big concerns regarding the increase costs of hunt/fish/trap license to fund ADF&G. Try cost reduction measures like above noted recommendations. There are some liberties that should be afforded those that live in Alaska. Paying more for hunting/fishing/trapping does not improve my quality of life. Do not raise in state resident costs. I suspect raising nonresident fees would not affect the user number of nonresident hunters. Anyone who is spending 10 or 12 thousand to hunt sheep on a

guided trip (that must be prebooked) will not notice a 10 or 20% cost increase. I would further recommend ADF&G evaluate department costs and trim fat, cut unnecessary studies, travel costs, data collection, etc.

- ✧ I get a trapping license for the opportunity to take a furbearer during hunting season & later in the year if I'm out and have such an opportunity. I may later if time permits. I did take a river otter on Admiralty during a deer hunt.

## Southcentral/Southwest

- ✧ We could really use a longer season for marten in 16A. Marten are very abundant. The first part of the season weather/snow conditions don't allow us to get out and around much.
- ✧ Marten season too short in 16A. Good population and should match mink and weasel Jan 31. More land, less trappers. Weather is a big factor too. One of many saying this! Same thing. Listen!
- ✧ Take the wolf off of "big game" status! It is not big game, we eat big game, except grizzly. Put it on furbearer status. This would make it much easier to control (helicopters or aerial hunt) because it would not be classified a big game animal which you cannot hunt same day airborne! The hunting regs could put wolf with fox & coyote so as to still have a bag limit. We really need the wolves curtailed for a few years till the moose, caribou calves and all sheep rebound.
- ✧ Keep up the good job you are doing. I appreciate the information. Look forward to your results next year.
- ✧ Due to weather, health & family problems at present, I am finding it difficult to participate. My goals are to return to this lifestyle ASAP. This admin. is to be commended on its predator control program. Grizzly & browns need more relaxed regulations as well as wolves.
- ✧ Some of the wolves in 16B have shown hair loss. It's not lice.
- ✧ I understand the possibility of overtrapping in Unit 14. However I think 16A should be extended to at least the end of January for marten. Lots of untrapped areas & overtrapping.
- ✧ This is the first time I filled this out - sorry - I didn't get to trap much last winter due to outside illness in the family - looks like I'll be able to trap this winter so will have more for you next season. Thanks.
- ✧ Let us shoot thieves
- ✧ Caught an arctic hare in a leg hold. Thank you very much for sending the results of these surveys. Keep sending them!
- ✧ I was not trapping for money, only to show my 2 girls how to trap. We sent our 3 beaver pelts to use and had a hat and 2 stuffed teddy bears made. They enjoyed the whole experience.
- ✧ I think that due to the lack of trappers in GMU 11 that the reduced lynx season is unnecessary. These cats cycle with the rabbits. Whether we trap them or not, they will cycle with the bunnies.
- ✧ Alaska fur buyers becoming more scarce over the years and what few there are know they have a monopoly and pay such poor prices that I must ship out of state in order to get fair market value of my catch. One guy (trapper) moved into my area, and now I catch less game for sure. I used to catch mostly males, now I catch about 50/50 ratio, not understanding why.
- ✧ Does the F&G staff have a reason for no beaver trapping in the "remainder of 14C"?
- ✧ I was in a brand new area. I had to learn the area and the animals. And to learn to arctic trap. Very nice animals. I have moved from there now so now I have to learn all over again. It was very hard to keep legholds working with all the blowing snow and subzero temps.
- ✧ Species seasons coordinate well, thanks.
- ✧ Dear ADF&G, Although I have not been actively trapping I have been advising trappers, young and old. I spend 100–140 days in the field each year and give reports of populations densities and fur bearer activities to local trappers. Wolves are up all over. Subsequently, beaver in nonswift river habitats are down. The porcupine populations have deteriorated for the past 15 years. Just this past 2 weeks I have seen tracks of 6 wolves, all of which are on single moose tracks, especially young moose.
- ✧ I have trapped recreationally for 28 years, including all but 2 of the 17 years I have lived in Alaska. The 2003–2004 season just became too busy between my young daughter, aviation for work and personally, and coaching a hockey team. And man, was it tough not getting any steel out. Part of it was new trappers in town targeting road accessible areas in Dillingham I used to trap. The "competition" was no fun, and so, I skipped the season.
- ✧ I need to report people are stealing wolverine caught in any traps.
- ✧ Unless the state can generate money from tag sales, the red fox season (hunting) should be closed until Nov 10th. The pelts are of little to no value and it's a wasteful practice to have hunters, usually with only big bore rifles using a resource for target practice.
- ✧ Appreciate the trapper report & ADF&G effort re: trapping management.
- ✧ Keep up the good work.
- ✧ It would be helpful to receive this request in March right after the trapping season, while our recall is

better than in December. While ADF&G may not be ready to tabulate/analyze data, you could mail them to trappers, and we could fill them out when we finish our season.

- ✧ Thanks for your support.
- ✧ Working too hard & trouble with sno-go. Need new machine for 05. Lots of increased people are in my area and hill climbing machine are on my snowshoe trails now. Note of interest: This summer saw wolves denning in new (for them) area in 13 and seem to be moving to areas where the land & shoot guys can't get to, on boundaries of hunt areas; almost killed 2 horses. Marten numbers seem to be going up, am planning on a good year next year, new sno-go and traps and much bigger line.
- ✧ The similarity of other trappers' answers/situations to mine (in general) is very interesting for 03–04.
- ✧ Thank you for putting out the trapper questionnaire and trapper report. Even though I didn't trap last year because of health, I like to stay up with current stats and info. I plan to trap after Jan 1st. Save the moose caribou, and sheep. Kill wolves and bears. Please extend the wolverine season in 13E. Four miles north in Unit 20 it's open a month longer than 13E. There isn't any biological reason why we can't extend our season by a month.
- ✧ Keep up the good work on the studies & questionnaire program.
- ✧ I'm only interested in trapping wolves, and there were less of them in the area I trap, i.e. the western half of unit 13, so I didn't bother with them last year.
- ✧ The wolverine season needs to be later in the year. Can't travel into the good areas till rivers freeze in Feb, hope. Very little effort and too many get caught in wolf sets after season & can't be released.
- ✧ I traveled and worked too much to trap my line in 2002–2003. But am running a small line this season & will report on next year's survey. Thanks for compiling the info and mailing out the completed report. Keep up the good work! P.S. You're right. We need to encourage & interest more younger people to trapping. We're due in 4 weeks with our first baby. Plan on giving him (her?) a trap for their first birthday! Thanks again!
- ✧ Unit 13E needs a longer wolverine season and a longer marten season. Both animals are abundant, and the current season is so early in year it make trapping these animals difficult.
- ✧ This survey seems late to me. I am already in the 2004–2005 season.
- ✧ We need to introduce marten in 15 A, B, C. We have a limited number of species to harvest on the peninsula. Hope the lice are on the way out. We will find out this winter.
- ✧ Did not trap for this year, 03–04. Letting the line rest up a year. Animal abundance seems to still be good in 15C. A few less lynx & wolverine sign seen, otherwise the furbearer population is very steady or increasing. Will try to trap next year.
- ✧ After 15 plus years doing all the winter trail maintenance between upper and lower Russian Lakes I got kicked out of this area and was told by an agent of the U.S. Forest Service who informed me that the area was closed to snowmachines, it was now for skiers only. During the 15 plus years that I trapped this area from the first of Dec to the end of February, only one skier ever traveled from lower to upper Russian Lake.
- ✧ I am looking forward to any future instructional books or videos on Alaskan trapping techniques, especially for wolves.
- ✧ Only trap for fun and exercise. Took 3 brothers, 6,8, and 11, on the line several times. Expect they will continue to trap. Will welcome them in my area as I trap less in the future.
- ✧ I've been unable to trap the last years due to financial/time constraints. I trap more for enjoyment than a livelihood.
- ✧ Wanted to trap but had left knee problems (surgery). Looking forward to next year.
- ✧ Trapping days are over; circulation in my feet and hands do not permit me to take the cold weather anymore. Thanks for all the information in past years.
- ✧ Did not trap this year due to my newborn baby. Thank you, I'll be back.
- ✧ Did most of my trapping in the 1950s and 1960s with my dad when I was young. Then trapped one year with my son (around 2001) for 1 month. We only trapped land otter. A very fun year! Gas prices too high to make any money.
- ✧ Institute a limited entry program for trapping permits. Something like current fishery programs.
- ✧ I haven't been trapping the last few years because I've had to work away from home. I plan on trapping in the future.
- ✧ The biologist and game enforcement troopers here in King Salmon do a great job.
- ✧ There are still too many wolves in unit 9B, and they are killing off too many of the moose. Need to be able to land and shoot them in more areas of the state.
- ✧ Too many wolves - no walking down village streets - hard to get to unless we have lots of snow.
- ✧ I do this on free time just to keep critters in check. We need ADF&G to write an intense management. Plan for Unit 9. Predators have reduced game animals to critical numbers. Our area biologist claims the ratio of predator to game animal is 1 for every 2. Katmai N. P. claims 2000 brown bear reside there. That's nuts.

- ✧ So-called subsistence beaver shooters have decimated the beavers in my area. This regulation is very much abused, very wasteful and should be changed. Also the Oct. 10 beaver trapping is allowing harvest of almost worthless hides because they are easy to take. Also incidental catch of otters is not good for this furbearer.
- ✧ I killed a wolf on 12/22/04 that was gaunt! I missed his running mate, and it was obvious he was starved as well. Wolves polishing off fox and coyotes!!

## Interior

- ✧ Hares are coming back fast on my line.
- ✧ Fish & Game is doing a pretty good job I believe. The thing would suggest is doing more enforcement during both hunting and trapping seasons. I also think people had better get used to the increasing populations on the road system. Remember that most of us were new here at one time and we all wanted that "Alaska experience" too. Let's try and take in a few of them in and teach them the right way of doing things.
- ✧ Beaver population and lack of interest, by most trappers, in taking them in 20D, due mostly to low prices makes the sealing and limits a waste of time and money. If the lynx season has to be shorter, start it later when the hides are best.
- ✧ Would like to see the fox season extend to end of March in Unit 20.
- ✧ In 20A very few marten - more coyotes, less fox.
- ✧ I'd like to see registered traplines to eliminate some encroachment problems myself and others are facing. Last year I had someone trapping beavers and trying to trap/snare fur on my line. When confronted the person said it was "practically his backyard and he had every legal right to trap there." I explained that until this person moved to the edge of my line, I trapped there and stopped only because I did not want to catch his dog or somebody else's. He did not want to talk ethics, only "He has every legal right to trap there." Now he is nailing traps and snares to trees with 16 penny nails and scaring the fur out of the main drainage to my trapline. I doubt if this problem is going to go away any time soon.
- ✧ Do not increase our fees. Please amend the current system. Make the \$5 license holders show proof of need. No need, no license. Collect full rate. Just trapping that's an increase of \$10. What trapper only traps? For hunting, fishing, and trapping that's an increase of \$47 per trapper X 100=4700, X1000=47,000. We already pay. What about the folks buffeting the system. There's money out there. Thanks. Keep up the good work.
- ✧ Due to health issues (heart), I am no longer able to run my lines. I turned them over to a young man of 21 years of age. My only "trapping" was done from my highway vehicle by calling. I can still enjoy everything associated with trapping without the risk of health by being out in the cold for long periods. It is amazing how well you can do with this other form of harvest.
- ✧ The limited road system in Alaska makes trapline crowding off of road systems unavoidable. When running my road line, I don't let competition from other trappers bother me. When I stop and talk to them, I tell them good luck and as long as I can't see your trap from my trap, I'm happy, have a good season.
- ✧ Looking forward to a good year this year.
- ✧ We are being affected by global warming - late freeze-up/ too much snow by the time rivers freeze: trails slumping off into drainages: 30" snowfall in 36 hours, etc. Lots of wolves in Feb-March, and Aug-Sept in our area. Wolves coming to our yard, unafraid, and also our neighbors yard, in Aug-Sept. Marten population still severely depressed but slightly higher than 02-03: better male/female ratio but most animals are old adults.
- ✧ Keep up the good work.
- ✧ The legislature needs to give trappers some kind of rights to a trapline (re: unethical trappers & recreators).
- ✧ There are too many people trapping and overstepping lines. There is no respect for other people's traplines. Trapping should be done by draw.
- ✧ Securing, compiling, and analyzing this information is a serious and necessary undertaking. I, and I am quite sure most others, appreciate your efforts. Thank you.
- ✧ I trap by dog team, so I don't make many sets on my 5-mile line. I don't make any trail sets because of the dogs. I don't expect to get a lot of fur on my short line, but in 4 years, last year was my worst.
- ✧ The current laws allow pre-freeze up and post-breakup open water harvesting of beavers in the entire 20B unit. This is a 'nuisance' harvest approach that has no business being applied to areas outside of urban areas, where beavers are a nuisance. Trappers "farming" houses in registered, established lines will have no idea if female was killed during the open water seasons, and the risk of overharvest is great. This must change! Beaver are a valuable furbearer and deserve protection from ADF&G. These open-water harvest seasons seem to use beaver as dog food; BS!
- ✧ Dept. should consider merging dates for coyote and red fox. This year lynx season was Dec 1-31: I think Jan 1-30 would be better in respect to fur priming. Thank you very much for the report.



- ✧ Great information! I have never read an annual report before and found the information to be useful. Unlike large species, this survey is probably very important for population/density measurements. You don't hear of many marten surveys being done from a supercub. I would suggest and support a similar yet shorter version of this survey to be filled out upon purchasing a trapping license. Similar to the survey prior to buying duck stamps. This would give you 100% participation, at least for some basic information. I look forward to next year's survey although my trapline is completely burnt.
- ✧ Thanks for the yearly info. Gathering moose info on this survey might help hunters & gather useful info on where they hang out, health, population, and like how many get snared. killed by wolves, etc.
- ✧ I don't see any reason to open beaver season in 20B on Sept. 25. Keep it Nov. 1 like it was. This questionnaire is a good idea, thanks.
- ✧ Reduce the length of the trapping season in Unit 20B.
- ✧ The longer beaver season in 20B is the best thing that's happened to trappers in our area in a long time. Thanks to ADF&G for continuing to increase hunting and trapping opportunity when the biology supports it.
- ✧ Try to get the questionnaire out earlier. It is hard to remember stuff that happened a year ago.
- ✧ Stop killing cows and calves.
- ✧ They are doing good job except I don't like cow moose hunt. We lose enough moose to other things.
- ✧ The area I trap for marten & wolves was involved in the Wolf Creek fire. The ridge that I catch most of my marten was totally burned. I lost traps & actually have not traveled there to survey exact loss. There appears to be marten though but not as abundant. Wolves are there. 2004 Fall–last spring I had someone snapping marten traps for the first 4 miles of my trail just before the end of the season.
- ✧ The wolf buffer zone along the Nenana River on the east park boundary is a joke. I have to go 2 mi. further east to make any wolf sets, this is 10 minute trot for a wolf. Please don't give in to the political pressure. The park boundary is the river, let's leave it at that. Easy to define, then it got moved to the intertie power line, still easy to define but I lost a lot of wolf trapping area. This year it's a mile east of the Parks Highway from about Healy to Cantwell because of the steep mountains, we lost a lot more area, so I have a couple of questions 1) Whose idea was it to change the buffer zone from the intertie powerline to 1 mile east of the Parks Highway? and 2) Will ADF&G cave to pressure to close this area to all trapping in the future? The Denali Park is 6 million acres & the Nenana River has been the boundary that's easy to define, not some imaginary line that you need a GPS to find. Thanks for all the hard work you guys do.
- ✧ Thanks for the questionnaire - lots of good info and a good read.
- ✧ You are doing well on education. People notify us of things caught that should not be quickly and efficiently so that we can deal with it so that hopefully it does not happen again.
- ✧ Yes. Let us fish! The fish are there, plenty of it good fishing past 3 years.
- ✧ I get hunting & trapping every year as I have grandchildren. I may start trapping again with them.
- ✧ Get back marine mammals, so everybody can hunt seals and sell skins to fur market. Have registered traplines.
- ✧ We appreciate your effort to urge young people away from video games and to get out into the real world.
- ✧ I've been trapping every year. Like beaver, mainly just for food. We always like to eat beaver. Hardly any money in beaver skins. Not much marten around.
- ✧ Wolf trapping was made hard by caribou coming into the country. Hard to pull sets to stay away from incidental catch. Wolverine moved into the country with the caribou. Wolves were using the caribou and were pretty fat. Marten are still coming back after declining post hare peak. Hares are very low now and lynx are dispersed out of the area. Only a few large lynx have stayed. Vole numbers were very low in the 03–04 season. You should also ask for large game species as prey base. These caribou were a large biomass used by wolves and scavenging by wolverine, lynx, & marten. Deep snow affects ungulate predation and associated furbearers. Thanks for the questionnaire and the good work you're doing.
- ✧ It is clear to me that price/value of fur is directly linked to trapping effort. It is my opinion that people who harvest moose/sheep should be encouraged to purchase wolves from the person trapping in their hunting area. We all need to work together on this. With high gas prices and few animals it was hard to pay expenses. Also, I have yet to sell my 2 wolves, people are cheap. If you accidentally have bycatch—moose, caribou—then you have to pull your sets within a 1/4 mile. It would be good to amend this. One idea is you only have to pull wolf sets, and you would not be permitted to make new sets within a 1/4 mile. Or after a month you can reset. I had no by catch in 03–04. In order to trap, we need to make money.
- ✧ All & all another enjoyable season - my 13 year old son is taking up the tradition. Hare populations are still on a low, also not much for caribou in the area this season so nothing to keep wolves around – furbearers are somewhat low in my area, due to low food populations. This was the second year

- I've been keeping set numbers low to try and keep healthy breeding stock around - the populations are low but holding steady. Just need to keep the Ralph Seekins crowd out - they certainly need a lesson in tread lightly and conservation. Happy Trails. See you next year God willing!
- ✧ I am sure you are doing right thing by culling wolves with airplanes. We must ensure our "livestock" (moose) be plentiful for the people. It would be awful hard to hunt them to extinction!
  - ✧ Thanks for the questionnaire. ADF&G doing a good job. Keep up the good work.
  - ✧ Anyone who doubts global warming should run a trapline in western Alaska.
  - ✧ Increase all license fees to provide AB's with greater funding.
  - ✧ Keep up the good work.
  - ✧ I have trapped the same line for 25 years. This is 05 when I am writing this & my lines are still as active & producing the same amount of fur after a big catch in 03-04. Even fewer females in 04-05 by about 18% or so. I don't know the answers, but when marten move to where feed is available and no other marten are present, they make themselves at home. So short of killing all the females, I don't think you could wipe out a line without trying really hard to do just that.
  - ✧ Open 19C to land-and-shoot for wolves. Way less moose & caribou since 10 years ago.
  - ✧ One of these years I am going to spend 3 months back there. I think the questionnaire is a great thing.
  - ✧ More damage and loss to marten and fox eating each other. Possibly due to shortage of mice and lack of moose kills. I visit traps every 3 days or less and normally see little loss to other species. Lynx season need not close Feb. 28. Cats are prime through March in 19B and elsewhere in GMU 19. Beaver on South Fork Holitna hit hard by severe fall flooding in 2004 and lost food caches. Wolves & wolverine preying heavily on beaver driven from dens looking for replacement food lost to high water in late October.
  - ✧ It's good to see all the aerial wolf hunts going on statewide. It is almost too late though. I seen one moose track all season.
  - ✧ I don't think trappers should object to restricting their efforts to trap a species in a low cycle - It would be nice if they could keep accidental catches, however.
  - ✧ The lynx and fox have been low in my area, Unit 12. The rabbit sign indicates that the rabbits are coming back. I did go out and explore my trapline but hope for a better season in 2004-2005.
  - ✧ The reason I didn't trap the last 2 years is because my son got married, plus he joined the Marines, then my daughter got married. Then I couldn't get on the line because of too much snow. Plus I have a full time job now. Hopefully next year I will be able to do some trapping.
  - ✧ Unit 13 wolverine should be open until the end of February.
  - ✧ I took last season off (building a house) for the first time in many years. I am back trapping this year and enjoying it more than ever. It's good to see your continued interest in trapping and am glad that I am still able to trap in Alaska. It makes winters enjoyable. Not all states are as lucky. Keep up the good work.
  - ✧ I am concerned about moose population after this past fire season. They seem to have been forced into more condensed areas and the season harvest may be too high. I saw this happen in the west fork of the Dennison R. area on the Taylor Highway.
  - ✧ Be careful on aerial shooting of wolves in GMU 12. It would be nice to use trappers. There is some outfits that would trap if they knew the wolf pack's location.
  - ✧ I think ADF&G is wasting time and postage getting info from trappers, then only using what fits their beliefs and programs.
  - ✧ Why does the fur prices that trappers get, get lower and lower, but the finished products go up and up?
  - ✧ To have a large bounty on wolves instead of aerial gunning. Not to allow Fish & Game employed people to hunt or trap in work area.

## Arctic/Western

- ✧ Keep up the good work.
- ✧ I strongly believe the ADF&G are hypocrites when they say it's illegal for subsistence users (Natives mostly) to harass any kind of animal when the ADF&G uses planes to chase wolves and kill them from the air. A plane is a motorized vehicle which is the most easiest way to track down and kill any animal. And the same goes for using helicopters to harass cow moose and calves. I'm sure that puts all kinds of stress on the cows and calves.
- ✧ When is ADF&G going to get involved in trapper education? We have abundant furbearers, increasing fur prices, and a bunch of interested but ignorant young village men who don't know much about trapping. Better a trapline than a bag of dope. Still, I want to commend you on this questionnaire. I read the results with delight every year. Strikes me that most trappers are considerate, intelligent conservationists from the way they write.
- ✧ Gas - problem. Snow cover - problem. Prices - problem. Fox - prices moving up. Have seen few

- local fox sign in Bethel area. Mostly large tracks. Beaver - lots. Muskrats - see more sign fall 04. Wolves - people say they see tracks many places.
- ✧ Starting to have more problems with people messing with sets. They are not stealing fur but disabling snares and traps. They are stealing snares but not snares with fox in them. Would like to see stiffer penalties for people disturbing lawfully set traps. Would like to see these people take a trapper education course instead of more severe fines. I would even be willing to take these people on the trapline to show examples of population dynamics, overpopulation, renewable resources, etc. I would rather educate than argue! Would be interested in training materials to educate young trappers. I have for the past 5 years taught 14–20 teens per year the basics of trapping, fur handling, and ethics. Could always use more resources.
  - ✧ Keep up the good work! And plant a bunch of muskox in Unit 18 on the mainland soon. I think they would do well, and it would take some of the hunting pressure off the moose.
  - ✧ We had mange and rabies here. 03-04 one musher was bit by his rabid dog that got it from one of the many fox too close to town. Too bad some of these younger guys don't want to trap them and make some extra money. The price is worth it. Nowadays I get \$36 average from the auction houses for them, but don't have the time. There were 5 wolves taken from this village if memory serves me right. Four were shot and I snared one. Two coyotes were also shot here. That's the largest harvest that I have ever heard of around here. They were south of the Yukon River 10 miles southeast.
  - ✧ I took a year off and moved. But I'm back at it this year.
  - ✧ My life has been threatened because I trap and the numbers I catch, so I don't talk numbers. Check your computer; it should show virtually everything. (**Editor's note:** None of the answers provided in the survey are EVER used for any other purpose and trappers names are NEVER given out. In addition, answers to the question of what trappers caught go a long way toward covering gaps in our information about the annual harvest, especially for species that are not required to be sealed.)
  - ✧ Conditions in my area have not been good for the last 5 years and the climate change and the migration patterns have changed since the climate change.
  - ✧ Keep up the good work! I hope gas prices go up even more, maybe it will let the animals have a chance to multiply.
  - ✧ No transportation.
  - ✧ Having benefited most of my adult life from Alaska furbearers both for dollar income and cold weather clothing, I am encouraged that State of Alaska and dedicated workers like yourself strive to "take care" of this valuable natural resource - valuable on many levels. I am 78 years young and have several other reasons now besides age that make me a non-active trapper.
  - ✧ I really enjoyed reading the annual report. Keep up the good work.
  - ✧ Last year I had many obligations. I'm trapping this year and I'm glad to be back.
  - ✧ I may not be a real "trapper" in the sense of your survey. I purchase a trapper's license annually to maximize season length of some species and to also increase bag limits should I stumble across a pack of wolves, multiple river otters, wolverine, etc. I am also under the impression that one needs a trapping license to legally harvest parka squirrels. I immensely enjoy shooting those squirrels and giving them to elderly Native women. The majority of parka squirrels are taken by driving the Nome road system in the spring and spotting them from the vehicle. I step off the road and shoot them.
  - ✧ Need to take immediate measures to increase moose populations. Bear & wolf population needs to be decreased so yearlings have a chance to survive; Unit 22A.
  - ✧ Not much snow and all windswept.
  - ✧ Yes, I'm 71 years old and I do not hunt and trap anymore like I use to. Getting too slow to move around or I'm not lively or strong enough to get my snowmachine unstuck if I am alone. Hunting and trapping used to be my livelihood when I was younger. Only my mind does everything.
  - ✧ Not much snow last year.
  - ✧ People around Nome & Council have been shooting beavers in the summers & leaving them. They say they do it because of all the dams.

## Author's Note

Thanks to all who responded to last year's trapper survey. Each year we get a larger number of respondents than the previous year and that's great. The more surveys I get back the clearer the picture of what's going on out there, and the better we can manage your resources. It also gives you a better understanding of how other trappers fared statewide. Your responses to this survey are strictly voluntary, but I strongly encourage you to respond. Your responses remain confidential and information from the survey is not used for any other purposes. Your questionnaire has an identification number on it which is solely used to help me keep track of who gets the surveys, who I need to delete, and who I missed. The database in which your answers are entered does not contain your name or address.

I would also like to thank Ryan Scott and Cathy Brown for editing assistance and suggestions.

**Due to the expense of putting the survey together and getting it mailed out, if you do not send in your survey form this year, you will not get a questionnaire next year.**

Good luck in the field this year. I look forward to hearing from you. If you know of others who want to participate in the survey and receive the report, please have them contact me.

Sincerely,

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**Alaska Department of Fish and Game  
Division of Wildlife Conservation**



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