

## Proposal 37

- This proposal extends the otter trapping season in Unit 4, by changing it to November 10 – April 30.
- Currently the season is Dec 1-Feb 15
- Public proposal
- Department Recommendation:  
No Recommendation

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Submitted by ADF&G 01/14/2013

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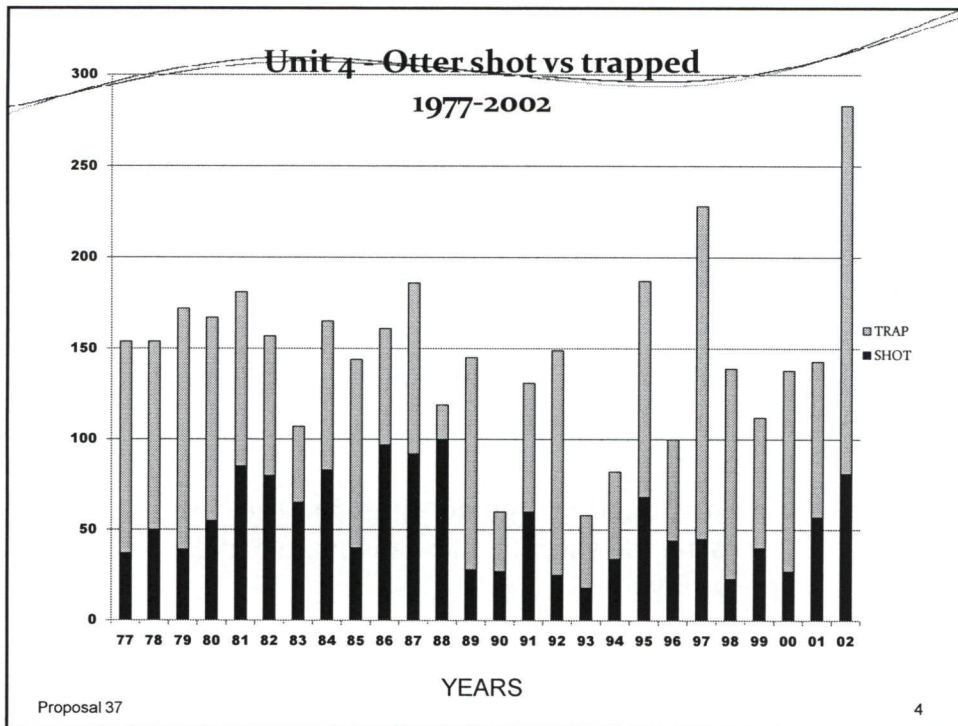
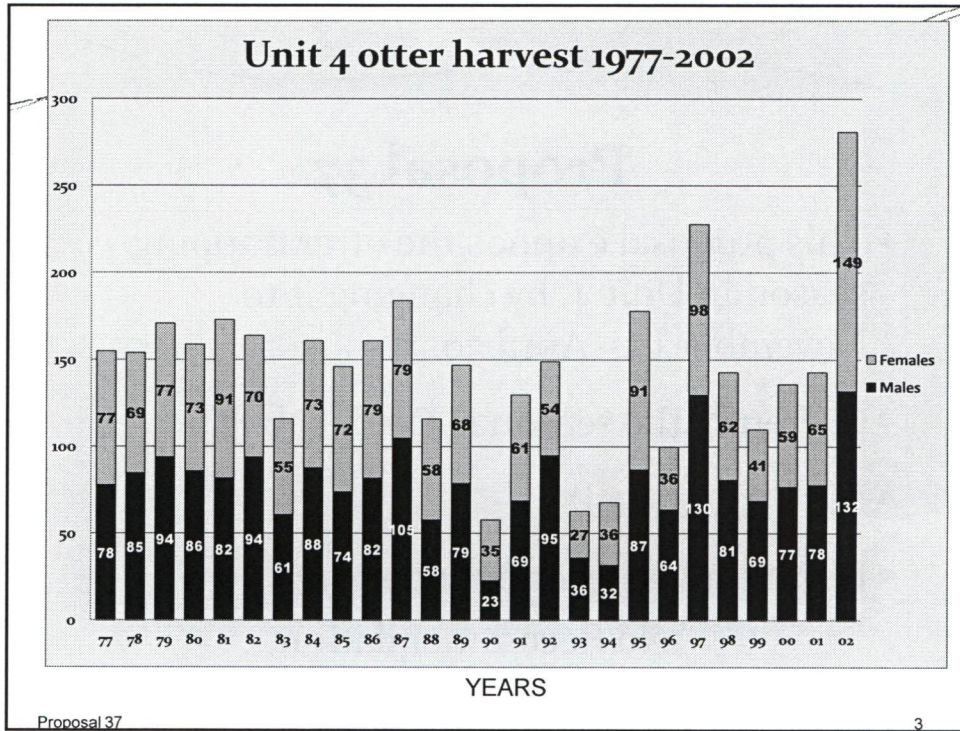
## Discussion

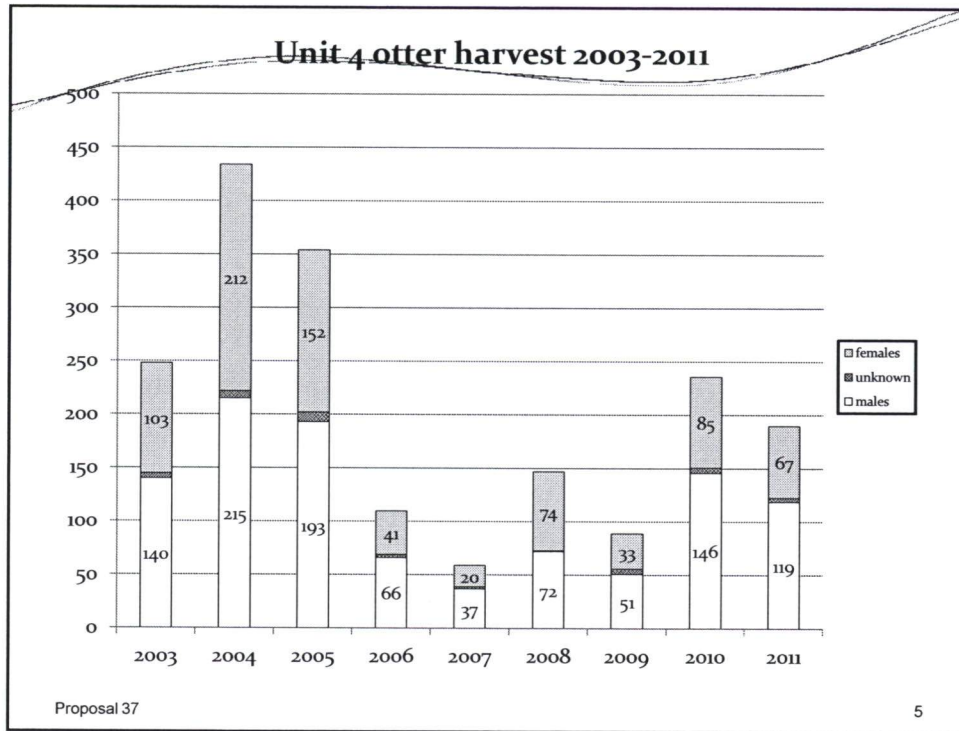
- Proponent of proposal cites two reasons for requesting this season change:
  1. Would allow the retention of otters caught incidentally while beaver trapping;
  2. Otters are found in high densities and the current seasons are too short to allow adequate harvest opportunity

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## Discussion

- Data indicate substantial fluctuations in otter harvest in recent years under the present season lengths
- Raw otter fur prices have remained relatively high, varying between \$80 to \$200 over the last decade, creating incentive to maximize harvest
  - This suggests fluctuations in harvest may be due to real changes in otter availability rather than trapper effort

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## Discussion

### Concerns with proposed season change:

- Extends season 13 weeks
  - This would more than double the present season length which could result in an unsustainable harvest
  - Delayed implantation results in Feb.-May pupping
  - Later season increases likelihood of catching females with dependent young
  - Latrine data – post-estrus activity at sites increases vulnerability of females
  - Boating weather and associated shooting of otters is much better in late winter

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## Summary

- Data from otter research studies suggest a longer season could increase female harvest including those with dependant young
  - Due to the vulnerability of otters (to both trapping and shooting), the longer season could lead to unsustainable harvests
- The present seasons have proven to provide both an opportunity for trappers while allowing for a relatively sustainable harvest over 30 years
- Few otters are turned in as incidental harvest (< 2 a year and this is usually nuisance situations)

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## Conclusion

- The Icy Straits AC originally voted to ADOPT but then dropped the recommendation to a Take No Action
- The Sitka AC opposed the action
- Department Recommendation:  
No Recommendation