

Alaska Department of Fish and Game
Division of Wildlife Conservation

Statewide Annual Report
1 July 2002-30 June 2003

TRAPPER QUESTIONNAIRE

Tim Peltier



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

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DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

Kevin C. Duffy, Commissioner

DIVISION OF WILDLIFE CONSERVATION

Matthew H. Robus, Director

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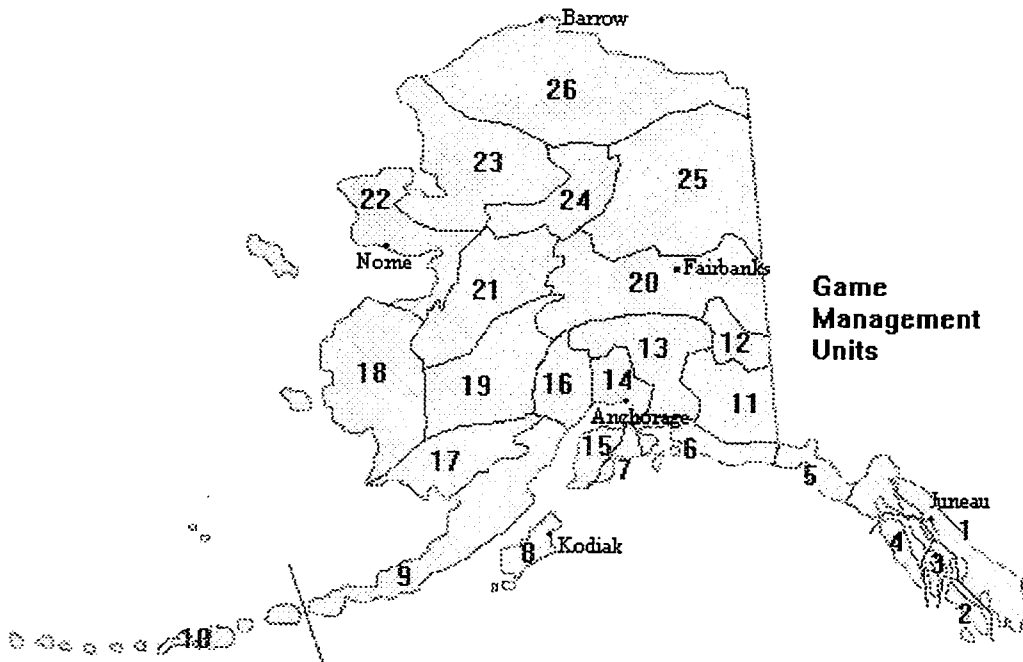
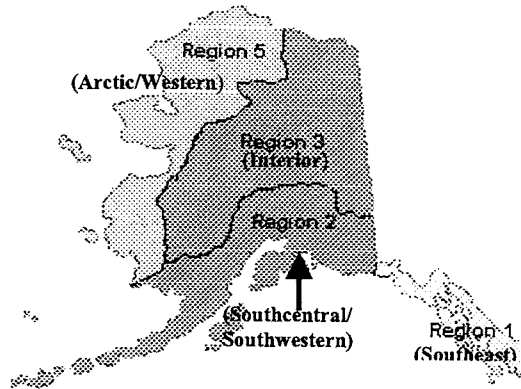
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ALASKA'S REGIONS AND GAME MANAGEMENT UNITS

REGIONS



CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
A PROFILE OF ALASKA’S TRAPPERS	2
Did you trap in 2002–2003.....	2
Trapper Age and Experience.....	2
Did you have a young person (under age 16) with you on your trapline this year?.....	4
What transportation did you use to get to your main trapping area?.....	5
What transportation did you use to run your main trapline?.....	6
How long was your main trapline in 2002–2003?.....	7
How many sets did you make on your line in 2002–2003?.....	8
What was the most important species you were trying to catch in 2002-2003?.....	8
What were the trapping conditions on your trapline?	9
How many weeks did you trap during the 2002–2003 season?.....	10
How many years have you been trapping in the same area?	10
Did you keep or sell most of your furs?.....	11
How did you change your trapping effort for the 2002-2003 trapping season?.....	12
Did last year’s fur prices or pre-season advertised prices affect your trapping effort in 2002–2003?..	12
Did the presence of other trappers in the area you trap affect your trapping effort in 2002–2003?.....	12
METHODS OF TAKING FURBEARERS	13
FURBEARER RELATIVE ABUNDANCE AND TREND	24
WOLF HARVEST METHODS	29
ALASKA’S FURBEARER HARVEST	30
COMMERCIAL TRANSACTIONS INVOLVING FURS	31
Fur Value.....	32
Fur Acquisition and Export.....	33
FUR SEALING REQUIREMENTS	34
AREA BIOLOGIST AND GAME MANAGEMENT UNITS	35
REGIONAL BIOLOGISTS’ REPORTS	36
Southeast Region.....	36
Southcentral Region.....	37
Interior Region.....	38
Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta (Unit 18).....	39
Seward Peninsula (Unit 22)	41
Kotzebue Sound and Western Brooks Range (Goodhope River to Cape Lisburne – Unit 23).....	41
Western North Slope (Unit 26A)	43
TRAPPER COMMENTS	44
How did trapping conditions affect your trapping effort?	44
Did other trappers in your area affect your trapping effort?	51
DO YOU HAVE ANY COMMENTS TO ADF&G?	54
Southeast Region.....	54
Southcentral/Southwest Region.....	55
Interior Region	60
Arctic/Western Region	65

ALASKA TRAPPER REPORT

2002–2003

INTRODUCTION

The 2002-2003 Trapper Report includes information provided by Alaskan trappers through the annual Trapper Questionnaire. This year 1766 questionnaires were mailed throughout the state and 466 responses were received. Of these responses, 69% were actively trapping during the 2002–2003 season. Broken down by region, 67 people trapped in Southeast (Region I), 101 trapped in Southcentral and Southwestern (Region II), 118 trapped in the Interior (Region III) and 37 people trapped in the Arctic and Western regions (Region V). Additional responses were received from individuals who did not trap during the 2001–2002 season. This report contains information on demographic data about Alaskan trappers, 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.

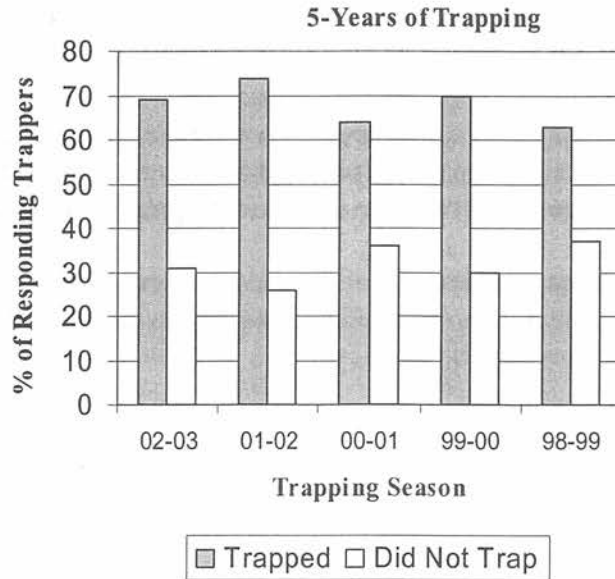
In the interest of confidentiality, the names of individuals and references to specific traplines are not included. The Alaska Department of Fish and Game hopes you will find this report informative and welcomes suggestions for improving this publication.



Alaska's Trappers

Did you trap in 2002-2003 Season?

Of the 466 trappers who responded to this questionnaire, 320 individuals or 69% said they trapped during the 2002-2003 season. Alaska experienced a decrease in the percent of respondents who trapped during the 2002-2003 season compared to 74% trappers the year before. The percent of respondents to the trapper questionnaire was slightly higher this year (26%) compared to 2001-2002 (25%).

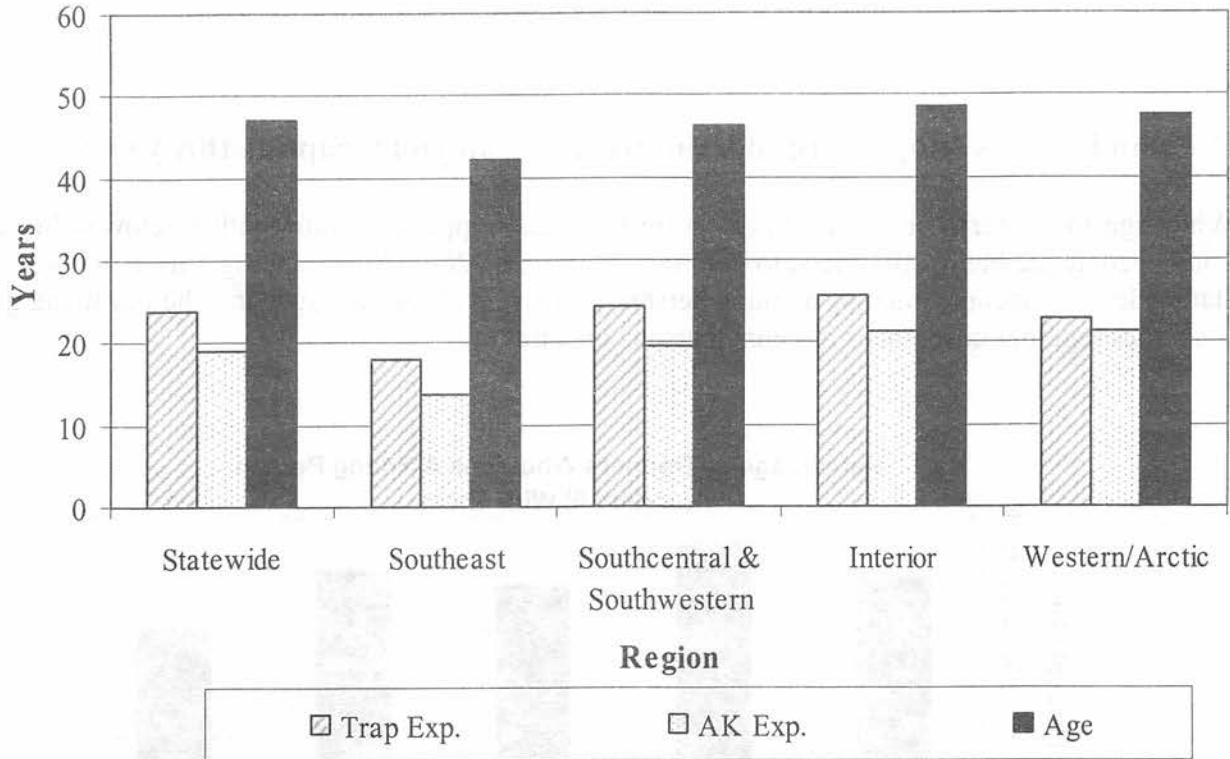


Trapper Age and Experience

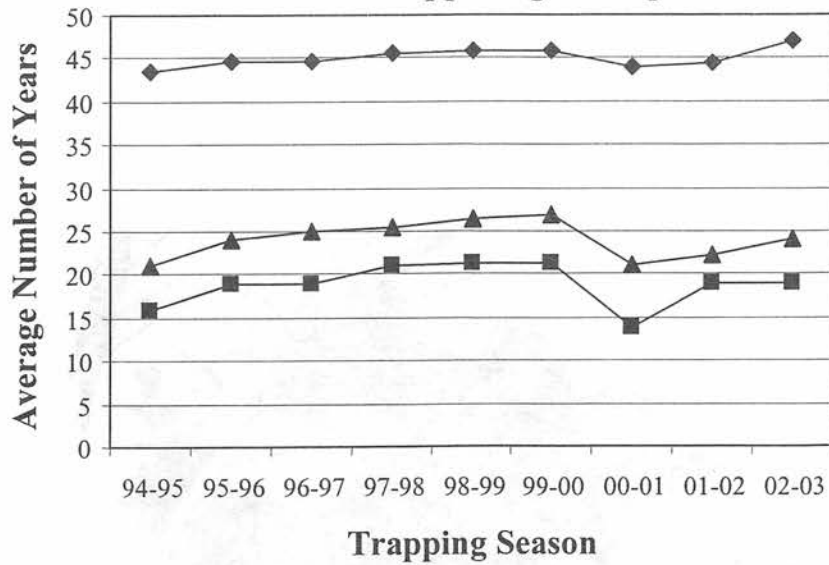
The average age of a trapper in Alaska who responded to this questionnaire is 47 years with 24 years total trapping experience and 19 years trapping in Alaska. The profile of this year's trapper indicates a slightly older age group makes up the majority of Alaska's trappers. The youngest responding trapper this year was 2 years old and the oldest was 88 years old. Eight 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 and Experience

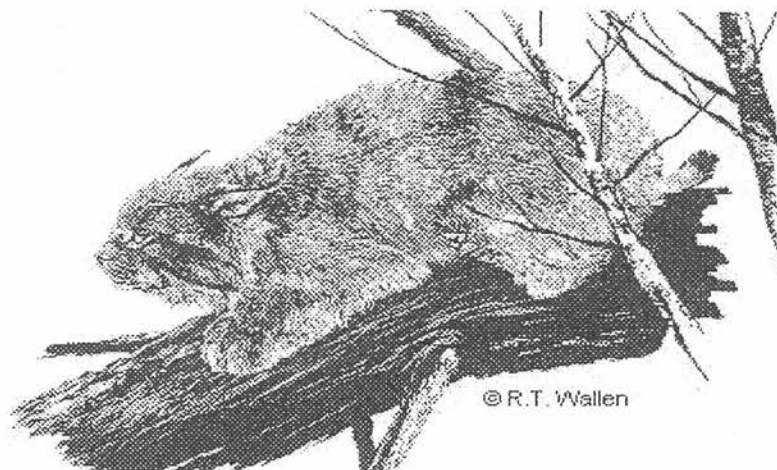
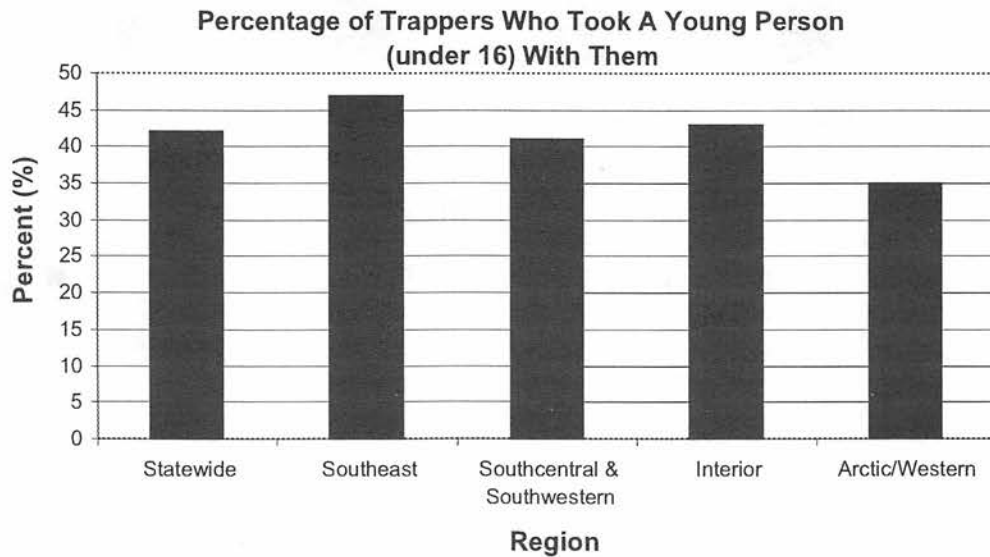


Trends in Trapper Age & Experience



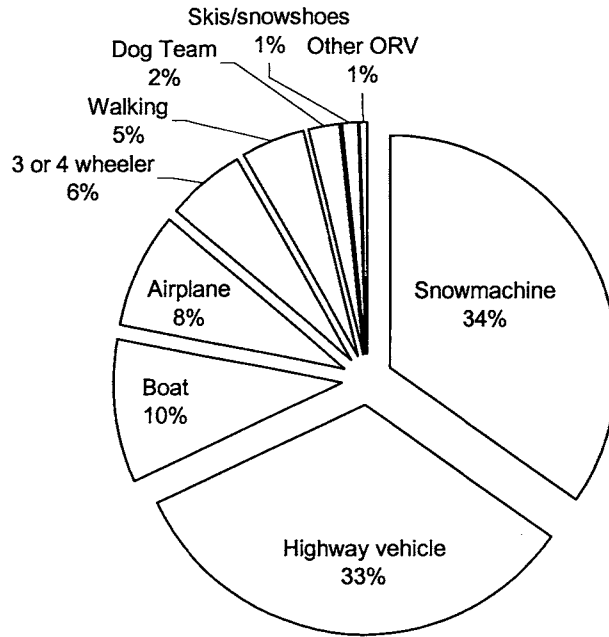
Did you have a youngster (under 16) with you on your trapline this year?

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 2002-2003 trapping season, 42% of trappers statewide were accompanied by a young person. This is up 8% from last year. The following graph illustrates regional differences in young persons on a trapline.

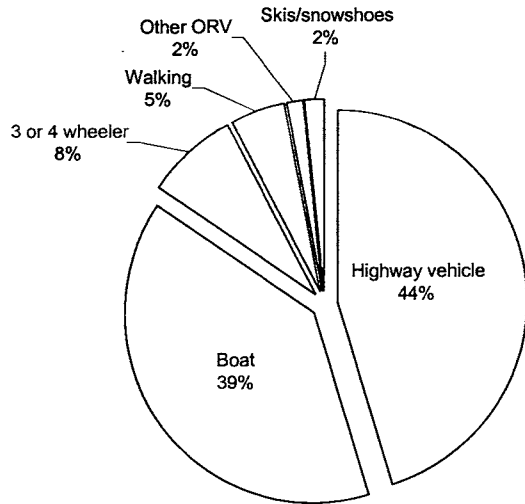


What mode of transportation did you use to get to your main trapping area?

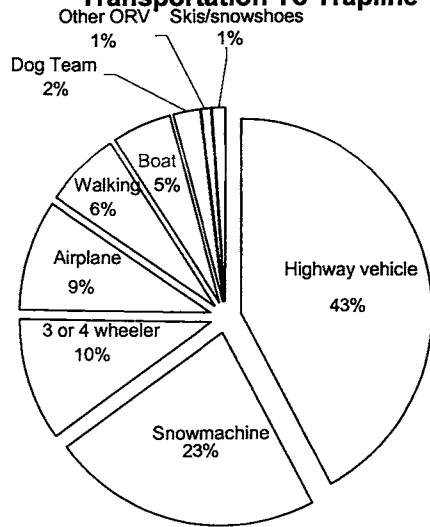
Statewide Transportation To Trapline



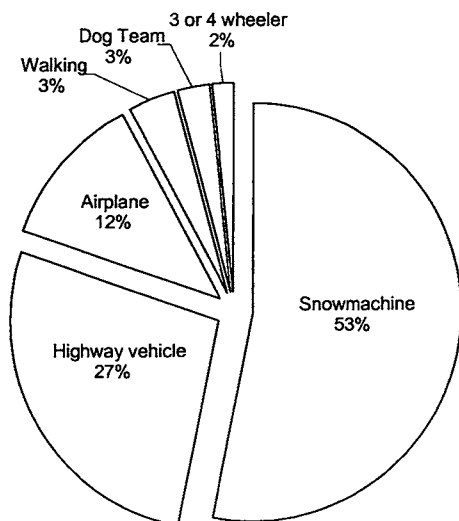
Southeast Transportation To Trapline



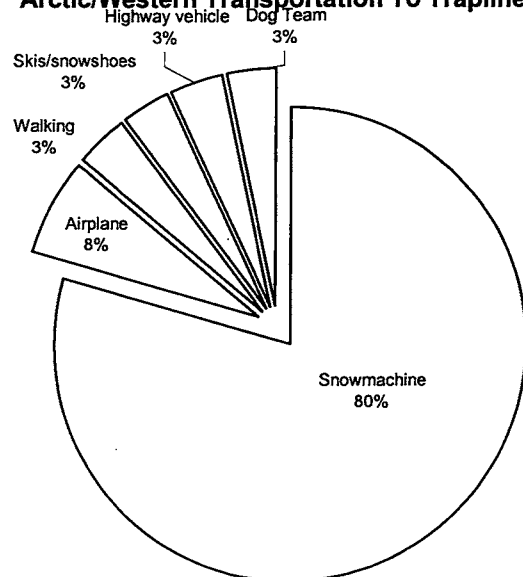
Southcentral & Southwestern Transportation To Trapline



Interior Transportation To Trapline

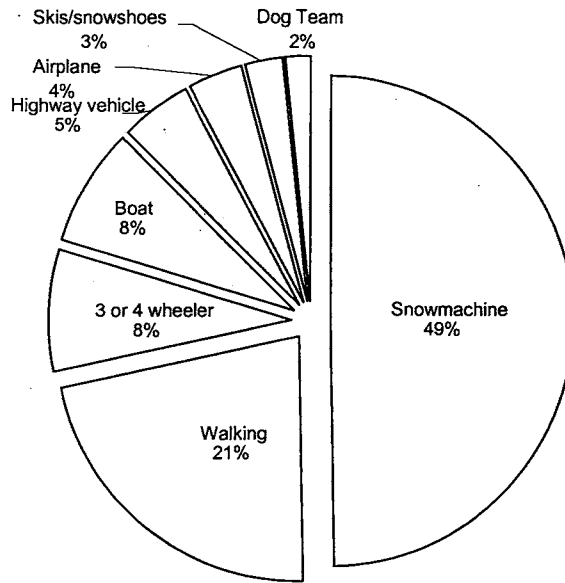


Arctic/Western Transportation To Trapline

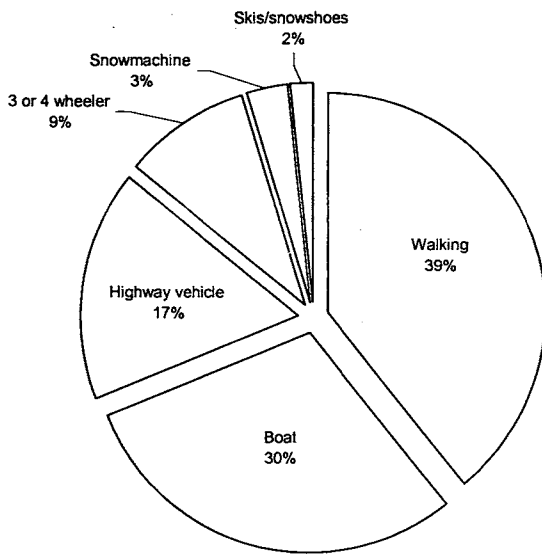


What transportation did you use to run your main trapline?

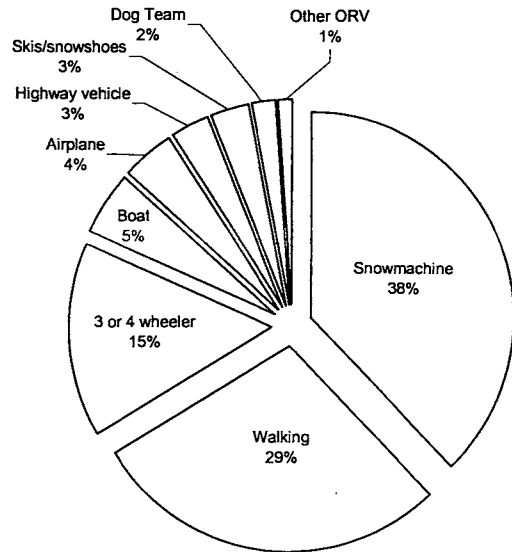
Statewide Transportation To Run Trapline



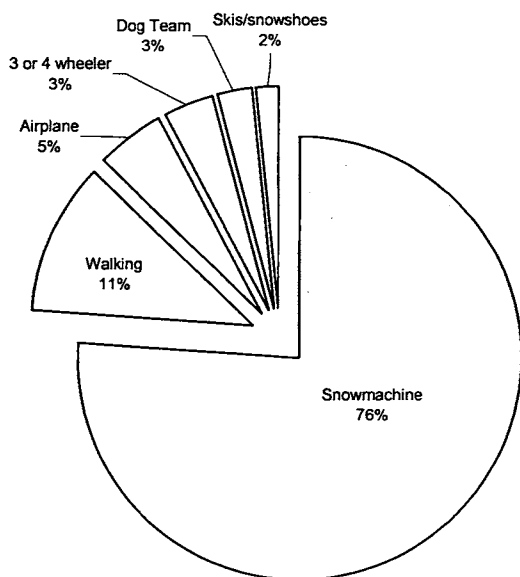
Southeast Transportation To Run Trapline



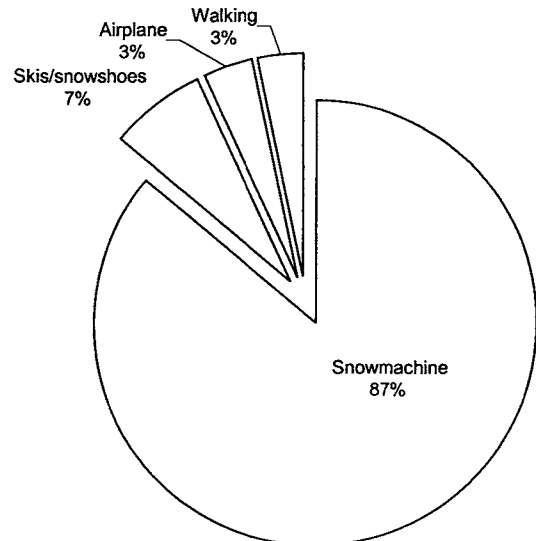
Southcentral & Southwestern Transportation To Run Trapline



Interior Transportation To Run Trapline

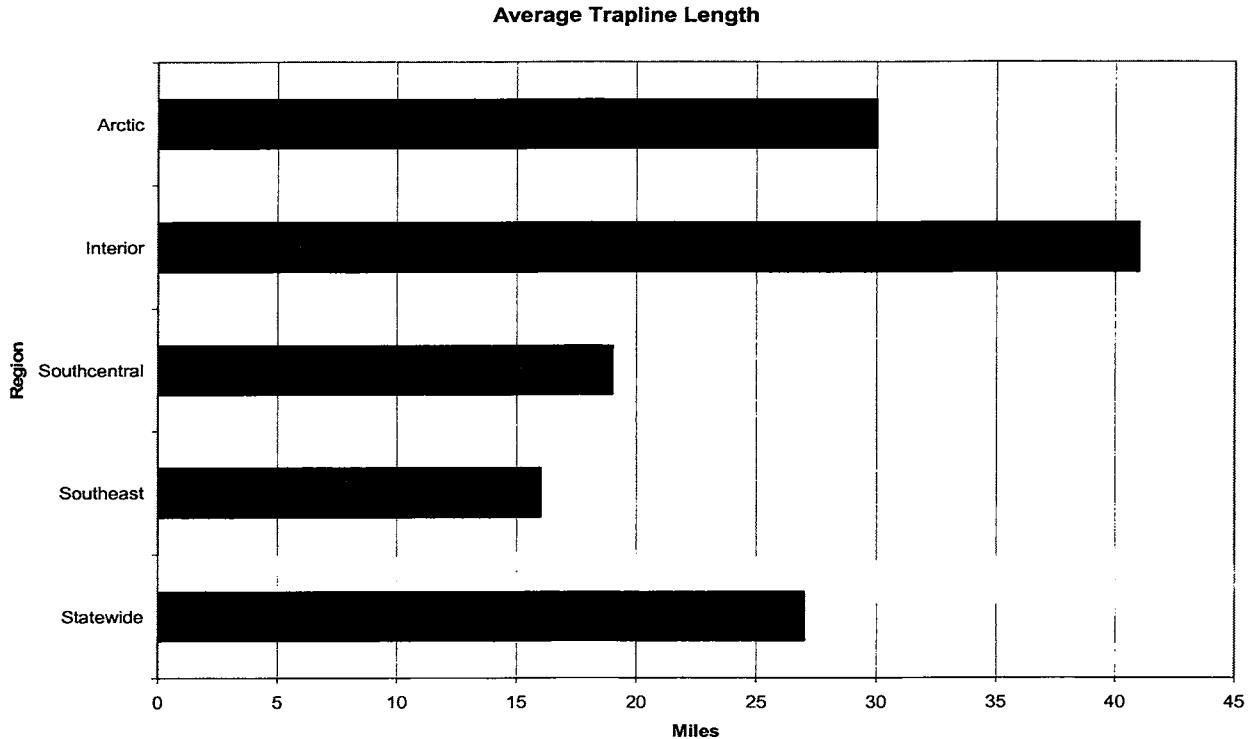


Arctic/Western Transportation To Run Trapline



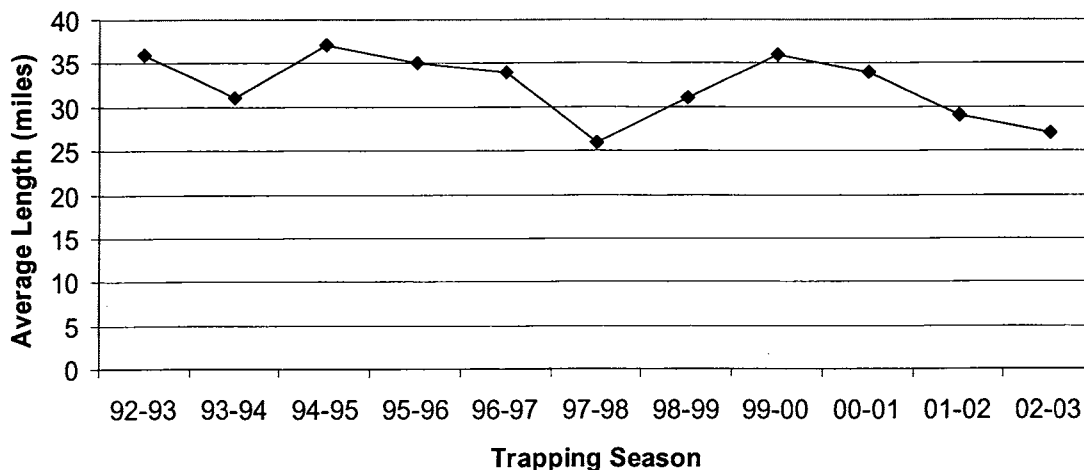
How long was your main trapline in 2002-2003?

The average trapline length in Alaska was 27 miles. Trap line lengths were variable throughout the state with less than 1 mile line being the lowest and 210 miles. In Southeast, average trapline lengths were 16 miles and varied between 1 and 80 miles. In the Southcentral and Southwestern regions, the average trapline was 19 miles long and varied between 1 and 120 miles. In the Interior region, the average trapline length was 41 miles and varied between 1 and 210 miles. In the Arctic/Western region, the average trapline length was 30 miles and varied between 2 and 100 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.

Statewide Trend In Trapline Length



How many sets did you make on your trapline in 2002-2003?

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 (87%) put out 100 or less traps. A significant percentage (45%) of reporting trappers put out a fewer than 25 sets. There was no increase in the percentage of sets with more than 300 traps (3%, 2001-2002 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).

Region	Number of Sets					
	Less than 25 sets	20-50 sets	51-100 sets	101-200 sets	201-300 sets	More than 300 sets
Statewide	45%	25%	17%	8%	2%	3%
Southeast	38%	44%	13%	5%	None	None
Southcentral & Southwest	49%	27%	14%	8%	None	1%
Interior	36%	24%	21%	9%	4%	5%
Arctic/Western	62%	14%	14%	7%	None	3%

Most Important Species

Marten was the species listed statewide as the most important in the 2002-2003 questionnaire and the most important in each region with the exception of the Arctic/Western region where wolverine 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 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.

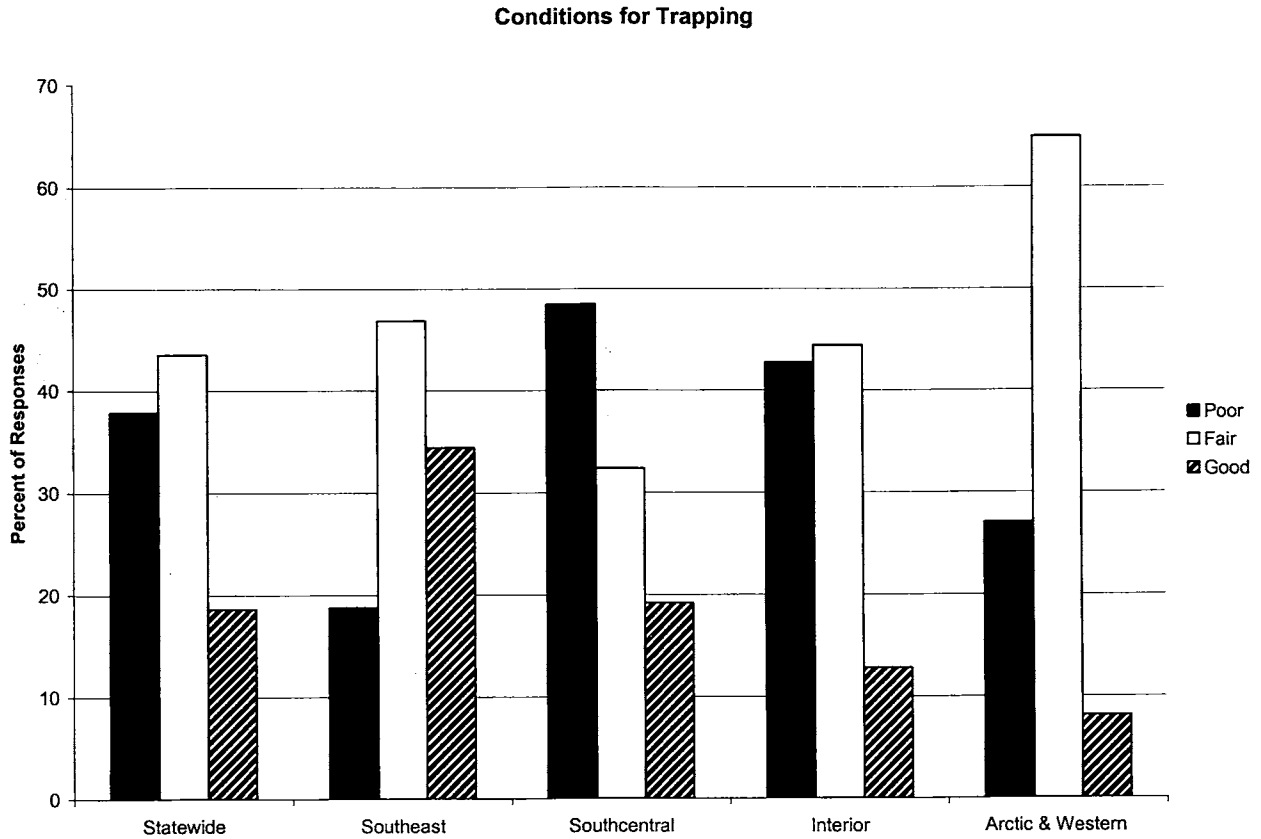
Region	Species											
	Marten	Wolf	Beaver	River Otter	Wolverine	Lynx	Fox	Mink	Coyote	Red Fox	Ermine	Muskrat
Statewide ¹	20%	18%	12%	11%	11%	11%	9%	5%	2%	1%	1%	>1%
Southeast	28%	19%	14%	25%	4%	1%	N/A ²	10%	N/A ²	N/A ²	1%	N/A ²
Southcentral & Southwest	16%	15%	15%	13%	9%	4%	12%	7%	4%	2%	2%	>1%
Interior	23%	22%	10%	2%	11%	18%	10%	1%	2%	>1%	N/A ²	>1%
Arctic/Western	9%	13%	11%	13%	22%	13%	10%	3%	N/A ²	2%	1%	N/A ²

¹ Statewide percentages listed in descending order of indicated importance.

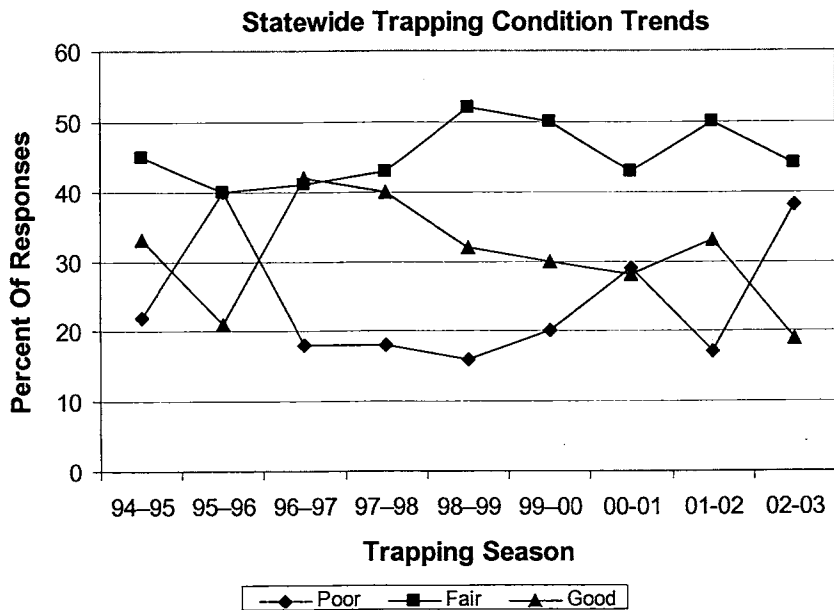
² N/A indicates no data available or no trapping effort.

What were the trapping conditions on your trapline?

Over 80% of trappers who returned the 2002-2003 questionnaire indicated the conditions were poor to fair. These charts illustrate condition responses by region and show a trend in condition responses for the last several trapping seasons.

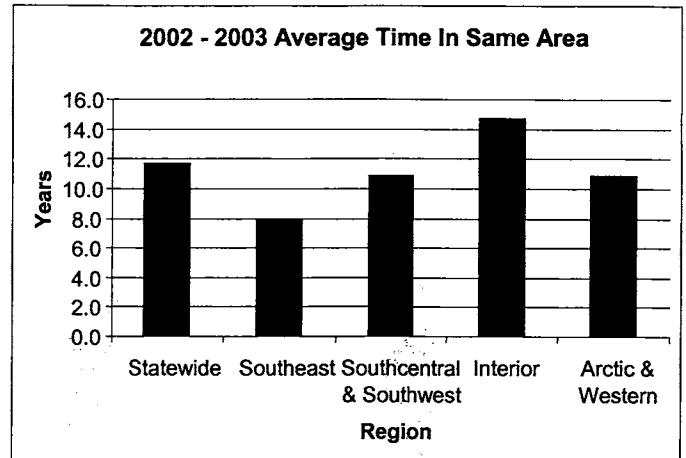
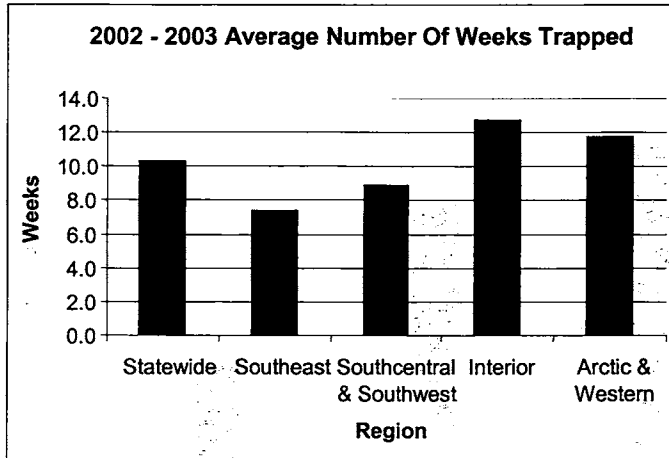


Trapping conditions have varied over the last nine years. The unusually warm and snowless winter of 02-03 had a large impact on trapping conditions in most of the state. The graph below depicts the percent of responses for each condition category (poor, fair, and good) over the last nine years. For example, during the 02-03 trapping season, approximately 43% of trappers felt conditions were fair.

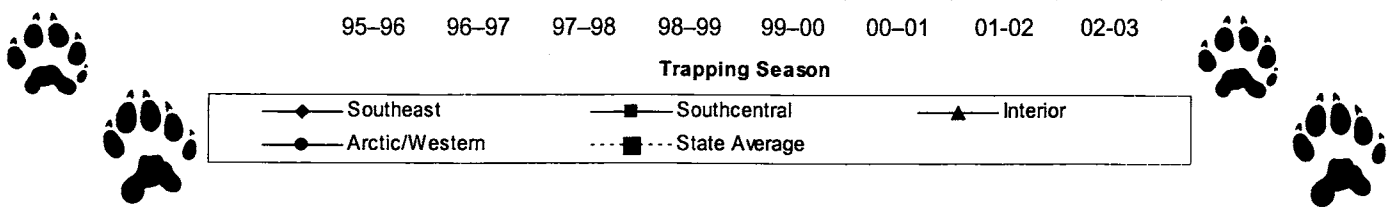
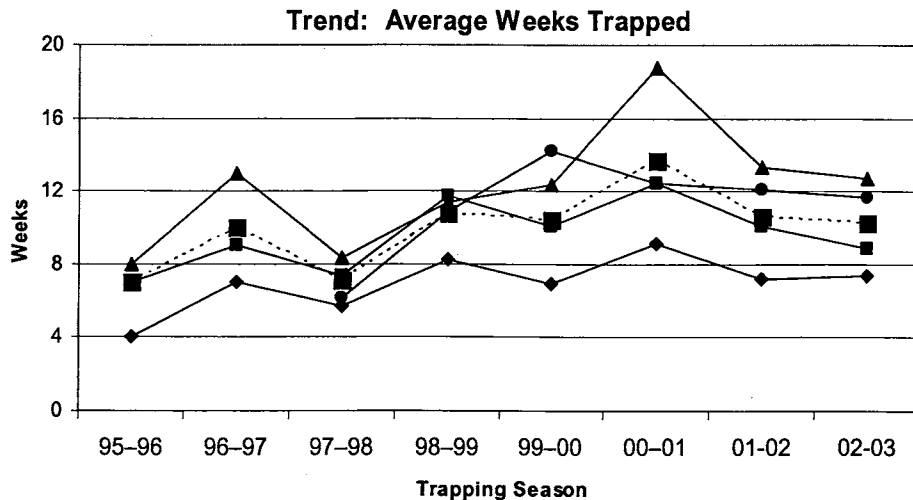


**How many weeks did you trap during the 2002-2003 season?
How many years have you been trapping in the same area?**

The average trapper in Alaska trapped for approximately 10.3 weeks, slightly less than the 2001-2002 season. Alaskan trappers have spent, on average, approximately 12 years trapping in the same area. The longest time in the same area is 54 years by a trapper in the Anchorage/Palmer area. Statewide, the average time trapping in the same area decreased.



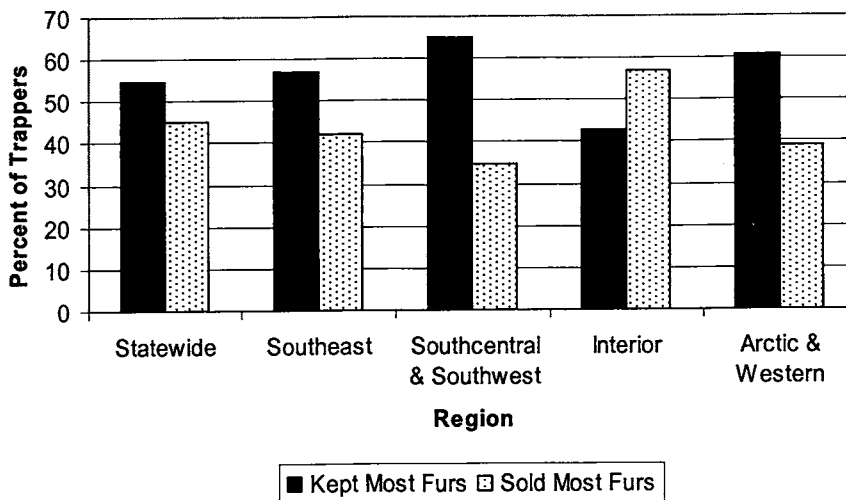
The chart below illustrates trends in the length of time trapped in each region over the last several trapping seasons. During the 2002-2003 trapping season, trappers in every region except Southeast trapped fewer weeks than the previous year. Statewide, over the last 8 years, the average number of weeks trapped has remained fairly stable at about 10 weeks per season.



Did you keep or sell most of your furs?

A greater percentage of trappers kept their furs in 2002-2003 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.

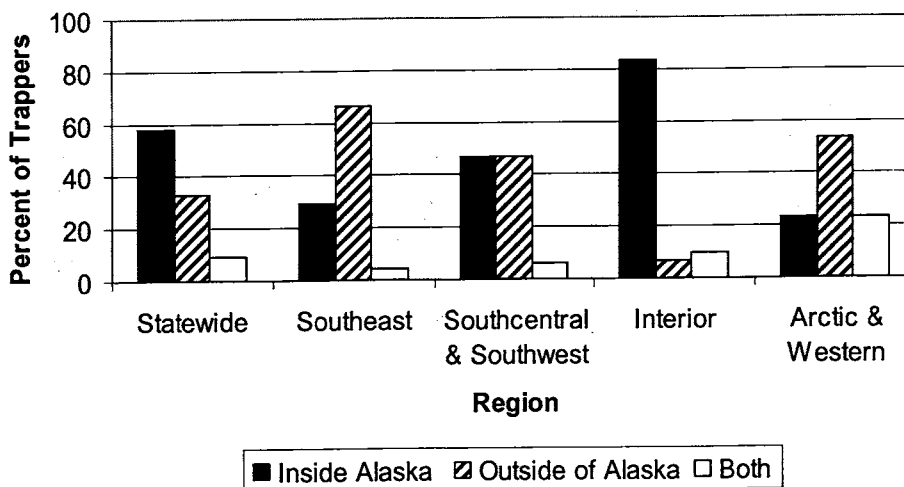
Trappers Who Kept or Sold Most Furs



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

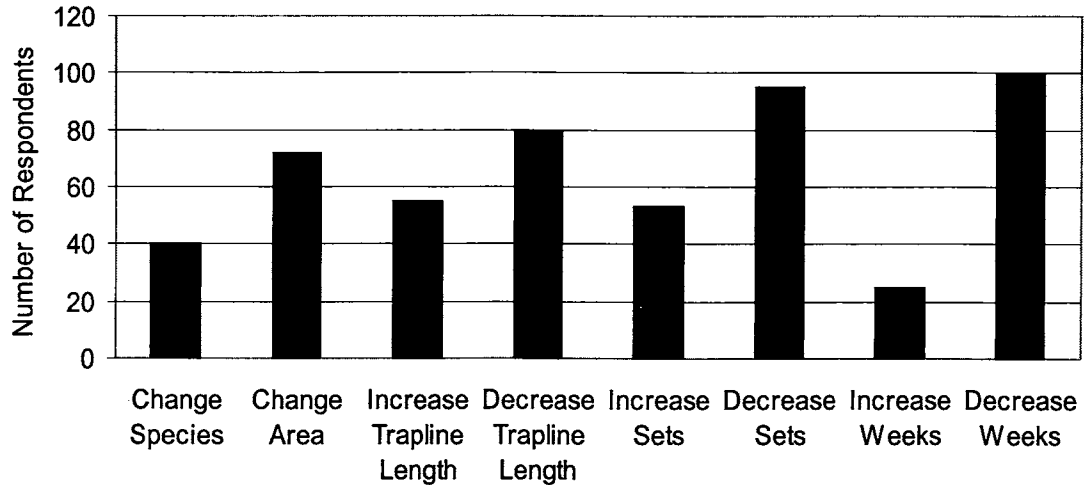
Statewide, trappers sold most of their furs to Alaskan fur buyers. Interior trappers sold more furs to Alaskan buyers, while the remaining trappers sold furs fairly equally to in-state and out-of-state furbuyers. The difference may be due to the proximity of fur buyers in Anchorage and Fairbanks making 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



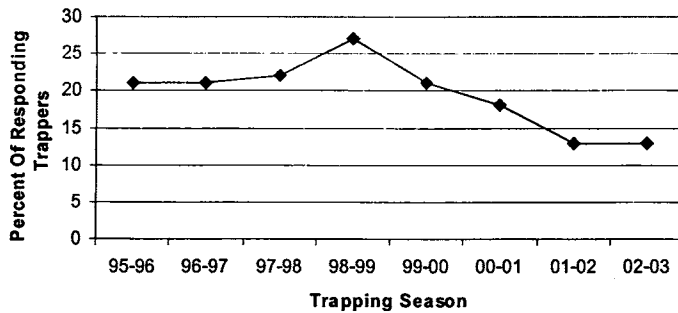
How did you change your trapping effort for the 2002-2003 trapping season?

2002 - 2003 Changes In Trapper Effort

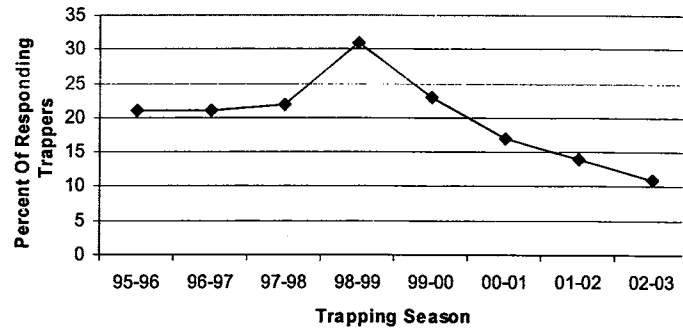


Did last year's fur prices or the pre-season advertised prices affect your trapping effort in the 2002-2003 trapping season?

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

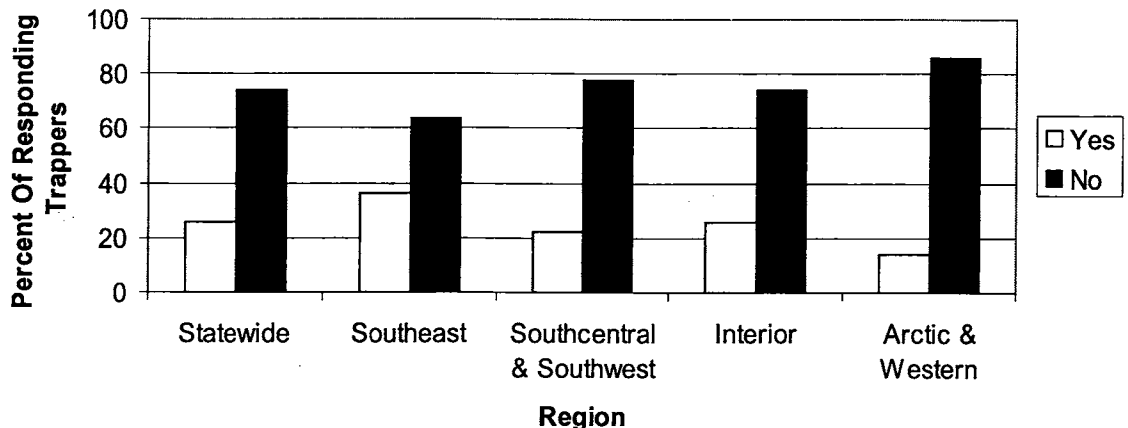


Trappers Who Said Last Year's Prices Affected Their Trapping Effort



Did the presence of other trappers in the area that you trap affect your trapping effort in 2002-2003?

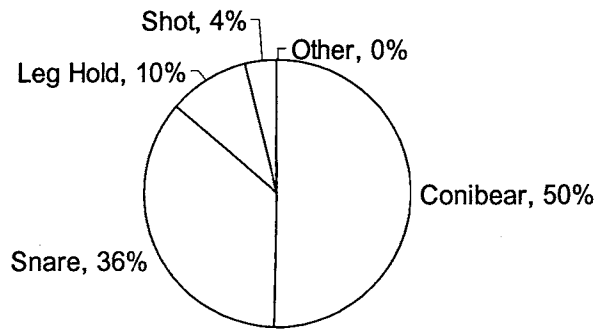
Trappers Who Said Other Trappers Affected Their Trapping Effort



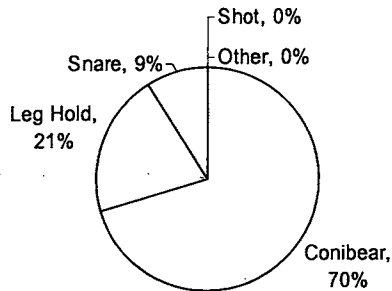
Methods of Taking Furbearers

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.

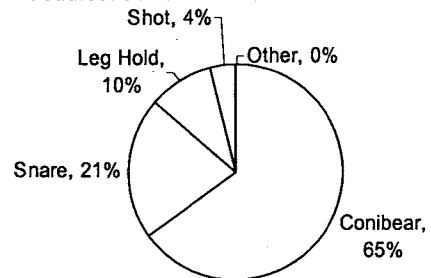
Statewide Beaver Harvest



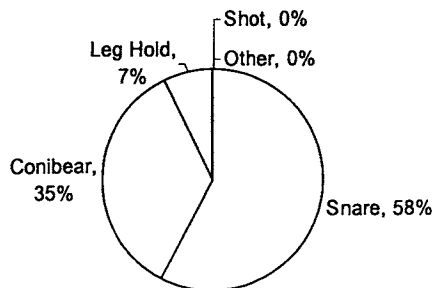
Southeast Beaver Harvest



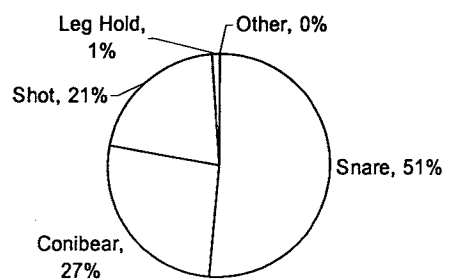
Southcentral & Southwest Beaver Harvest



Interior Beaver Harvest

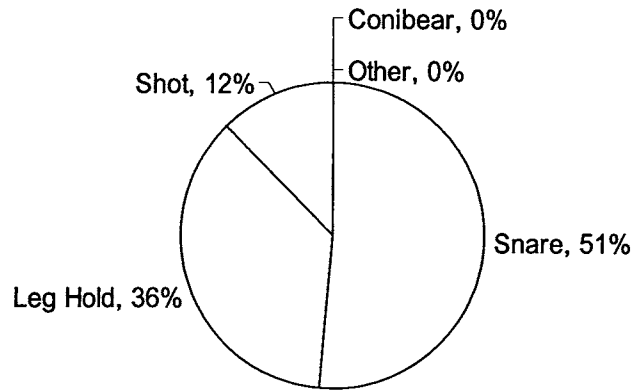


Arctic/Western Beaver Harvest

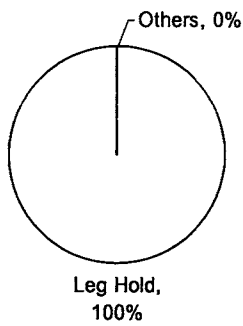


Method of Taking Furbearers

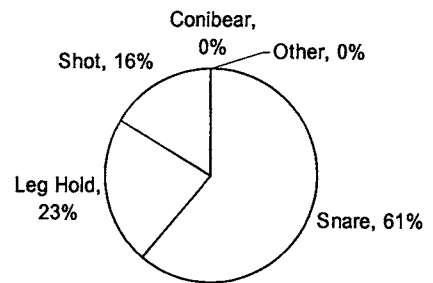
Statewide Coyote Harvest



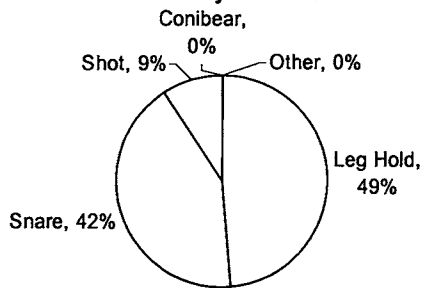
Southeast Coyote Harvest



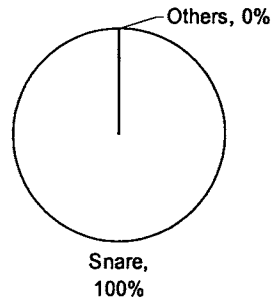
Southcentral & Southwest Coyote Harvest



Interior Coyote Harvest

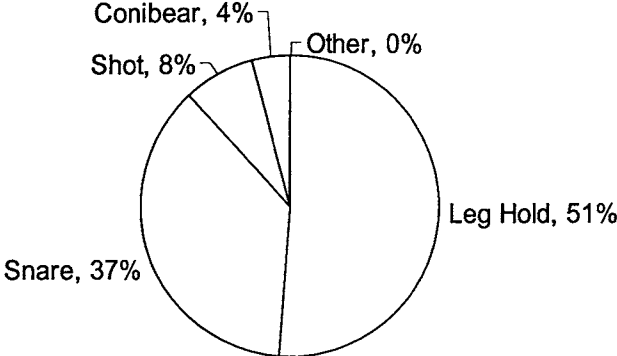


Arctic/Western Coyote Harvest

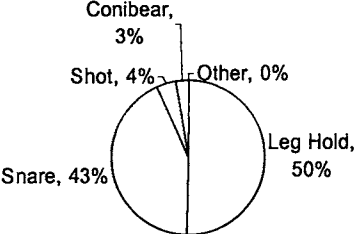


Method of Taking Furbearers

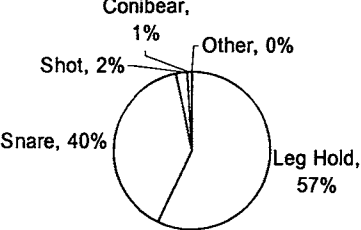
Statewide Fox Harvest



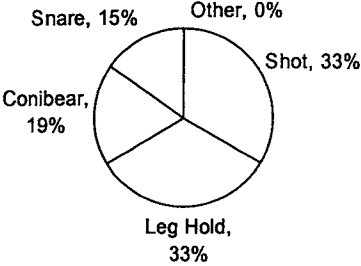
Southcentral & Southwest Fox Harvest



Interior Fox Harvest

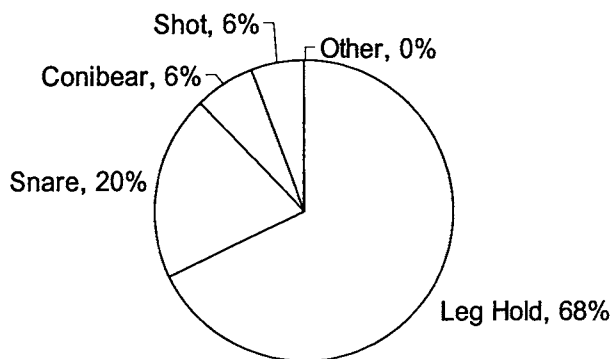


Arctic/Western Fox Harvest

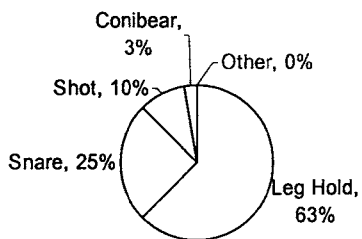


Method of Taking Furbearers

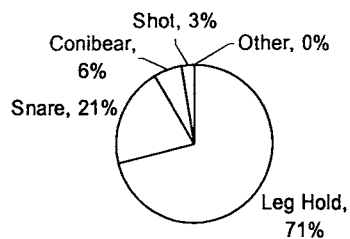
Statewide Lynx Harvest



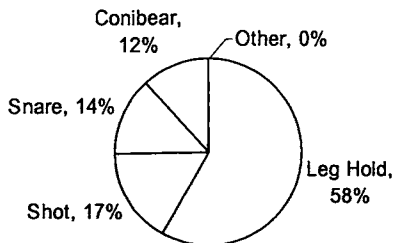
Southcentral & Southwest Lynx Harvest



Interior Lynx Harvest

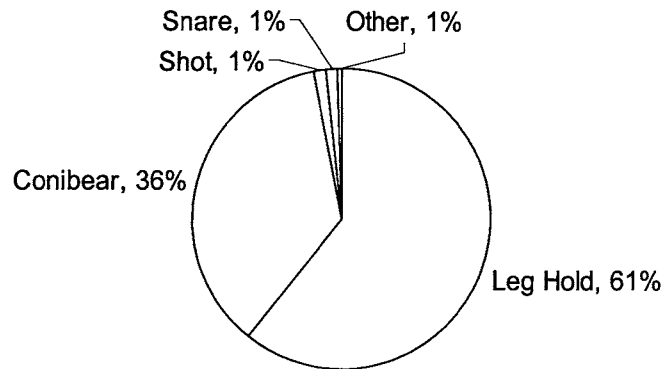


Arctic/Western Lynx Harvest

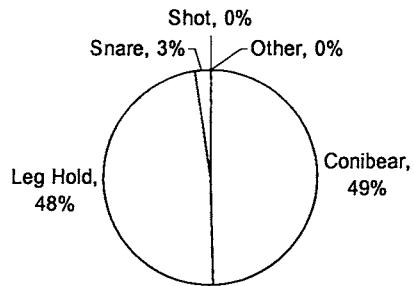


Method of Taking Furbearers

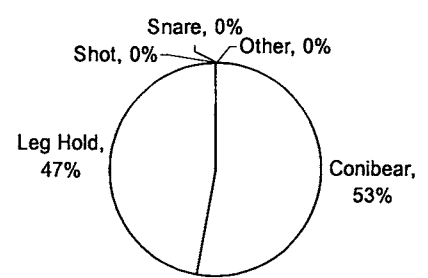
Statewide Marten Harvest



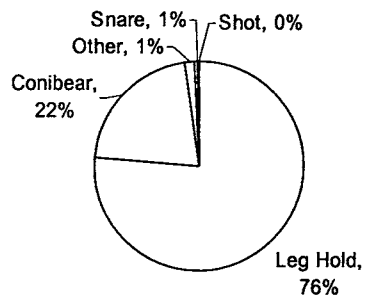
Southeast Marten Harvest



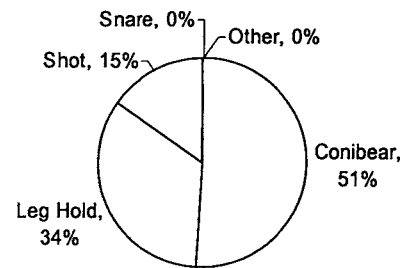
Southcentral & Southwest Marten Harvest



Interior Marten Harvest

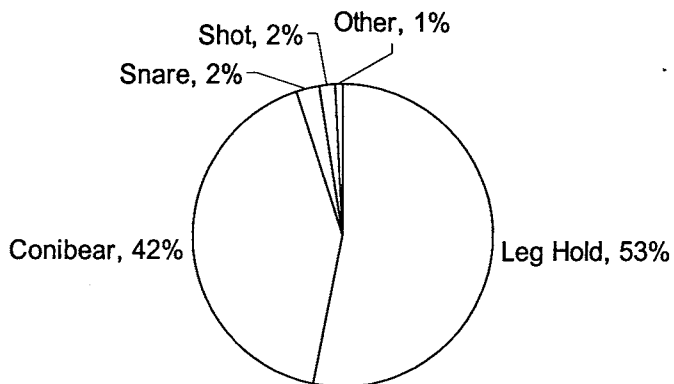


Arctic/Western Marten Harvest

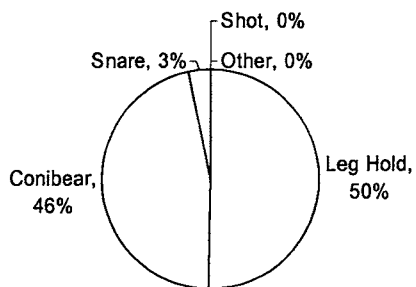


Method of Taking Furbearers

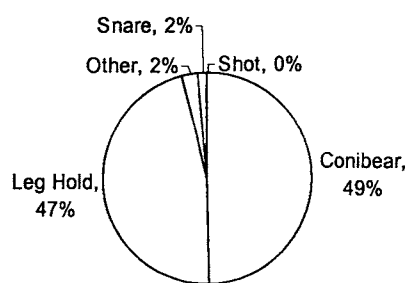
Statewide Mink Harvest



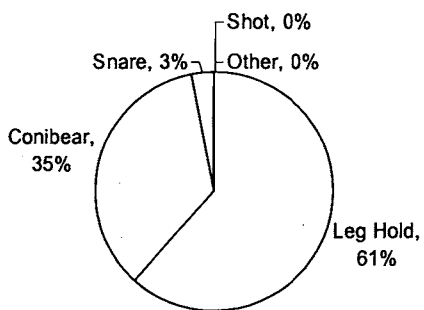
Southeast Mink Harvest



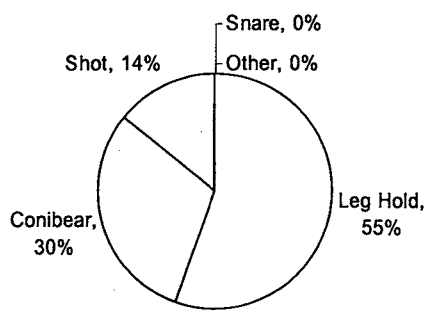
Southcentral & Southwest Mink Harvest



Interior Mink Harvest

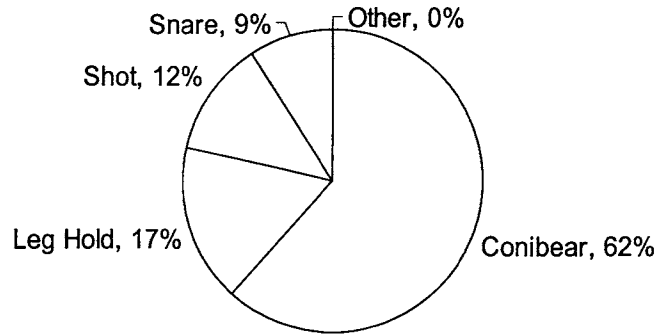


Arctic/Western Mink Harvest

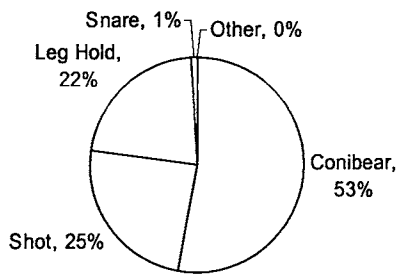


Method of Taking Furbearers

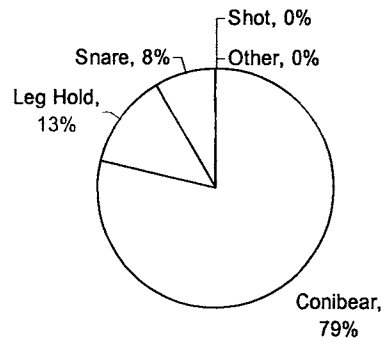
Statewide River Otter Harvest



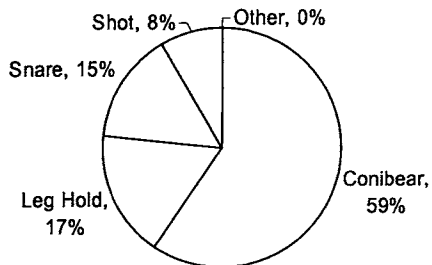
Southeast River Otter Harvest



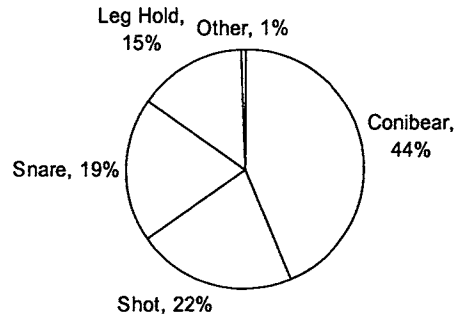
Southcentral & Southwest River Otter Harvest



Interior River Otter Harvest

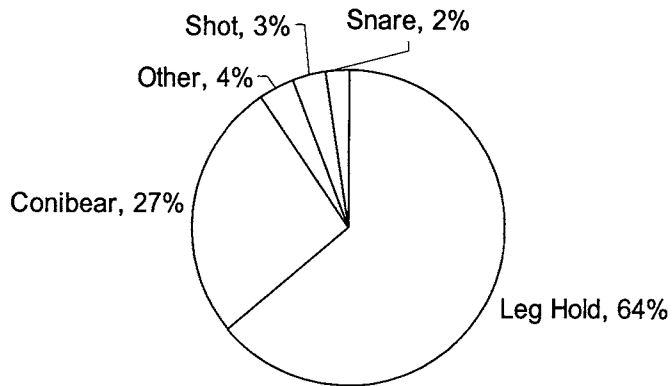


Arctic/Western River Otter Harvest

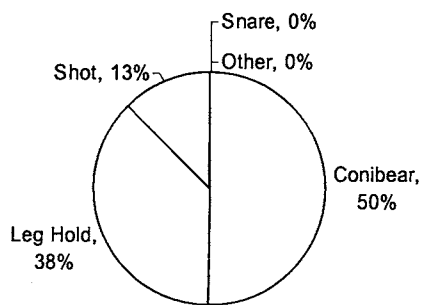


Method of Taking Furbearers

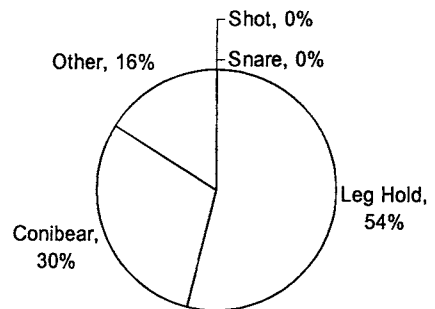
Statewide Squirrel Harvest



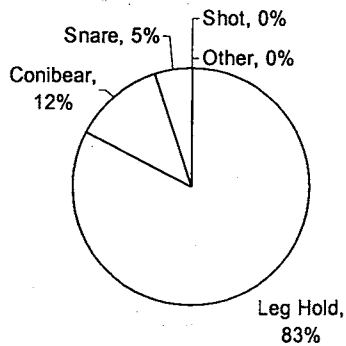
Southeast Squirrel Harvest



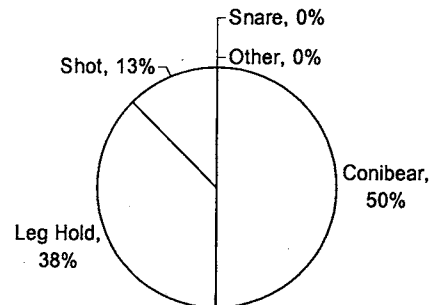
Southcentral & Southwest Squirrel Harvest



Interior Squirrel Harvest

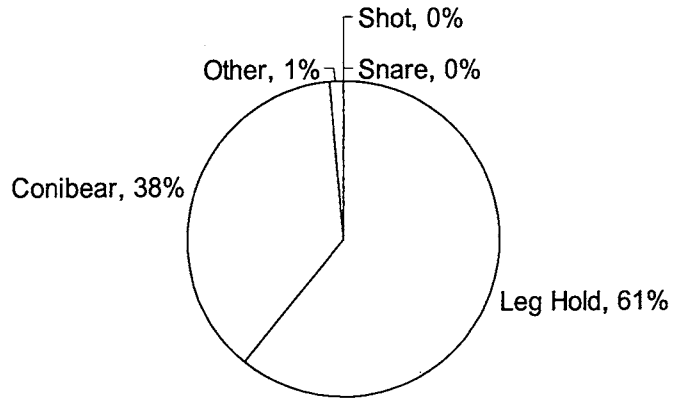


Arctic/Western Squirrel Harvest

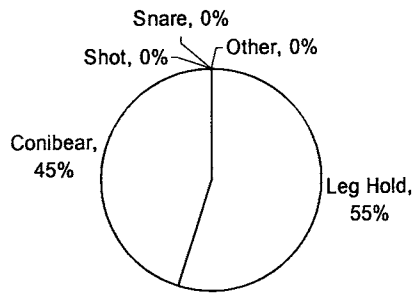


Method of Taking Furbearers

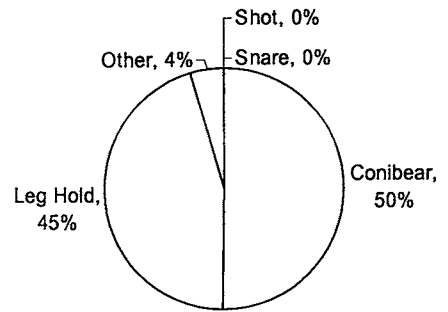
Statewide Ermine Harvest



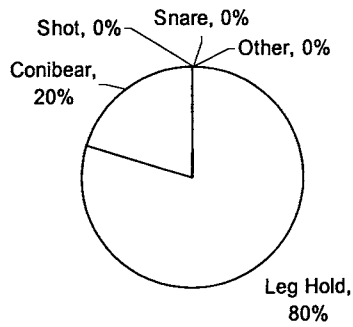
Southeast Ermine Harvest



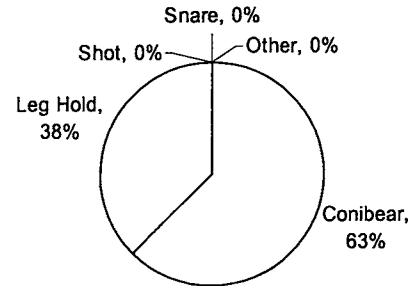
Southcentral & Southwest Ermine Harvest



Interior Ermine Harvest

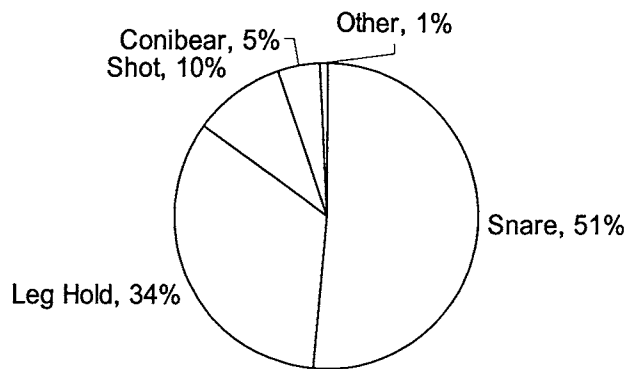


Arctic/Western Ermine Harvest

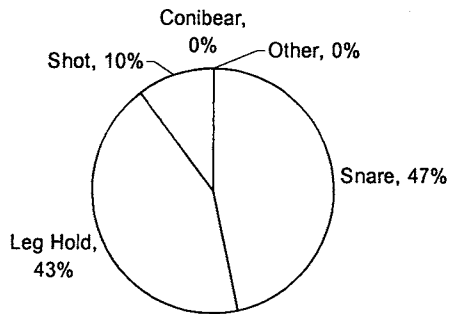


Method of Taking Furbearers

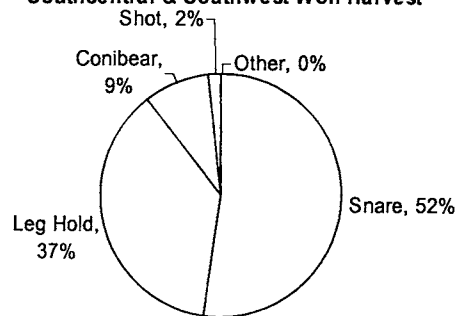
Statewide Wolf Harvest



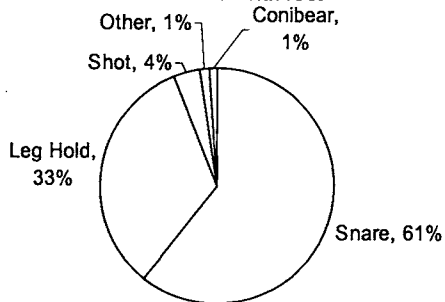
Southeast Wolf Harvest



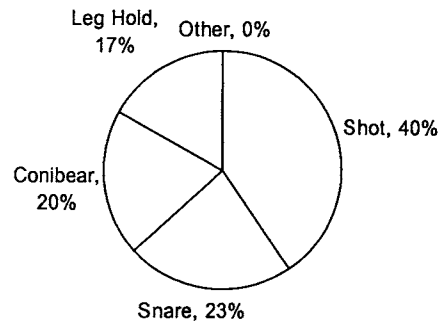
Southcentral & Southwest Wolf Harvest



Interior Wolf Harvest

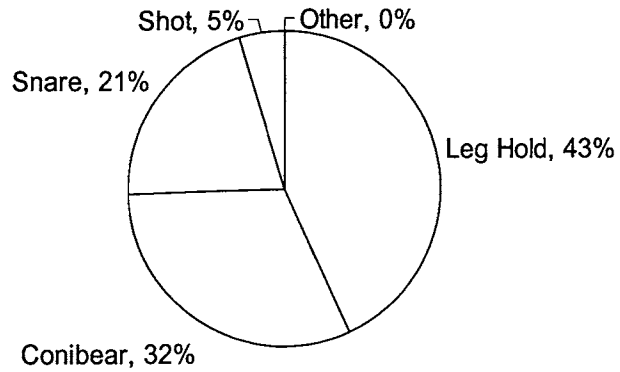


Arctic/Western Wolf Harvest

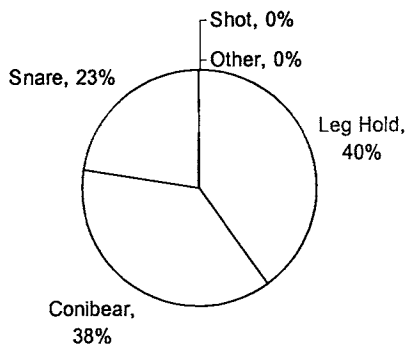


Method of Taking Furbearers

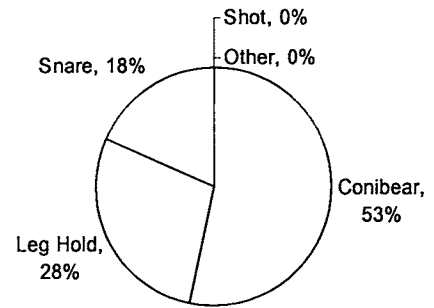
Statewide Wolverine Harvest



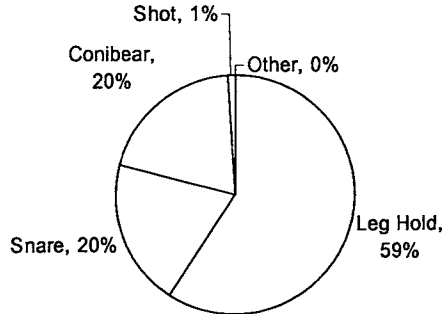
Southeast Wolverine Harvest



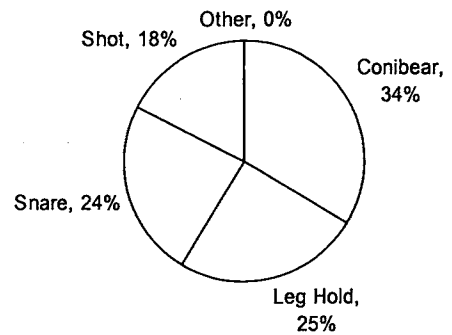
Southcentral & Southwest Wolverine Harvest



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 two measures. They developed an index for the responses received from trappers on the questionnaire. A numerical value was assigned to each of three 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)

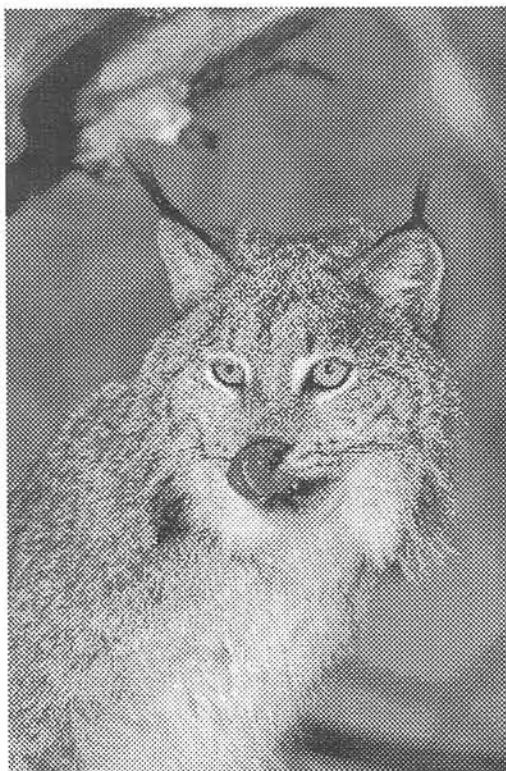
n = number of trappers reporting

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, 2002-2003 as reported by trappers.

Furbearer:	Statewide Average		Arctic & West Coast Region GMUs 18,22,23,26A	
	Relative Abundance	Trend	Relative Abundance	Trend
Arctic Fox	common	same	scarce	same
Beaver	abundant	more	abundant	more
Coyote	common	more	scarce	more
Ermine	common	more	common	same
Lynx	common	same	common	more
Marten	common	same	common	same
Mink	common	more	common	same
Muskrat	common	more	abundant	more
Red Fox	common	same	abundant	more
Red Squirrel	abundant	more	common	more
River Otter	common	more	abundant	more
Wolf	abundant	more	common	more
Wolverine	common	same	common	same
Prey				
Grouse	common	same	scarce	more
Hare	common	same	common	same
Ptarmigan	common	same	abundant	same
Mice/Rodents	abundant	more	abundant	more



Relative abundance and trend of furbearer populations in Interior Alaska, 2002-2003 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	common	more	x	x	scarce	more	x	x	x	x
Beaver	abundant	more	common	more	abundant	more	abundant	more	abundant	more
Coyote	common	more	common	more	scarce	same	scarce	more	x	x
Ermine	common	same	abundant	more	common	same	common	more	scarce	x
Lynx	scarce	same	scarce	fewer	scarce	same	common	same	common	more
Marten	common	same	common	more	common	same	common	more	abundant	more
Mink	common	same	scarce	more	common	same	common	more	common	more
Muskrat	scarce	more	common	more	abundant	more	scarce	more	scarce	more
Red Fox	common	same	common	same	common	same	common	same	scarce	fewer
Red Squirrel	abundant	same	abundant	same	abundant	same	abundant	more	abundant	more
River Otter	common	more	common	more	common	more	abundant	more	common	more
Wolf	common	same	abundant	same	abundant	same	abundant	more	abundant	more
Wolverine	scarce	same	scarce	more	common	more	common	more	common	more
Prey										
Grouse	common	same	common	more	common	same	common	same	common	same
Hare	scarce	same	scarce	same	common	same	common	more	scarce	fewer
Ptarmigan	scarce	same	scarce	more	common	same	common	same	common	same
Mice/Rodents	abundant	more	abundant	more	abundant	more	abundant	more	abundant	more

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

Relative abundance and trend of furbearer populations in Southcentral Alaska, 2002-2003 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 Archipeligo 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	abundant	same	abundant	more	abundant	more	abundant	more	common	more
Coyote	common	more	common	more	abundant	same	common	more	x	x
Ermine	abundant	more	common	same	common	more	abundant	more	abundant	fewer
Lynx	scarce	fewer	scarce	same	scarce	more	common	more	x	x
Marten	common	same	abundant	more	common	more	common	fewer	x	x
Mink	common	more	common	same	abundant	more	abundant	same	x	x
Muskrat	common	more	common	same	common	more	common	more	abundant	
Red Fox	common	same	common	more	x	more	scarce	more	abundant	more
Red Squirrel	abundant	more	abundant	more	abundant	more	abundant	more	x	more
River Otter	common	more	common	same	abundant	same	common	same	abundant	same
Wolf	common	same	abundant	more	common	more	common	more	x	x
Wolverine	common	same	scarce	same	scarce	same	common	more	x	x
Prey										
Grouse	common	same	common	more	common	same	common	more	x	x
Hare	scarce	same	scarce	same	common	same	scarce	fewer	abundant	more
Ptarmigan	common	same	common	more	common	more	common	more	abundant	more
Mice/Rodents	abundant	more	abundant	more	abundant	more	abundant	more	abundant	same

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, 2002-2003 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, 3		Petersburg, Wrangell, Kupreanof & Vicinity GMUs 1B, 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	more	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Beaver	abundant	more	abundant	more	abundant	more	abundant	same	abundant	more	scarce	more	
Coyote	scarce	more	common	same	x	more	abundant	fewer	abundant	more	x	x	
Ermine	common	more	common	more	common	same	common	more	common	more	common	more	
Lynx	scarce	same	common	same	x	more	common	same	scarce	same	x	x	
Marten	scarce	more	abundant	more	common	same	common	same	abundant	more	abundant	same	
Mink	abundant	more	abundant	more	abundant	more	abundant	more	abundant	same	abundant	more	
Muskrat	scarce	more	scarce	more	x	fewer	scarce	more	scarce	more	x	x	
Red Fox	abundant	same	abundant	same	scarce	more	x	more	scarce	same	abundant	more	
Red Squirrel	abundant	more	common	more	common	more	abundant	more	abundant	more	abundant	more	
River Otter	common	more	abundant	more	abundant	same	abundant	more	common	more	abundant	more	
Wolf	abundant	more	abundant	more	abundant	more	abundant	more	abundant	more	abundant	more	
Wolverine	common	same	common	same	scarce	more	common	more	common	more	abundant	more	
Prey													
Grouse	common	more	common	same	scarce	same	common	more	common	more	scarce	more	
Hare	common	same	common	more	scarce	more	abundant	more	scarce	more	abundant	more	
Ptarmigan	common	same	common	more	scarce	more	scarce	more	common	more	scarce	more	
Mice/Rodents	abundant	more	abundant	more	abundant	same	abundant	more	abundant	more	abundant	more	

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 1998 through 2002.

1998–1999 Trapping Season

Region	Shot	Trapped	Snared	Unknown	Total Wolves Sealed
Southeast	55	70	49	1	175
Southcentral	208	163	65	6	442
Interior	173	212	288	6	679
Arctic	90	34	2	20	146
Total	526	479	404	33	1442

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
Total	722	512	420	61	1715

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
Total	694	445	604	61	1804

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
Total	573	488	604	49	1672

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
Total	501	394	438	20	1353

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 1998-1999	Reported Harvest 1999-2000	Reported Harvest 2000-2001	Reported Harvest 2001-2002	Reported Harvest 2002-2003 [†]
Beaver*	Southeast	189	477	514	310	409
	Southcentral/Southwestern	1232	1145	1601	1037	1681
	Interior	1334	1057	1348	1335	170
	Arctic/Western	461	397	151	23	78
	Total Beaver	3216	3076	3614	2705	2338
Lynx	Southeast	0	0	13	0	8
	Southcentral/Southwestern	553	755	876	425	134
	Interior	2180	2191	2934	1742	752
	Arctic/Western	49	66	159	182	157
	Total Lynx	2782	3012	3993	2349	1051
Otter	Southeast	544	506	428	495	1099
	Southcentral/Southwestern	409	358	470	511	477
	Interior	58	81	113	111	123
	Arctic/Western	153	75	165	99	376
	Total Otter	1164	1020	1176	1216	2075
Wolf	Southeast	176	225	215	132	204
	Southcentral/Southwestern	506	579	582	590	359
	Interior	679	676	825	765	662
	Arctic/Western	134	236	182	181	128
	Total Wolf	1495	1716	1804	1668	1353
Wolverine	Southeast	18	26	13	4	31
	Southcentral/Southwestern	170	162	168	204	95
	Interior	227	288	310	237	240
	Arctic/Western	81	76	133	99	87
	Total Wolverine	496	552	625	544	453
Marten**	Southeast	2385	2891	3025	1758	2654
	Southcentral/Southwestern	806	933	1395	1367	677
	Interior	9	0	0	13	78
	Arctic/Western	0	0	0	1	0
	Total Marten	3200	3824	4420	3139	3409

* 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	1998-99 Average \$	1999-00 Average \$	2000-01 Average \$	2001-02 Average \$	2002-03 Average \$	2002-03 Top \$
Beaver	\$25.75	\$21.77	\$20.65	\$45.00	\$28.25	\$55.00
Coyote	\$21.67	\$22.17	\$24.34	\$23.97	\$29.23	\$52.00
Fox	\$16.13	\$21.97	\$17.35	\$25.75	\$30.51	\$50.00
Lynx	\$42.50	\$54.75	\$60.25	\$91.00	\$134.39	\$250.00
Marten	\$24.00	\$26.89	\$35.36	\$45.50	\$39.07	\$60.00
Mink (wild)	\$10.25	\$13.14	\$7.36	\$15.84	\$14.46	\$25.00
Muskrat	\$1.31	\$1.47	\$1.33	\$1.73	\$1.45	\$7.00
River Otter	\$38.75	\$41.13	\$72.82	\$59.83	\$102.29	\$200.00
Squirrel	\$0.50	\$0.92	\$1.33	\$0.98	\$0.93	\$1.00
Weasel	\$2.75	\$4.00	\$4.35	\$3.47	\$2.07	\$3.00
Wolf	\$231.25	\$213.75	\$159.00	\$165.00	\$270.63	\$600.00
Wolverine	\$281.25	\$233.75	\$257.50	\$222.50	\$243.54	\$400.00



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 2000-2001, and 2000-2002, trapping seasons have been recalculated in the same manner to provide for a comparison.

2000-2003 Fur Acquisition and Export

	2000-2001		2001-2002		2002-2003	
	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	695	842	586	579	617	607
Coyote	75	41	55	56	70	68
Fox, Blue	18	1	38	0	0	0
Fox, White	60	8	57	0	14	0
Fox, Cross	119	62	66	48	69	68
Fox, Red	385	356	216	281	244	399
Fox, Silver	33	10	29	1	20	1
Lynx	748	686	370	661	240	519
Marten	2441	7990	1954	4922	1789	5328
Mink	410	601	293	372	589	602
Muskrat	619	350	511	391	992	475
Otter, Land	324	320	320	385	554	916
Red Squirrel	1916	125	7	219	11	159
Weasel	80	103	136	138	114	218
Wolf	190	102	203	199	238	92
Wolverine	66	70	62	71	60	92
Other	297	4	44	0	48	0
Grand Total	8476	11671	4947	8323	5669	9544

FUR VALUE

The following tables summarize the total estimated value of furs trapped during the 2001-2002 and the 2002-2003 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.

2001 - 2002 Fur Value in Alaska

Species	Total Number	Average Price Paid in Alaska	Total Estimated Value
Beaver*	2705	\$45.00	\$121,721.00
Coyote**	111	\$23.97	2,660.67
Fox**	736	\$25.75	\$18,952.00
Lynx*	2349	\$91.00	\$213,759.00
Marten**	6876	\$45.50	\$312,858.00
Mink**	665	\$15.84	\$10,533.60
Muskrat**	902	\$1.73	\$1,560.46
Otter*	1216	\$59.83	\$72,753.28
Squirrel, red**	226	\$0.98	\$221.48
Weasel (ermine)**	274	\$3.47	\$950.78
Wolf*	1668	\$165.00	\$275,220.00
Wolverine*	544	\$222.50	121,040.00
Total:	13,270		\$1,152,230.27

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
Total:	15,213		\$1,223,124.06

* From mandatory fur sealing records

** From Furs Acquired by Alaskan Dealers + Furs Exported by Hunter/Trappers

Records for 2003 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, 13E, 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

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

Regional Biologist Report

SOUTHEAST REGION

Dale Rabe, Wildlife Biologist

Harvest rates of all furbearers in GMUs 1-5 during 2002-03 were up when compared with the previous year, with the exception of beaver which remained at the same level. While the increases in the harvest of the more abundance species (marten, otter, and wolves) ranged from 32-84%, harvest of less common species (lynx and wolverine) were up as much as 350%. Of the more abundant species, otter showed the largest increase in harvest, up 84% from the previous year. These changes are likely a combination of increased trapper effort and in other cases increases to population levels.

Harvest of beavers in Region I dropped 5% compared to 2001-02. While Units 1C and 1D increased between the two years, the remaining units experienced offsetting declines. Units 2 and 3 have by far the highest harvest of beaver 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 (293) remains well above the 10-year average of 216.

The 2002-03 wolf harvest of 200 animals has rebounded back close to the long-term average of 204 animals for the region. Harvest in Units 2 and 3 increased significantly, accounting for nearly all the increase throughout the region. The mainland portion of the region (Units 1 and 5) accounted for approximately one-third of the harvest and is a similar harvest level to the previous year. There are no known wolves in Unit 4, presumably excluded by the high brown bear populations on these islands, and thus no harvest. Populations of wolves throughout the region remain healthy and the harvest pattern over this past year is generally consistent with long-term patterns.

Martens remain the most commonly trapped furbearer in the region with 2570 harvested during the 2002-03 trapping season. This total is up 41% compared to the previous year but remains significantly below the previous high years of 1996-97 and 1997-98 when over 3700 were taken. Harvest increased significantly in Units 1A, 1D, 2 and 4; in Units 1C, 3, and 5 it remained comparable to the previous year. Marten populations fluctuate in response to food availability and this year's harvest was well within the range recorded over the last 10 years. Martens principally prey on small mammals like voles, and a survey of small mammals related to a field study of martens revealed that small mammal populations were low in several areas of the Region.

Otter harvest increased 84% between 2001-02 and 2002-03, from 501 to 923. This trend follows a continuing pattern of increased harvest over the past three years which may be the result of better fur prices for otter pelts in recent years. This harvest is larger than any in the preceding 7 years. The most dramatic increases occurred in Units 2 and 4, which alone accounted for 83% of the harvest in the region. Harvest in other parts of the region was much less and generally equivalent to the previous year.

The wolverine harvest of 27 represents a 3-fold increase from the previous year and a return 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. Lynx are another uncommonly taken furbearer in Southeast Alaska. This year only 5 were trapped, all on the northern mainland. 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.

Numbers of Furbearers Sealed by Game Management Unit for 2002-03.

GMU	Beaver	Lynx	Marten	Otter	Wolf	Wolverine
1A	19	0	119	64	23	6
1B	1	0	195	21	15	2
1C	12	0	69	22	5	4
1D	22	2	103	3	12	8
2	135	0	804	485	61	0
3	86	0	150	39	71	3
4	1	0	1109	283	0	0
5	17	3	21	6	13	4
Total	293	5	2570	923	200	27

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SOUTHCENTRAL REGION

Howard Golden, Southcentral Furbearer Biologist

During the 2002–2003 trapping season in southcentral Alaska, total harvests for the region were higher than last season only for beavers and river otters. Fur sealing records showed beaver harvest was well above the 5-year average. Beaver take was highest in the Mat-Su Valley/Upper Cook Inlet area. River otter harvest was also well above average. The Alaska Peninsula/Kodiak/Aleutians area had the highest otter harvest even though fewer were taken there this year than last. The area with the biggest increase in the take of river otters was Prince William Sound. For Southcentral overall, wolf, wolverine, and marten harvests were all lower in 2002–03 than in 2001–02 and all were below the 5-year average. Wolf harvest was highest for the region in the Nelchina/Copper River Basins, but the only increases in wolf take were slight ones in Prince William Sound and on the Kenai Peninsula. The only area of the region where wolverine harvest rose was the Alaska Peninsula/Kodiak/Aleutians. Almost three-quarters of the marten sealed in southcentral Alaska were taken in the Mat-Su Valley/Upper Cook Inlet area, although the 2002–03 harvest was only about half of last season’s take.

Lynx harvest dropped again this season across southcentral Alaska. In Prince William Sound, Kenai Peninsula, and Nelchina/Copper River Basin areas, lynx harvest was down to about one-fifth of what it was the season before. The only area with an increase was the Alaska Peninsula. 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 drop in the Nelchina/Copper River Basin area. This was the third year of their decline following the population peak in 1999–2000. The lynx population seems to have reached its peak in 2000–2001 and is still dropping. 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. This situation is also happening on the Kenai Peninsula, although snowshoe hare and lynx populations seem to have reached their peaks about 4 years ago. Lynx often leave areas where

snowshoe hare numbers have crashed and travel to new areas in search of food. The increased take of lynx in the Mat-Su/Upper Cook Inlet and Prince William Sound areas during the last few years was probably due to this movement of lynx away from the Nelchina/Copper River Basin area and Kenai Peninsula.

Trappers should expect to see shorter lynx trapping seasons and some closures for the next few years as lynx and hare populations across the region continue declining to the low points in their cycles. 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.

Harvest of furbearers sealed in southcentral Alaska, 2002–2003.

	Beaver	Lynx	River	Wolf	Wolveri	Marten
Prince William Sound	116	3	176	4	4	84
Kenai Peninsula	277	10	63	48	6	36
Alaska	257	35	224	40	26	1
Nelchina/Copper River Basin	370	44	31	162	29	70
Mat-Su Valley/ Upper Cook	519	44	109	79	19	568
Dillingham/Nushagak Basin	258	1	50	30	15	2
Region Total for 2002–2003	1797	137	653	363	99	761
Total for 2001–2002	1037	425	511	590	204	1367
Average over last 5 years	1363	549	479	523	161	1053

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INTERIOR REGION

Interior Furbearer Biologist Craig Gardner

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. 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 and 2003-2004 lynx populations reached their cyclic low, and we purchased only 59 and 36 carcasses from trappers,

Reproductive performance is one of the most important pieces of information guiding the decision making process. 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. Based on our finding of no kittens in the samples collected in 2002-2003 and 2003-2004, it appears survival of the few kittens born during the declining phase of the cycle is very low.

The good news is that the pregnancy rate among adult lynx was higher in 2003 compared to the previous year. An increase in harvested kittens is often a sign that the lynx population is near its population low and we expect pregnancy rates and survival of kittens to improve during 2004.

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 and will likely remain curtailed during 2005 as the lynx population starts its recovery. 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 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. Our preliminary analysis indicates that percent male in the harvest was 55% in the eastern, 59% in the central, and 60% in the western portions of the interior. The ratio of juvenile to adult female was best in the eastern interior (4:1) and was about 2-2.5 in the central and western portions.

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, we should see increasing numbers of marten in the next few years. With the recent increase in marten prices that is good news!

We initiated two additional furbearer research projects that should benefit trappers. The first is a 3 year study looking at wolverine distribution in interior Alaska and evaluating which habitat parameters are most important to wolverine. We completed the first year of field work and are in the process of analyzing the data. In next years report, we will be able to present more information that should help you plan and manage wolverine trapping on your line. The other project is a continuation of developing a breakaway mechanism for snares to allow moose and caribou inadvertently caught to break free but still retain wolves. We have designed a prototype that will be tested this trapping season. We will be presenting the results to the Board of Game during the spring 2005 meeting.

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 1,000 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 furbearer harvest in Unit 22 is done 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 2002–2003 trapping season was 51 lynx, 8 river otter, 33 wolverine, and 36 wolves. These are minimum harvest estimates because many furs taken are used locally and not presented for sealing.

Wolf densities were 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 Western Arctic Herd caribou which have frequently wintered on the central Seward Peninsula since 1996. The harvest of 69 wolves in 2000–2001 is the highest reported in Unit 22. The reported wolf harvest during 2002–2003 was 21 wolves.

Staff observations and reports from Unit 22 hunters and trappers indicate beaver in Units 22A, 22B, 22C and 22D were abundant with numbers stable or increasing, and beavers are reported to be colonizing areas of Unit 22E. In response to the growing beaver population, the Board of Game liberalized Unit 22 beaver regulations at the 2003 BOG meeting. The current hunting and trapping seasons do not close and bag limits are unlimited, although only a firearm may be used to harvest beavers from June 11–October 31 regardless of whether you harvest beaver with a hunting or trapping license.

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

Lynx harvest reached a 10-year high in 2001–2002 when 69 lynx were harvested. Unit 22 residents harvested 51 lynx in 2002–2003. Lynx continue to increase in eastern areas of the unit along with hares, their primary food source. In Unit 22A and 22B lynx were reported to be increasing. In Unit 22D lynx were generally reported to be scarce but increasing. Survey respondents from the remainder of the unit said lynx were scarce or not present in their hunting/trapping areas.

Our staff is grateful to the hunter/trappers who take the time to fill out the annual trapper questionnaires. The information provided gives us a better picture of changes in furbearer populations than we can get on our own. The surveys you complete help document the importance of furbearer harvest to the subsistence way of life in Unit 22. If you know of hunters/trappers who are harvesting furbearers encourage them to get their pelts sealed. We thank you for your help!

KOTZEBUE SOUND AND WESTERN BROOKS RANGE (GOODHOPE RIVER TO CAPE LISBURNE – UNIT 23)

Jim Dau, Area Wildlife Biologist

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. Trapping efforts and results in Unit 23 are similar to previous years, with species reports as follows:

Beaver – Beaver continued to expand their range throughout Unit 23. New lodges have been observed in the western portion of the Unit. Although relatively few of the new lodges have been built in habitat that appeared suitable for overwinter survival, the lodges have thrived with new dams appearing each year. The last several winters have been fairly mild with shallower ice on lakes and rivers. This may have allowed beavers to establish in areas where they could not have lived in normal winters. Now that they have increased water levels with their series of dams their chances of survival are probably good. The Selawik beaver population has completely utilized all suitable habitat. Residents of Selawik village continue to be concerned about beavers damming streams important for seining whitefish and also contaminating the village water supply with Giardia.

Lynx – Snowshoe hares were extremely abundant in the Selawik drainage during the late 1990s through spring of 2001 but crashed soon after. As a result most lynx emigrated from that area. Hunters and trappers in other portions of Unit 23, such as in the Kobuk drainage on the northern Seward Peninsula and near Kotzebue, reported seeing and harvesting more lynx than in previous years. Numbers of willow ptarmigan were very low throughout Unit 23 during the winter of 2002–2003 except on the Seward Peninsula where they were abundant. This probably made lynx travel widely in search of food. Lynx are still more abundant in Unit 23 than during the late 1980s through mid-to-late 1990s. There is no intent to restrict lynx hunting or trapping regulations in Unit 23.

Mink and Marten – After several years of expanding their range westward to near the Chukchi Sea coast during the late 1990s, marten appear to have decreased their range as numbers have declined. As in past, most marten trapping in Unit 23 occurred in the upper Kobuk drainage.

Red Fox – Foxes were common throughout Unit 23 but overall numbers continued to be lower than in previous years. Only 1 case of a rabid red fox (found near Red Dog Mine) was confirmed during the winter and spring of 2002–2003. This was the second consecutive year of low rabies levels in Unit 23.

River Otter – River otters were still fairly abundant throughout Unit 23 but, as in 2000–2001, their numbers appeared to have declined from levels reached during the late 1990s.

Wolf – Wolf numbers have increased on the Seward Peninsula during the last several years. This is probably a result of large numbers of caribou wintering in the area since 1996–1997. Wolf numbers also seem to be relatively high in the upper Kobuk drainage. In contrast, wolves appear to have declined somewhat in the upper Noatak drainage. This may be because moose have almost disappeared from that area, although sheep provide a reliable food source and caribou are there at least seasonally in most years. Wolf hunting and trapping levels in the upper Noatak are low compared to the rest of the Unit.

Wolverine – Wolverines typically occur at such low densities that it is difficult to visually estimate population levels. Comments from hunters and trappers suggest wolverines remained relatively high on the Seward Peninsula, and in the upper Kobuk and Noatak drainages but numbers were lower near Kotzebue than in previous years. Some trappers speculate that high harvests near Kotzebue have reduced wolverine abundance in the lower Noatak and Kobuk drainages.

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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. Snow machines 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 km² area in the foothills of Unit 26A, indicated that the wolf density had dropped from a high of 4.2 wolves/1000 km² in 1992 to 1.6 wolves/1000 km² 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. Snow machines 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 eruption 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

- ❖ Weather had an effect as always. Effort was up for whatever the weather permitted.
- ❖ No snow and warm temperatures made it hard to maintain sets due to freeze and thaw. Fur quality was down.
- ❖ If there had been snow, I'd use a snowmachine. Also, snow limits access for other trappers in this area, so I would have set in more areas. Around here, less snow means more competition from other trappers.
- ❖ Warm, wet, little snow. The wolves rubbed early. My efforts were directed toward exploration, enjoyment and an excuse to get in the woods.
- ❖ Not enough snow to get wolves into our area this year.
- ❖ I'll try somewhere else this year.
- ❖ Didn't.
- ❖ Traps iced in.
- ❖ Lack of snow.
- ❖ Didn't.
- ❖ No snow. Very windy. Warm winter.
- ❖ Lack of snow allowed road access.
- ❖ Mild winter, didn't get enough snow.
- ❖ Not having snow affected it.
- ❖ It's weather, can't do much.
- ❖ Easier - no snow.
- ❖ The weather was mild, but did not affect trapping.
- ❖ The weather was too nice. Not enough snow to drive the animals down.
- ❖ Conditions were good most of the time but there were days I was glad to get home to the fire.
- ❖ It was a mild winter, but it didn't affect my effort.
- ❖ Weather conditions were bad. Warm summer/fall. No snow coverage for tracking. Spent more effort on beaver.
- ❖ Very little snow. Few marten.
- ❖ The weather was too mild.
- ❖ The winter was way too warm, which even made mink trapping tougher than normal.
- ❖ Warm winter resulting in fair hides, not excellent.
- ❖ Warm weather (poorly)
- ❖ Lack of snow made it hard to locate wolves.
- ❖ Weather was too dry, no snow. Plus about 9 other trappers. I trapped at 2000 feet in January. Was no snow.
- ❖ Warmer weather, higher water made it harder to cross the river.
- ❖ Many of my sets were frozen in or washed out by rain.
- ❖ It was so warm that the wolves were matted and rubbed.
- ❖ Less snow makes the wolf easier to trap. They can't catch as many deer.
- ❖ No snow, was able to use 3 wheeler all winter.
- ❖ Unusually windy conditions throughout December. March kept me from getting to my sets, so to minimize possibility of spoilage, I limited my effort and number of sets.
- ❖ Freeze-thaw cycle of the Southeast makes it difficult to use legholds for wolves. All the warm weather made for a better beaver catch.
- ❖ None, had average winter as far as temperature and snow.

- ❖ We had little snow but a lot of freezing.
- ❖ Not enough snow – wolves were not hungry enough.
- ❖ Didn't affect.
- ❖ No effect.
- ❖ The weather didn't cooperate, caught several cats (cats that have been dropped off at a dump are spreading out rapidly).
- ❖ Roads were good. Checked every night.
- ❖ It was very warm in December. I didn't put out any gear until we had cold weather in January.
- ❖ Less snow made the marten trapping easier.
- ❖ Weather conditions and furbearers did not affect my trapping effort.
- ❖ Weather conditions were too warm. No or little snow.

Southcentral/Southwest

- ❖ No snow combined with a very late freeze up almost shut me out.
 - ❖ Lack of snow, but no real effect on conditions.
 - ❖ Light snow.
 - ❖ Overflow of lakes and rivers affected landing of aircraft. Lack of snow early made for rough conditions.
 - ❖ Unpredictable weather was a huge factor. My lynx catch was down due to poor ice and snow conditions during lynx season.
 - ❖ Conditions didn't affect my efforts. An accident kept me off my feet for most of the season.
 - ❖ No snow.
 - ❖ Did not freeze up until mid December, very little snow all winter. Couldn't use snowmobile until mid December and the lack of snow the rest of winter dictated where I could travel.
 - ❖ No real change.
 - ❖ Weather – too warm, too wet, no snow!
 - ❖ Could not set the whole line.
 - ❖ No snow, bad ice.
 - ❖ Not enough snow. Ran my four-wheeler most of the winter and could not access a lot of the country.
 - ❖ It was warm, no snow or ice (safe). Didn't trap 1/2 of line (across river). Didn't trap rivers like normal (rained, flooded).
 - ❖ Weather was too warm and we had very little snow. This resulted in open water and no snow to travel on. Open water precluded using four-wheelers. Hopefully we have snow this year. With a year reprieve, maybe we'll have better results.
 - ❖ Creeks open, freeze/thaw – just push through to set and keep working.
 - ❖ Made it easier for beaver. Open water or little ice, harder for predators because of icy conditions.
 - ❖ Wet, icy, warm weather.
 - ❖ No snow. Had to work hard to find trails.
 - ❖ No snow changed travel mode and type of sets.
-
- ❖ The massive amount of warm weather and rain in southcentral Alaska caused me to shorten my line and season.
 - ❖ Weather was warmer than other years. Some sets froze while others were buried by frequent snowfall.
 - ❖ Warm weather, poor ice conditions made trapping less accessible for me.
 - ❖ Change in weather.
 - ❖ Lack of snow in the area made wolverine unavailable.

- ❖ Marten and wolverine don't come off the mountain when there isn't snow. Hard to travel/weather changed a lot.
- ❖ Wet, lots of snow at one time, made it difficult to access trapping area.
- ❖ Lack of snow. It was too warm to trap where I wanted to.
- ❖ We had bad snow conditions, a lot of rain. Usually we trap lynx, but we were gone for the whole lynx season.
- ❖ Less snow, warmer temperatures made me check sets more frequently.
- ❖ Too wet and rainy—no snow.
- ❖ Warm thaws, not enough powder snow, then too much snow.
- ❖ Freeze up stopped me because of road conditions.
- ❖ Lack of snow and ice prevented using snowmachine to access most areas. Attempted to set traps using skiff in December, but water was too high —conditions decreased my trapping effort in both time and area.
- ❖ Last year, 2002 – no snow at all, did not trap. Set only 4 traps for subsistence, fur prices affect our efforts, had only one buyer for about 4 seasons.
- ❖ We had no snow we were forced to cut back and stay close to town. It put a lot of us trapping in close and stepping on each others toes and caused some confrontations for some with the non-trapping public.
- ❖ Too much rain.
- ❖ No snow. Had only a short line in because I thought it would snow, so I spent lots of time and effort in preparing for a quick long hard winter that never came.
- ❖ Mild winter made for bad trapping season.
- ❖ The weather was very poor and hard to get around.
- ❖ No snow and ground not solid enough. Last season.
- ❖ Couldn't land in most areas due to lack of snow. Past years we would land and snowshoe to set traps. Fly to another spot and repeat.
- ❖ No snow till New Year's, so this old man could not ride his snowmachine.
- ❖ Too much wind blows snow over sets. Not good.
- ❖ Lack of cold temperatures kept me from getting to my main line until late in the season. Lack of snow meant I had to walk instead of use the sno-go.
- ❖ Warmer weather. Rivers didn't freeze up till later so length of line was shorter.
- ❖ We didn't have any snow till after the first of the year, and even then I was pushing the bad snow conditions.
- ❖ No affect. Normal snow level, not as cold.
- ❖ The weather was too warm. Pelts showed little to no guard hairs.
- ❖ Good snow-fairly warm weather.
- ❖ Not enough snow.
- ❖ Little to no snow, ATV access was easy, animals were hard to track.
- ❖ Lack of snow and ice prohibited the use of a snowmobile. As a result, the only trapping I could do was near Dillingham by foot.
- ❖ Light snow depth kept fur animals and prey at high elevations and therefore less accessible on our trapline.
- ❖ Rain, melting, freezing.
- ❖ Not significantly.
- ❖ Trapping conditions always change, so no effect.
- ❖ Lack of snow made for poor trapping conditions.
- ❖ Mild weather, allowing open H2O. Trapping access was easy walking.
- ❖ Flooding in October changed the rivers considerably. Warm temps helped water trapping, but the floods came again in November. Wiped out all the beaver dams and washed away half my sets.
- ❖ I couldn't get into good marten – bad snow conditions. The warmer weather allowed better water trapping.

- ❖ Too much rain. Got wet lots of times and the conditions weren't safe on the ice and streams. Washed out sets, lost traps, not as many sets out.
- ❖ Made most things harder because of the warm weather.
- ❖ I was unable to trap last winter due to the lack of snow.
- ❖ Rain and floods.
- ❖ No snow.
- ❖ High water, low snow, could not cross the creek, lost all my mink sets.
- ❖ Not enough snow or ice to access area by snowmachine, or even walking.
- ❖ They didn't – I was trapping for fun, not profit.
- ❖ Mild winter made traveling outside more comfortable.
- ❖ Flooding.
- ❖ Sets easier to keep working.
- ❖ Trapping conditions – temperatures played an important role – continuous changes in freezing/thawing. Would rain great amount, then freeze, then thaw. Lake never froze and some ground/streams/bogs unsafe to travel because not frozen, no snow, etc.
- ❖ Traps froze
- ❖ Need to be frozen. Need snow. The constant thawing, freezing freezes traps down. We need caribou in our area.
- ❖ Lack of freezing conditions limited travel.
- ❖ The lack of snow made me wait longer to trap.
- ❖ Warm weather made creek travel hazardous and that is the general area I was trapping in.
- ❖ Snow and frozen is better. The thaws make it slow going.
- ❖ Mild winter, making it difficult to travel by snowmachine.
- ❖ Warm weather, no major concentrations of caribou, no furbearer concentrations.
- ❖ No snow last year. No tracks. Crashed airplane – short season.
- ❖ Too warm. Poor ice conditions bad for travel – good for catch.
- ❖ Open water made trails tough. No snow for snowmobile.

Interior

- ❖ We had very little snow at the beginning of the trapping season, thus we didn't even begin until the end of December. Low snowfall and higher temperatures also contributed to low catches.
- ❖ No snow.
- ❖ No snow early in season made for slow travel, plus warm temperatures kept crossings thawed.
- ❖ With only inches of snow, it's not only hard to trap, but it takes a lot of the fun out of it.
- ❖ The snow and weather conditions prevented me from trapping last season.
- ❖ No snow and warm temperatures made for a very difficult season. Took a break and let things rest, i.e., me.
- ❖ Low snow depth made the going slow and breakdowns increased. Was OK for cutting out old trails and some new ones.
- ❖ I did not start until late because of low snow conditions. One area I could not access because of icy hill and GVEA intertie construction.
- ❖ Not much snow. It made trapping more challenging.
- ❖ Unable to access much of line due to lack of snow.
- ❖ No snow.
- ❖ Marten are really low. Lynx are starting to come back, more rabbits. Wolves are low, only 1 out of a pack of 4.
- ❖ Low snow year. Hard to make sets.
- ❖ Low snow, harder to travel.
- ❖ Very little snow early on.

- ❖ I did not trap due to health this past season. However I was active with the ATA with education programs and did some calling. If I can improve my health, I will be back in the field again.
- ❖ Not a lot of snow, rivers didn't freeze very well.
- ❖ I did not trap because the creeks and river were not safe to cross.
- ❖ Lack of snow made it easy for animals to go where they pleased and not on your trails. Lack of snow made traveling difficult. Trapping is my hobby.
- ❖ Very late getting past 26 miles due to open water. Otherwise good trails.
- ❖ Less snowfall during 2002–03 made snowshoeing easier, thus I could cover more ground.
- ❖ Not enough snow to make animals use my packed trail.
- ❖ Lack of snow.
- ❖ No snow until Dec. 25th, not fox or marten sets.
- ❖ All my traps were stolen two weeks after I set them out. Conditions after that were bad.
- ❖ No snow and very few marten tracks. Pulled all traps after a couple weeks.
- ❖ No snow made it rough at first and hard on equipment.
- ❖ It resulted in greatly increasing the number of people in the area; the late freeze-up kept many from accessing areas across the river.
- ❖ Decreased exploration and extension of new line and decreased catch substantially due to mandated set reconstruction (twice) over entire line (rain, thaw, freeze).
- ❖ Trap less because of the lack of snow.
- ❖ Late freeze-up of the Tanana River has caused less trapping time. Once I started trapping, everything was normal.
- ❖ Hazardous.
- ❖ The weather was warmer than usual. Lack of snow made it harder to travel or man my line.
- ❖ Rain and no snow delayed start of trapping.
- ❖ No snow till December, freeze thaw in January, February, etc.
- ❖ Lack of snow hurt me. Also the discouragement of younger trappers moving in causing a conflict.
- ❖ I was only giving a minimal effort this season, so conditions were not a major factor.
- ❖ I wasn't able to get traps out on the entire line. Snow was marginal in areas. Rivers didn't freeze until late.
- ❖ Lack of snow caused me to walk the line, thus I carried fewer traps.
- ❖ Low snow fall cut off season.
- ❖ Snow depth allowed animals to travel freely. Two winter ice storms (rain)
- ❖ Freezing rain – no snow.
- ❖ Very light snow – poor established critter trails. Temps fluctuating about freezing made set inoperable
- ❖ Not particularly – very little snow, early high water.
- ❖ Lack of snow limited access and opportunity.
- ❖ Milder weather allowed for more time outside.
- ❖ Work and marriage and home construction had a much larger effect on my effort than any other factor.
- ❖ Lack of snow prevented me from getting to some areas.
- ❖ No snow.
- ❖ Lack of snow has kept me down to only the first half of my line. Trail conditions made slow going.
- ❖ I couldn't get out because of a lack of ice early and too much overflow later. I intend to trap in the 2002–2003 season.
- ❖ Less motivation to be out.
- ❖ Very busy building native style birch snowshoes the last 3 years, also building sleigh or birch sleds, and teaching Native arts and crafts.

- ❖ Not much snow and warm temps made travel hard. Therefore, I could not cover as much country as I would have liked to (too rough)
- ❖ No snow or too much snow and extreme low temps always change the effort.
- ❖ No snow. No fur.
- ❖ I set enough traps to keep people out. I let my trapline rest a year.
- ❖ Not much snow – didn't set much for canids.
- ❖ Leg holds less effective on wolves without snow cover. Snares were more productive.
- ❖ No snow all season made it rough and slow.
- ❖ 80% of my line burned, including 2 cabins during the summer of 2002. Mild winter with no snow made thing worse.
- ❖ Lack of snow.
- ❖ Couldn't get out early because of warm weather early.
- ❖ Warm weather, too warm.
- ❖ Not enough snow to get around on sno-go. Had to walk more.
- ❖ I walk my line so I don't need snow for transport. As you know, last season was a lousy snow year. I catch as many cats and wolverines without snow cover.
- ❖ Warm weather, raining, no snow, very icy conditions, all my fur I trapped last year were all primed, except 2001–02. Waited until it was colder, then the fur was prime.
- ❖ Weather conditions played a major part in hindering trapping.
- ❖ No snow.
- ❖ The lack of snow makes it harder to target trails.
- ❖ No snow – hard on equipment.
- ❖ Shortened season. Too warm and creeks and rivers didn't freeze up until late in season, also very little snow.
- ❖ Warm weather made it difficult to travel my line.
- ❖ Not much snow in early season for ski flying.
- ❖ Lack of snow was hard on snowmachine – warm weather created more overflow problems.
- ❖ Low furbearer populations, so I only trapped enough to keep others from jumping my line.
- ❖ More snow would have been helpful.
- ❖ Late start – set very little.
- ❖ Warm weather, shallow snow – wolves don't follow the trails and rivers very much.
- ❖ Made for less trapping.
- ❖ Low snow levels allowed more animals to meander across more area without having to stick to set trails. The effect was to spread my sets more and not gang set as often.
- ❖ Conditions were the same as other years.
- ❖ Lack of snow at beginning of season.
- ❖ No snow. Used grass and spruce needles to cover sets–snares not stained.
- ❖ No snow. Lots of warm weather make it hard to see any sign, but I made the same sets as always.
- ❖ Late snow was bad.
- ❖ Snow conditions perfect last year.
- ❖ No snow.
- ❖ There's been no snow and poor freeze up.
- ❖ Used to be good money and everything was low. Right now gas is \$3.50 and fur prices are bad.
- ❖ Warm winter with lots of rain, making sets difficult.
- ❖ No snow – the snow-go wasn't dependable.
- ❖ Trapping conditions were good up until late January when we had 3-4 feet of new snow. Wolf sets were all messed up and the wolves went high on the mountains. I had no problem traveling at the beginning of the season on 7 inches of grain snow.
- ❖ Not much snow until later in the season, plenty of overflow, more winds in the high country drifting sets over.

- ❖ Freeze/thaw ruined sets.
- ❖ Minimal snow hampered traveling conditions and sets for wolves.
- ❖ Weather conditions.

Arctic/Western

- ❖ Last winter was a non-winter. No snow and extremely mild. This caused me to trap later, much closer to home, and concentrate on local furbearers (fox and otter).
- ❖ Less.
- ❖ No snow.
- ❖ No snow – or hardly any snow all winter.
- ❖ We always wanted lots of snow and good ice. Every year we get rain and periods of no snow. I guess I have to learn to adapt and sometimes pull traps and wait it out.
- ❖ Warm weather.
- ❖ No snow.
- ❖ Not enough snow 2002–2003.
- ❖ Weather conditions were bum, animal numbers high.
- ❖ The low snow at the start of the year made travel and keeping traps clean easy, but the heavy snow in January decreased my trapping effort.
- ❖ Heavy snow and rain ruined most of February
- ❖ Not many species of what I wanted to get at that time and not enough time due to work.
- ❖ Lots of thin ice and open creeks made it tough to go as far as I wanted.
- ❖ Do less trapping. I was doing teaching how to trap with the students at young age.
- ❖ Late season, bad freeze up. Lots of overflow.
- ❖ Low snowfall
- ❖ Zero snow so gave up after 3 weeks. Caribou went to the Seward Peninsula instead of here zero wolf tracks.
- ❖ Lack of snow during most of the season kept me from expanding my line.
- ❖ The warm winter made it difficult.
- ❖ Poor snow.
- ❖ Reduced it
- ❖ Couldn't get out often enough to check the traps.
- ❖ The conditions didn't affect me.
- ❖ Late snow and scarce game.
- ❖ The conditions for trapping and hunting for me were fair.
- ❖ Not enough snow.
- ❖ Warm weather.
- ❖ Early season was warm, made for bad ice conditions. Not enough snow early on.

Did Other Trappers In Your Area Affect Your Trapping Effort?

Southeast

- ❖ Several traps were stolen and I took extra effort to keep the line and sets inconspicuous.
- ❖ Trap, gear and animal theft (one wolf, one lynx).
- ❖ Too many people running my other traplines. I had trails cut and others just thought they were there for them.
- ❖ Too many people encroaching – other trappers messing with sets.
- ❖ Several other people worked area I've had to myself. Has become a free-for-all!!!
- ❖ More trappers, less target game.
- ❖ Too many marten trappers around setting hundreds of traps covering too much area. They're out to make money only, not in it for the fun of trapping.
- ❖ Someone moved in on my grounds.
- ❖ Had one other trapper in an area. I'd find otter and beaver, but didn't have gear to set. Next time back, I had the gear but someone else had traps set.
- ❖ A lot of trappers in a small area.
- ❖ Too many people in the same area.
- ❖ Too many trappers are overloading our area.
- ❖ As far as I know, I am the only one trapping in the area.
- ❖ Yes, someone else was trapping in an area I had set up. So I pulled my sets where we overlapped.
- ❖ Competition in this area is fairly intense and I find myself having to walk farther than other people are willing to go. I try to take the good with the bad to get an even keel. With the first-come, first-serve system it makes it difficult and I end up taking the bad with the worst.
- ❖ Competition for wolf at beach kept us off beach. Part-time beaver trapper double set some of our sets.
- ❖ Too many in one area.
- ❖ They got too close to my sets.
- ❖ The sets made me move to a different set site.
- ❖ They made sets in some of my locations.
- ❖ I reduced my trapping effort to accommodate an increase in number of other trappers in the area.
- ❖ Other, well-established trappers targeted marten. To avoid conflicts, I trapped mainly mink.

Southcentral/Southwest

- ❖ Seeing very few trappers in my area.
- ❖ Any main drainages within 50 miles of Anchorage are overrun with people. Lost at least 2 lynx and 1 wolverine to thieves.
- ❖ A trapper borrowed my traps without asking me.
- ❖ Road trapping in my area.
- ❖ Too many people not enough game. The country is big, but most people are weekend warriors.
- ❖ Some would trap too close.
- ❖ Think he owns the Copper River basin.
- ❖ Had to find area with no effort.
- ❖ Airplanes over the wolf and wolverine.
- ❖ Someone else started trapping then pulled out. But was trapping long enough to mess up otter trapping and it was the best in 5 years.

- ❖ A few trappers crossing over our line and making sets.
- ❖ Stealing traps, animals. Placing traps right next to my traps.
- ❖ Another trapper moved in on my traditional area.
- ❖ I avoided a portion of the line planned as other trappers were already setting up. I didn't wish to over-harvest marten. I believe this occurred.
- ❖ Several trappers took the area that I had used in the past three years. It's even somewhat out of the way.
- ❖ There were many more trappers in my area than on a normal year. Took over some of our old areas.
- ❖ Stolen traps and spring traps.
- ❖ Good sets that are hidden are few.
- ❖ Many more than usual.
- ❖ More competition.
- ❖ Other persons expressed an interest in trapping near their homes but then never trap. They claim "rights" to an area, telling other trappers to stay out, but never trap or set a trap at the first of the season and never check them the whole time! This makes any new people getting started in trapping either 1) do not trap because all areas are "claimed" or 2) trap anywhere, everywhere, and wherever they like, disregarding all trappers – including the honest and respectable ones.
- ❖ Too many people snowmachining and trapping near.
- ❖ Other trappers were concentrating in the area near the town of Dillingham, increasing competition because of an inability to snowmobile.

Interior

- ❖ It seems like every year I have people sneaking on my line also a new wildlife officer that doesn't know his butt from a hole in the ground...
- ❖ Must spend time with signs and token sets each year to deter others. This takes away from line maintenance and sets.
- ❖ Outskirts of my area being more and more trapped by others.
- ❖ More people moving in, who do not respect traditional lines.
- ❖ I had to stay in my area.
- ❖ We had trappers start trapping in the same area we were in. Once we found them and talked to them, they slowly pulled out.
- ❖ We all get along with each other.
- ❖ Trappers stole all my traps.
- ❖ When I ranch my animals for future season, I always have pieces of garbage from trappers association trapping on my line or either side of me.
- ❖ Traffic in the area was very high, and while my sets were not disturbed, evidence of people spending time was everywhere.
- ❖ Because I'm still new to Alaska (1995) I'm lucky to have a line at all. However, my line could be described as the "black hole of trapline" due to its paucity of fur as well as its terrain. If I could, I would move into a more favorable ground, but said ground is occupied by another trapper.
- ❖ An airplane trapper was trapping wolves near my line.
- ❖ Generally, individuals respected that line was registered and not available
- ❖ Younger trappers moving in and not understanding the lack of seed stock, but if I reset line they take over, if I trap I kill off seed fur so I felt discouraged.
- ❖ Prevented me from trapping a couple different areas.
- ❖ Lazy buggers stole the only marten that got into my traps. Got a nuisance beaver permit and had fun catching beaver with no competition and no ice.
- ❖ Competition.
- ❖ New area was very small due to other established traplines in area.

- ❖ A couple people from Fairbanks were on one of my lines and became angry when asked to vacate my country. They are trying to take over.
- ❖ Trapping from aircraft, I want to avoid snowmachine access areas at all costs. I found many good trapping areas that I had to pass up due to sno-go tracks. I had to fly considerable distances to get away from the sno-gos, which limited my use of daylight hours for setting and checking traps.
- ❖ Too many trappers are crowding in on established traplines. The increased effort makes it hard to achieve the catches of the past. All the traplines are fast becoming merely recreational, which is very bad for trapping generally.
- ❖ When I was hunting deer the first week of November, I came back to start trapping and a lot of the beaver ponds I wanted to trap were already being trapped.
- ❖ No one trapped much last year.
- ❖ A group of us inherit traplines from our folks.
- ❖ Too close to each other.
- ❖ The season was a very respectful one on the part of all trappers in the area. It's about time!
- ❖ Since I am new to this area, I simply avoided areas where it appeared someone else was trapping.
- ❖ Someone moved in on my 9-year existing line and took otters and had wolverine sets on my trail. No respect.
- ❖ If someone else catches the fur, I surely am not going to.
- ❖ They affect my trapping by trapping in my area by aircraft. Although I am all for aerial predator control.
- ❖ "Competition" factor – seeing the other guy getting out causes me to want to get out more! (He says the same thing.)
- ❖ Prevalent marten effort in nearby areas limits my marten effort.
- ❖ Getting more crowded around town.
- ❖ I wished a single woman trapper would "step on my toes," then we could have coffee together. It appears I live at the end of the street where there aren't many single women making their tracks. As a matter of fact, there are not any females out here at all.
- ❖ Not as bad as usual.
- ❖ Less competition.
- ❖ They were the only reason that I trapped at all. Keep them from taking over my line.

Arctic/Western

- ❖ Nobody else was fool enough to be out beating their snow-machines up.
- ❖ I only ran into another local trapper. It was good to stop and chat with someone about fur and trapping.
- ❖ Had some competition, but no real factors from other trappers.
- ❖ No, but some Kotzebue trapper(s) were setting right next to some of my lynx sets.
- ❖ A few sets in my area were unknown to me.
- ❖ Traps in the same area take some game.
- ❖ I know some areas where other trappers work, so we stay out of each other's way.
- ❖ I share part of my line with another trapper. He traps marten and otter, I trap wolves.

Do You Have Any Comments To ADF&G?

Southeast

- ❖ Considering the sustained migration and residency of fisher into northern Southeast, when might a season or limit be added to the regulations?
- ❖ The issue of domestic dogs being caught in traps/snares is a hot topic. Several dogs were killed this winter due to unethical trappers, irresponsible dog owners and plain bad luck. It is also an important topic in Gustavus and the backlash is making it harder to trap or at least publicly acknowledge being a trapper. I think trapper education on ethics and public relations and public education on trapping would help.
- ❖ Your efforts to keep furbearer populations healthy and to keep trapping alive are greatly appreciated. Keep up the good work.
- ❖ I'm not a market trapper. I do it for the love. My sets are few and widely scattered depending on the weather, transport and inclination. I hope this limited input is of some value.
- ❖ You shortened our wolf season this year against the wishes of us, the trappers and the Upper Lynn Canal advisory committee, and so far no Fish and Game personnel can give us a good reason why.
- ❖ I think you should change the wolf season back to where it was. I can see no reason for shortening the season. Wolves are plentiful here.
- ❖ City regulations around Juneau make it very difficult to trap legally without making a major commitment to the activity. This is likely keeping many young people who might be interested from starting to trap. Perhaps the department could approach the city assembly about re-legalizing at least mink/marten traps (110's/120's, #1 - 1 1/2's) within much of the currently closed areas along the beach & trails/road (Perhaps reducing the closed areas along roads/trails from 1/2 mile to 100 yards and reopening the beach north of Amalga Harbor.)
- ❖ Doing a great job of management. Keep it up.
- ❖ Why is Juneau area most regulated and restricted in the state?
- ❖ I will probably stop trapping in 2003–2004 because of the increase in anti-trapping attitude in the Juneau area.
- ❖ Thank you for the annual report. The statistics and comments were very informative. I personally haven't been able to trap for a few years but I hope to get back into it soon.
- ❖ The squirrels have increased tremendously on Kodiak Island during the past five years. Currently we have no marten population on Kodiak Island, recommend ADF&G consider transplanting a few marten from Afognak Island to Kodiak Island, especially N.E. side near villages of Port Lions.
- ❖ Thank you for continuing this survey. I find the information personally educational. Heavy rains here make trapping very hard. I wish otter season was extended into February for safer travel on ice, longer days and less worry of incidental catches while beaver trapping. Maybe I need to write a proposal for a meeting. Thanks.
- ❖ Make trapping limited entry like the fisheries. Issue permits to people who want them and that's it. No more ever. People could then buy and sell them. That would limit numbers to serious trappers only. Also anti's could raise money and buy them and feel like they were saving animals.
- ❖ All of my hunting is with a rifle using a sea kayak. Would like to be able to shoot beaver.
- ❖ I am a teacher and appreciate you folks sending me the report each year. I share it with students in my classes. A couple of years ago I moved to Craig and find it hard to trap here. When I retire after next year I hope to get back into it again. Growing up in Wrangell, I paid for my college from money earned from our trapline. Thanks for the great job you do.
- ❖ Need to put limits on some of the animals, or limit the number of traps a person is able to set. This would make it easier for young kids to catch animals right away and stay interested in trapping.
- ❖ Questionnaire should come out right after season ends. Hard to remember numbers. Thanks

- ❖ Is it possible to get these questionnaires out in the spring? It would be easier to remember more accurately what I saw and trapped.
- ❖ I don't think I will trap anymore. I loved the long days I spent on the trapline and the freedom I felt out there. It has been wonderful to watch the game over the years, much better than the TV. If a young person asked me, I sure would help them start a line, even show them a thing or two. Well, thank you for letting me spend my time on the line, wish I would have more time to spend. Thanks for my over-60 hunting, fishing license. Well, I think I will go fishing, maybe eat a big fat king steak tonight. Hope all this helped.
- ❖ Doing a great job. I really appreciate the information included in the annual report. Very informative.
- ❖ I trapped for several weeks in area 2 for the first time since the 1970s. Sure a lot less trees now.
- ❖ The wolf problem in Southeast and adjacent islands is huge. I feel that this problem is being ignored. What's the deal with the bleeding hearts? The study conducted on Hecter Island turned out to be so far from the truth it hurts. Maybe the wolf bounty should be reinstated and see if that would help. Although the warm weather made trapping harder, it did allow me to include my 4-year-old daughter and 6-year-old son. They enjoyed the season and were present on the best day. I've never seen young kids so excited about helping out. We packed 3 beaver, 2 mink, and a marten back to the truck.
- ❖ There are an increased number of wolves. They are diminishing the deer populations and should be trapped, in order to bring the numbers down to a reasonable amount. If any trappers ask about where to find wolves, tell them about Edna Bay and Heceta Island. Both have quite a few.
- ❖ Hunting season for wolves should start sooner, while hunting for deer is in full swing and sightings are higher. Like Sept. 15, for example.
- ❖ The marten are prime here about the middle of October. I think the season could open about 3 weeks earlier then now, and close 2 or 3 weeks earlier then now.
- ❖ Since I started thinning out the wolves on Wrangell, the deer population has increased greatly, as well as the moose population.
- ❖ Hard to remember what I caught when, where and how. If you would send out the questionnaire in April it would be better.
- ❖ Sealing of marten and beaver is not necessary.
- ❖ Seasons for wolves could be re-extended back to the old time frame. Institute registered traplines in Alaska. Many people that trap for a living in the winter find themselves getting squeezed out by outsiders and hobby clowns. Many seasons in past years I lived or died by my line.
- ❖ I believe that regulation requiring Southeast traplines to be tended at least every 48 to 72 hours needs to be in place and enforced. Some trappers run their line (1) once per week, which amounts to killing furbearers, not harvesting them.
- ❖ Wolf and marten sign was the most widespread. Several otter scat sights were found. In Southeast we have good wolf populations and I intend to expand my wolf trapping.
- ❖ Wolf are very hard on deer and moose. Please make it possible to use poisons on them.
- ❖ Inform trappers to check if there are other trappers in the area and to stay away.
- ❖ Keep up the good work.
- ❖ Thanks for opening the roads in the Tongass. Allows non-natives to trap out of Hoonah. A longer otter season would sure help our local steelhead populations.
- ❖ Glad to see you still keeping contact with trappers.
- ❖ I trapped in Angoon for 3 days, in Scammon Bay for 10 days, around Juneau for 1 month. My sets were 6 or less traps.

Southcentral/Southwest

- ✧ Push to have wolf taken off big game list. Big game are generally edible, except for B. bear. Wolf is not big game! It's a furbearer or predator. If it was not on the big game list, it could be controlled (shot from planes, poison, etc) much more easily, like is done over in Canada.
- 2. Open season year round for coyotes. They are more deadly on sheep lambs than anything else. They compete for lynx food and will kill red fox – both these pelts are more valuable than coyote.
- 3. Start a state bounty (\$100) per wolf pelt. We need to drastically, and very soon, cut the wolf populations or even our children will not enjoy sheep and moose hunting, maybe our grandchildren!
- ✧ I was recently elected chairman of the local advisory committee. After a short period of dealing with the department on various issues, I have decided that the department ignores biological numbers and makes decisions based on things like public opinion and perception and things like season alignment for ease of (non-existent) enforcement. So this year I decided not to give you free of charge biological population or harvest data. When I come to feel that the department has biologist not piologist (political science majors) within its ranks, I will be glad to share biological information with the department that may be utilized. I would also like to thanks the new Board of Game for all their support in spite of the department's piologist.
- ✧ Aerial wolf shooting may not be politically correct. However, not many folks have seen a wolf-killed moose barely eaten.
- ✧ Mostly trap beaver – when I do trap. There seem to be a lot of them this year. Very liberal seasons and bag limits – will try to snare a few of them this year.
- ✧ ADF&G is doing a great job!
- ✧ Would like to see the marten season in 14 and 16A longer. When conditions are good, seasons are closed. Lots of wolves in unit 19C, few moose no calves. Second time in 20 years our family did not shoot a moose. Never saw a bull, only caribou we saw being chased down river by a wolf. Can hear wolves howling at anytime of the day. Nonresident hunters shoot for horns and waste the meat. Guides partly to blame.
- ✧ I would like to see the seasons change for lynx and wolverine in 14. Move lynx season to Jan 15–Feb 15. And bump wolverine back one month as well. Early November weather is so unpredictable that you may not be able to get to areas until December.
- ✧ Poor unfrozen early season. Could not get to the area that I typically trap marten until after the marten season was over. More wolves passing through the area that I trap than I have seen in years past. More beaver and lynx in the area this past season, fewer otter sign.
- ✧ Quite a few more wolf packs in the area than 5 years ago. Fair number of moose. Plenty of black and brown bear. Protect our access.
- ✧ We could use a longer marten season in 16A. Marten are real abundant the past few years. With winter being slow to arrive these days, we end up with the season being shortened on the front end.
- ✧ Would like to see unit 16A for marten same as 16B (a season opened until Jan 31)! Same as mink and weasel seasons.
- ✧ I would like to have a longer season for marten, from Carpenter Creek north of Matanuska River to Coal Creek, the same as 13D. The marten don't come out of the high country until late.
- ✧ Did not see as many wolf or wolverine tracks as last year. Lynx were common in rivers, but nowhere else. Lynx are moving farther north for the last 2 years.
- ✧ Work kept me from trapping this season. I have introduced my kids to trapping. We are all still learning. It makes me a better outdoorsman and brings the family together.
- ✧ With increasing values for otter in recent years, we are seeing increased pressure and perhaps overharvest in some areas of eastern Prince William Sound. Preseason recon. this year indicates that otter population have plummeted in Nelson Bay, Simpson Bay, Sheep Bay, Port Gravina... ADF&G should consider reducing harvest limits in portions of Unit 6.

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- I feel that closing the lynx seasons without taking the proposal through the advisory committee process is wrong!
- A lot of bear problems in early season, getting in my wolverine sets. Can't trap early in season. Should find a way to lower bear population in Cordova.
- I've trapped off and on all my life. My father was a trapper and that helped pay the bills while my brother, sister and I were growing up. It was an important part of our lives. Today with the anti-fur movement and the low fur prices, it's not so important. Having said this, it's important to me to continue to have the same rights and lifestyle that I had as a youngster. But with the Department of Agriculture, cops, state troopers, and enforcement from cities, greenies, harassing trappers, it's an era gone by. I will continue buying hunting, trapping, and sport fishing licenses to support the industry with hope that it will survive. I've had many great days anticipating that next set around the corner, with fresh tracks in new snow. I've skinned a lot of fur, even wearing out a few knives. Other than tagging, I feel the rest of my trapping business is private.
- Please let the lynx season in UWRT coincide with wolverine season or Nov 10–Jan 31.
- I missed most of the trapping season. I don't understand your lynx season. I imagine you are shortening the season because there aren't very many lynx. The lynx are going to cycle no matter whether we trap them or not. They won't come back any faster if the season's only a month long.
- Please mention to the area biologist that deer bag limit should be decreased during the immediate years following heavy snowfall winter (as did Kodiak), at least extend the bucks-only season. Too many does shot on poor years of survival makes for harder hunting in areas of less deer density/square mile. I have a degree in wildlife management and pay close attention to deer population dynamics and consider myself the expert of 6D on deer annually.
- Be friendly and helpful to local trappers to show them where to go to catch wolves.
- I moved from Cordova to Kotzebue in mid winter. I knew I was moving so I never started trapping in Cordova. I arrived in Kotzebue too late to start trapping a new area. I spent some

hunting observed and shot at several coyotes up high working sheep trails. Very poor caribou calf survival this year, some can be predators, wolves observed killing 3 calves in one hour on Glass Creek unit 13A in early July.

- ✧ If and when you allow aerial same-day, or airborne shooting of wolves, I would recommend the following. A limited registration or drawing permit with orientation class so it won't be a mess and get bad press and have people not knowing boundaries. These comments are from a pilot, trapper, hunter, guide.
- ✧ Warm winter. Rivers didn't freeze up until late so could not get out as far. But still had a good/fun season. There appeared to be more squirrels and shrews – but that could be only because of the warmer weather so they were out more.
- ✧ One thing I would like to see for 13E is a longer season – until the end of February – for wolverine. This would cut down if not stop the incidental catches. Just 4 miles up the Parks Highway in Unit 20, the season is open until the end of February. That tells me there probably isn't a real good biological reason why we can't extend it longer in 13E.
- ✧ Let us use planes for some better predator control. I saw 1 bull moose around Lake Louise all fall. Spent every weekend at the cabin and no moose, a few caribou around. No bears at the cabin though.
- ✧ I wish the season would open earlier, especially for lynx (when numbers are up a little)
- ✧ I am a recreational trapper and do not sell any furs. There are a lot of poachers in the Hatcher Pass area 14.
- ✧ Poor snow conditions early. Didn't trap.
- ✧ Fox population continues to decline. Talking to other trappers, it appears that this is the trend many places in the state. In this country recreational snowmobilers who chase them down will likely keep the population down as most of their damage is done in March and April when fox are at the dens. Not sure now to deal with this problem as it is almost impossible to enforce.
- ✧ I trap wolves only because their numbers have been up in recent years while moose have been down and because they are the most challenging and interesting to trap. Anything else I catch is by accident in wolf sets.
- ✧ This is a great deal. Good to see Fish and Game using all the great data collected by people in the field. This season I hope to run my usual line of 20-30 miles for varied species. I'll let you know what I find.
- ✧ I have heard that there are groups trying to limit the number of river otter trapped around Kachemak Bay. This area contains a good number of otter. I think there is no need to limit the number trapped.
- ✧ There was an abundance of lynx sign in Unit 7 this past year. This could have been due to poor prey conditions in Unit 15. These lynx may have been nomadic in their search for prey. Hare populations have been down in Unit 7, but they're never abundant due to large tracts of coniferous forests. I suspect these large numbers are now decimated because of lack of prey. Is the answer to harvest these excess lynx or let nature take its course? It seems that the present day thought is to let it run its course. Marten populations are down due to overharvest. The Unit 7 population probably should have a season limit. Your survey is great if used as a management tool.
- ✧ Did not have as much time to trap last year, shortened my line and effort. Floods came and washed out half my mink and otter sets, so I was discouraged and pulled up. Wolves moved into the river bottoms and drove out all the coyotes, large pack twenty plus animals in the South Fork. Multiple moose kills in the area. The floods wiped out the beaver dams, but they seemed to make it through and I saw new activity where they had begun to dig into the riverbank for the winter. With no feed beds left, it would have been tough on them. I am sure the warm winter allowed them to forage all year. River otters scarce this year. Seems to be less around. Mink population is very high.

- ❖ I agree with the closing of the lynx on the refuge. There aren't that many in the Kenai Mountains. Near Cooper Lake and Cooper Landing, I've never seen so many – they're getting the grouse. I may have just been lucky, but I saw 6 during the season and another this summer along Snug Harbor Road and the shore of Kenai Lake.
- ❖ I only set 6 traps one night while ice fishing in 13A. All set were for muskrats and I caught two rats.
- ❖ After being run off my trapline of 15 years by the U.S. Forest Service, I had planned on going after beaver to have my wife a beaver coat made. Due to the lack of snow here on the Kenai Peninsula, I didn't trap but two beaver. Hope this winter will be a winter of more snow, maybe someone in the Forest Service who is not an environmentalist wearing a uniform of the USFS.
- ❖ My main trapping is for marten. The low snow keeps them up high and the rain keeps me down low.
- ❖ I would like to see the beaver season in Unit 15 extended until the end of April to allow some open water trapping. I would also like the muskrat season moved back up to June 10th, so we can hunt them with .22's from canoes. Importation and planting of parka squirrels and ruffed grouse on the Kenai Peninsula would feed more furbearers, increasing potential trapping opportunity.
- ❖ Thanks for the good work trying to promote trapping. I've given a few demonstrations at the South Peninsula Sportsmen's Association but would like to find a way to bring more young people into trapping. It's been a big part of my life. If there is anyway I can help, let me know. Thanks again.
- ❖ Last season waited for snow which would open the refuge to snowmachines. Never happened. Am looking forward to a more normal winter this year.
- ❖ I would recommend having trappers register for areas/lines. There are people in my area who don't trap anymore, yet still claim areas as their traditional runs and tell everyone else to stay out. Other people who live in the region seasonally, express interest of coming back in the winter to trap in areas around their places. They claim the area as theirs and then never come back and trap. It's hard to get new or younger people trapping when people "set claim" to all the surrounding areas and never trap. Having trappers register their lines/areas would be a step toward keeping active and interested trappers in the system while the "non-trappers" claiming all the areas would be phased out. It also creates better backing for the honor system – if new trappers can see that a person really has been actively trapping in an area by registration, they would be more likely to find a different area. As of now, a lot of people claim areas and say they trap when it's obvious they don't. It's hard to honor their "claimed area" when you know they're lying. I've also seen a great increase in the wolf population and in turn a significant decrease in moose. I would like to see some more action in getting these predators under control – like same-day-airborne hunting.
- ❖ Just started trapping.
- ❖ The local state troopers keep scaring, bugging, and bothering the local young trappers who are trapping close to town (They have to trap close – no means of going very far.) Sometimes they catch dogs. We are supposed to have a leash law for dogs. I feel that the state troopers should be talking to the dog owners, not scaring off the young trappers.
- ❖ Wolf numbers are exceedingly high along with the subsequent predation on moose and caribou by the wolves. I have found it to be futile to try and bring wolf numbers down by trapping. We need to be able to use airplanes the same day to either land and shoot or aerial shoot to be effective.
- ❖ The season over seven months ago.
- ❖ I have seen and read the regulations of 9B; and I would like to see the season go through the end of March. Right now our season is Nov. 10–March 31 for the species of beaver, otter, and wolf. I would like to see the species of mink, lynx and wolverine go through the end of March also.

- ❖ High fuel prices and low fur prices make trapping an occupation for fun, not profit, which is not all bad.
- ❖ Lack of snow last year didn't allow us to go places like the wildlife refuge because of the snowmachine rules. Airplanes could not land in places that are typically used (lack of snow). Consequently, on the Kenai traditional traplines were abandoned in search of areas that were accessible. We didn't have an average Alaska winter here. The overall number of animals caught resulted in less than average.
- ❖ No snow or ice made traveling impossible. Maybe this year.
- ❖ We have a wolf problem! As long as people sit around and do nothing it will continue. Ballot box biology won't work, doesn't work, and can't work. Out of complete ignorance people have been led to believe in this alpha-beta hogwash. Anyone that has ever kept a female dog unspayed can tell you if you don't watch it, you're going to have pups. Male wolves don't run into female wolves in heat and say I'll pass. They are all getting knocked-up, so are they all alpha females?! Wolves are prolific and if you don't keep some sort of control on their numbers they will eat everything they can catch. While I'm at it, there are also too many bears here. Why one every four years. I'd change that to one a day in the month of May, and come September you can shoot so many you can't remember! Maybe the wolf experts could come teach them to eat the bears. That makes as much sense as what's being done –nothing! Thanks for your time and effort on the questionnaire. I always find that interesting.
- ❖ The last 3 years I've had to leave home to work because of the bad fishing season here in Bristol Bay. Before that the price of furs has been so poor that it's hardly worth it. My son is 14 years old and I've been teaching him trapping around home. He hunts with me. He harvested a moose this fall and got a couple of caribou last year.

Interior

- ❖ Hopefully we'll have a better winter! Thanks for asking our opinions and keeping up to date on the trapping world. I think it's important for both trapper and ADF&G to work together and keep the animals available for the next generation. P.S. My younger sister is also getting started in trapping (she's 11). Hopefully we can interest more young people in the lost art. It sure is a good way for kids to learn about their environment, animals, animal habits, tracks, etc., but its also gets them out of the house! Hopefully, we'll have good weather this winter. Thanks also for the information you've compiled in the trapper questionnaire. One last thing: I believe the Tier II moose permit should be re-evaluated. People who live out in the Bush, IN their game units, year round, can't even apply for one. I mean this is Alaska – who releases applications in May (breakup) which must be back in May? Also the people who live in the game unit have no refrigeration (hence winter harvest) can't get any, yet people who have been here 20 years and live in Anchorage, can get one simply because they end up with more points than us. Completely unfair. This may not get anything changed, but please consider it. I just think the point system should be done again to fit into modern Alaska.
- ❖ There should be a list across the state of open land where young and old trappers can go to trap. Farms, ranches, state and federal land. I've lived in Delta Junction 7 years and still really haven't found a place to trap. Wherever you go, someone claims it.
- ❖ Very few wolves and only one wolf pup track possible, lack of snow and no moose wintering low kept them out of my trapping area. Also low population of rabbits and grouse, also mice/rodents not very high. Maybe a factor in the low wolf activity. Marten population normal only in heavy timber. Has been low in more open areas since rabbit population dropped. Have not set these areas for 3 years and still very little sign.
- ❖ Keep up the good work.
- ❖ Due to full time job and lack of an area close enough to run a part-time line without spending too much on gas to get to it, I will probably not trap this year either.

- ✧ It can be difficult to find an area to trap in Alaska because of limited access. Most good access or main drainages have established lines. I have been cutting trail and will continue, but it takes time. Instead of one longer line, I will have 2 or 3 lines under 6 miles.
- ✧ I just hope we have some colder weather so some of us can get to our trap lines.
- ✧ We usually catch 100-200 marten per year. This year we caught 18. Numbers were so depressed we were pulling line after 2-4 weeks as we pushed the end of line farther out. Caught half the marten over 6 miles of trail/2weeks. Very poor recruitment over the last 2-3 years. Lots of voles; lynx high was not extreme. Most marten seemed in good condition. Open creeks, health problems delayed getting the full line out till January.
- ✧ Recreators (especially dog mushers and skijorers) generally do not respect that trails/roads they use were built by miners, loggers, and trappers. They should build their own trails. I caught by snare (and rescued) three abandoned dogs 20+ miles from Fairbanks.
- ✧ It's too bad there isn't a better way of identifying traplines and trapping areas. It would make it easier to find a place to trap and easier to protect a line. Someone stole all my traps, 2 dozen in all.
- ✧ The price of fur is too low so I just buy the license to support Fish and Game. It's too hard to find a trapping area close by. Dog mushers think they can take over any trail you put in. Then you can't set trail sets. They throw your traps away. I had my trails marked with a sign and they still threw my traps in the woods.
- ✧ Please, let's not let the public vote on trapping regulations. That decision should be made by Fish and Game. Science, not emotion.
- ✧ I would welcome knowing about an area where I could spend less than two hours to travel and then start making sets.
- ✧ I do not want wolves and wolverines to be considered big game animals. That is wanton waste. The fur is not prime before or after trapping season.
- ✧ For the second year in a row, the same two Fairbanks "sport trappers" undermined resident trapper efforts. Worse, they brag of snares from "here to Fairbanks" and how, even if the road were closed as it was scheduled to be, they'd "open it up." Given their incomes and access to equipment, maybe they could to the everlasting chagrin of us who live here and need what little remuneration as we do from trapping our home grounds. Persons with incomes, and I include their income to necessity ratios, have no business taking away the below poverty incomes of the less fortunate – under the name of recreation. Perhaps this is a distinct disadvantage to those living on the road systems' terminus, but it also displays a lack of ethics, personal accountability, and civic responsibility on the part of these two individuals. Maybe this is another example of overpaid-with-excess-leisure-time clashing with those overworked and underpaid. Or possibly, it's just plain greed. Unfortunately, if it is publicized and/or comes to legislation we'll all lose out because anti-trappers will focus on the opportunity. They will capitalize on the rift, exponentially gaining public sympathy, and ultimately threaten the end to all trapping. Hunting and fishing are next. Further, when the foregoing is combined with infrequent line checks and sets left operable – some containing animals – year round, the future of trapping in general draws attention like bears to berries. And no trapper or trapping organization that I know of has the funds to combat anti-trapping efforts. The only way we can keep trapping alive is by behaving responsibly toward one another as well as, or rather especially to, the environment and all its occupants.
- ✧ I think ADF&G is doing a good job.
- ✧ Concern with the decline of furbearing animals. Permanent roads into any more of this state will only speed up this problem. They must be stopped if the game is to survive. There are too many people now wanting the same thing and the simple fact is the land will not provide for all users. No more people, it's really that simple. I have trapped since the 1970s and have seen it decline continually.

- ❖ Having different closure dates for coyote and fox seems silly. Get them aligned. I enjoyed bringing in my beaver for sealing in the past, but I agree that this is probably funds that could be used better. So doing away with beaver sealing makes sense.
- ❖ The questionnaire is appreciated. I wish you had more political clout on the wolf issues and subsistence issues.
- ❖ Thank you for the questionnaire. I believe it is a very useful tool.
- ❖ The area biologists need to send these reports to every person who purchases a trapping license. Because I have lived in Fairbanks for 3 years and have only received this report from the AB in Juneau.
- ❖ It would be nice to see the state putting on classes on how to properly trap game and how to be successful catching game you're after, not putting animals in danger.
- ❖ Low snow prevented travel. Fifty percent of line not within reach. Late river freeze knocked off one month. Fur scarce. No marten. A few cats, less fox, more coyotes, wolves abundant but excessive snowmachine traffic made trail setting impossible.
- ❖ I know it will never happen, but it would be nice if folks could not just go down your trail and start trapping. Thanks for all your support.
- ❖ My trapping this year consisted only of taking a youngster out and helping him catch a fox. I moved to a new area and only trapped behind the house.
- ❖ Had eye problems – didn't get to trap too steady.
- ❖ I have trapped wolves for the 8th year now. In that time, I have seen maybe 2 out of 100 wolves that have bum hair. I check traps regularly, not once a week, 3-4 times a week. Proper fur care is the most important part of trapping. Animals left for a week or more several places before the lazy trapper checks the sets, therefore you get your so called Mohawk wolves. The next time a story about wolves is in the Daily News Miner I would hope real trappers are interviewed instead of lazy weekend counterfeit trappers who just want their names in the paper.
- ❖ I really didn't have a "trapline." I just set rabbit snares within 2 miles of my house. When foxes started to eat my rabbits, I set fox snares and got 3 foxes. It's been five years since I've had a real trapline.
- ❖ Thanks for continually striving for maximum hunting and trapping opportunity while maintaining our wildlife resources for future generations.
- ❖ The problem in my area is too many people.
- ❖ My only 2 comments are that it would be easier to remember number and percentages if this were earlier in the summer, or if you asked trappers to keep notes and then send them a report to fill out. My other comment is that this is great. I'm glad you are asking the trappers about their lines as they know the animals and conditions on their lines. Please feel free to send me a questionnaire next year.
- ❖ I would suggest Fish and Game place a bounty on wolves. It would help decrease the number of wolves and also encourage more trapping.
- ❖ The reason I didn't trap the 2002–2003 season is due to the West Fork forest fire in May of 2002. My trapline was in the path of the fire and needs time to mend.
- ❖ Thanks for your support.
- ❖ The change in boundary in 20A, where you can't trap wolf west of the intertie power line – this change really changed my whole trapping program, must really be careful not to target wolves or use large traps. I really don't want to catch a wolf in this area due to all the controversy. This new buffer zone really affected my trapping methods.
- ❖ The moose are disappearing in many areas of the state. Let's get some wolves and bears gone. It is general consensus that ADF&G is doing a very lousy job managing moose in the state.
- ❖ Caribou used to be predominant annually, but lately they have been sparse. Fly-in hunters turn the herd by shooting the leaders (i.e., big antlers). Our ancestors and elders always let

- the leaders go so the rest of the herd will come, but the need for big trophy antlers changed that? No one knows because they never stopped the fly-in hunters.
- ❖ Since there's no money or work in the village, I may trap a little this year. I hope the fur is good.
 - ❖ Get rid of current governor.
 - ❖ We sure appreciate the efforts of ADF&G and ATA to keep trapping alive. We thought trapping would be dead by now with the invasion of all these wild-eyed freaks into state politics. We live for trapping!
 - ❖ Too many outside hunters. Too many end boat. Scare moose out of hunting area.
 - ❖ Too many wolves affecting moose population. We need aerial hunting for the wolves again. This is the first year people have to go without meat. So please help us. I'm 65 and I don't want to starve.
 - ❖ We trap beaver for food. We always trapped for food and clothes to survive. My family survived in hard conditions from trapping.
 - ❖ I plan to trap this winter with my two bags. I would like to see more trapping classes at the schools.
 - ❖ Beaver in our area are very abundant. Wolves seem to be increasing. Wolverine is the same as usual. There seemed to be more lynx than usual last year. I know of one coyote shot in Kaiyuh, which I skinned for the hunter. This was the first; most people didn't know what it was.
 - ❖ I'm repairing my sno-go, so this season will be better. Last winter was the first in a few years that I didn't get a wolf. Also the wolf trapping class that Glenn Stout put on was excellent. Thanks.
 - ❖ Lynx population continues to decline with the hare crash. I estimate hare population is at 3-4% of the peak. Also feel there are 10% of the lynx peak population. The lynx I caught were all extra large older lynx, as they are cannibalizing smaller ones from the population. Marten numbers dropped off last year more than likely disease related, and are still low in my area. I restricted my harvest. Fox numbers are low also as lynx hunt fox when the hares crashed. Fox that are remaining are staying in more "open" terrains. Wolf numbers increased over last year as caribou overwintering in this area on the mountains allows higher wolf population. An animal that should be included as a prey indicator in the survey is Arctic ground squirrel and wolverine have a significant bearing on pup survival in Arctic/alpine habitats. (Arctic ground squirrel numbers have declined significantly on the south slope Brooks Range). Wolves will alternate to a higher number of sheep and moose calves with reduced small game numbers. Thanks for the questionnaire and good work.
 - ❖ For the most part it was a good season, didn't catch a lot but had a good time taking my 12-year-old along. The trapping in the area was very respectful of everyone, and they seemed to respect the trappers next door. I hope to see this continue. The hare population has reached bottom and there are more rabbits, lynx, and caribou in the northern drainages. Wolf population was low. Saw two female wolverines, hope to have a litter on the line next season. Saw a large number of moose wintering along the divide near larger willow patches. Haven't seen that in several years. Was great just to be out there. Hope everyone has a good "next season."
 - ❖ I'm glad the department is keeping up this program, and hope it continues for some time. I'm concerned that the fur value section of this report is nowhere near accurate. In a way it is an injustice to report the figures that are in the report. They are truly minimum values and I think make the "industry" of trapping look like it is smaller than it really is. I also think that some of the harvest figures presented are fairly inaccurate. I'm shocked at the lack of compliance with fur sealing regulations in some rural parts of the state. I'm not sure how to fix that.
 - ❖ I am very glad that aerial wolf hunting opened up in our area. This should have been done a long time ago. Thanks for moving the bears this spring. I really think it made a difference. I

saw 8 moose in one lake about 1 mile from my house. I have not seen that many moose in one spot in years.

- ❖ Make all seasons, snares, traps, shooting for game animals the same.
- ❖ Keep up bear relocation in the spring and increase wolf take in the area.
- ❖ I will be trapping this season. Thanks for the questionnaire booklet.
- ❖ Make it legal to use foothold snares for bears in 19D for a month in the spring for 3–4 years. Too many bears eating moose calves.
- ❖ Do all you can to get land-and-shoot opened up. No more than 20% of moose left from 12 or so years ago. Plenty of feed and no bad winters. Calf survival is almost non-existent with low number of cows. If we shoot some wolves, the tourists won't go away.
- ❖ You should have shot and killed all bears transported to Fairbanks instead of wasting money. Should legalize aerial hunts on wolves again.
- ❖ Fur prices too cheap! Gas prices too high! Need spring season for beaver shooting, too many beavers blocking creeks for fish to spawn.
- ❖ There are too many beaver damming the creeks. Whitefish having trouble getting through. Need to cut down on people who hunt moose and other animals.
- ❖ Considerable decrease in numbers. All lynx I trapped were real large, fat and in good shape. Mostly male. Only trap them in November and December. Try to get out before I damage my breeding stock. I tend to believe that cats mate real early in those mild winters we experienced recently, which coincides with trapping season, hence I quit early. Answer me this if you would: How can a trapper truly avoid carting cats as he is still targeting wolverines at the end of their season? The only way to release a furbearer out of conibear is extracting a dead species. No catch and release here. Hence, I don't use conies at all, my breeding stock is too valuable for me. Good to see a profoundly competent board of game, support and encourage all members to work as one board, they are our managers! And truly competent individuals they are. Scott and Tim you outdid yourself with putting together the 2001-02 trapper questionnaire, a terrific source of information. Yes, the code of ethics is right there in the front of your find book. May it radiate high morals from Ketchikan to Barrow.
- ❖ The weather plays a big part in fur conditions, warm weather shorter fur, colder weather primed fur, and you know what that means to the prices. So I'm learning on when to trip, because of weather. You sent me two questionnaires. I'm the same person – make note.
- ❖ Less regulations. More trapping
- ❖ You're doing a good job and providing a valuable service for the state.
- ❖ Too many wolves.
- ❖ I trap with my kids to show them something about life and lessen the grasp of video games and television. That subsistence lifestyle is eating moose, fish, beaver, lynx, etc.
- ❖ I am concerned about Alaska wolves and other furbearers, about misconceptions of wolves by tourists. I believe a well-written, small 3x9 card of how Alaska wolves are plentiful not endangered and how trappers utilize the pelts both for warmth and function would be great for the gift shops that sell our work.
- ❖ I do not trap, but I do considerable predator calling each winter.
- ❖ Wildlife biologists could give more info to trappers as to the whereabouts of wolf packs and areas in the lines that contain action.
- ❖ I plan on trapping only wolf and wolverine this year. I will use snares almost entirely.
- ❖ I don't want Fish and Game to start shooting wolves. Don't let those with the ability to access info on tagged furbearers to trap those units they work in.
- ❖ Why did the fox all disappear with the decline of the snowshoes? There seem to be lots of rodents. Do you think lynx predated them? I had lynx come in my yard and drag fox carcasses away, and had one just sit and stare at my Australian shepherd as she barked at it from maybe 6 or 8 feet away – showing no fear. There was no fox sign in my area last season – normally I catch about 6.

- ❖ Need to get more young people interested.

Arctic/Western

- ❖ We have a 5-year moose hunting moratorium going into effect in this area next year. I strongly believe this has to be coupled with heavy wolf harvesting in order to have success. Also, in my trapping area (and I believe throughout the mountain areas) brown bears are slowly replacing black bears. Now when we climb hills to hunt we see nearly all brown bears instead of what we'd see 10 years ago, which was mostly black bears. This also spells a problem for calving moose. We, as trappers, have a responsibility to help the situation by removing as many wolves as possible. If the moose populations do rebound, we won't get any credit, but we trappers will know what we did.
- ❖ As I didn't trap last year, I'm sorry I don't have any firsthand information to help you with. It wasn't low prices that kept me away, (we always tan and make traditional handicrafts anyway) but a new house and new baby.
- ❖ Thanks for the information, very nice. Price of fuel and lower fur prices have pretty much kept lots of trappers at home. Even for fur it's getting to be a more expensive hobby. There are so many beaver they are closing off almost everything. Most nontrappers do not understand the importance of a good trapper.
- ❖ If they let us hunt wolf, they should let us hunt by snowmachine. Too many wolves.
- ❖ I managed to find work last winter so I didn't have as much time to trap as I would have liked. I caught fewer furs, but made money. I worked at otter a little harder and it paid off. The auction house was giving me up around \$170 for a good one. Fox prices were also good. We haven't had a rainy season in the last few years and our winters are getting milder hardly even below 0 degrees anymore.
- ❖ Lack of snow made it hard to reach some traps in 18. Meat from animals I give to the mushers locally so no animals are wasted.
- ❖ Too old to trap.
- ❖ Why do the otters have to be tagged even though they are hunted legally?
- ❖ I suggest some wolf control for increased moose numbers. The big beautiful moose, the heart of the wilderness meat supply is getting awfully scarce. Let's get it back into a good balance for everyone. Moose are way more valuable than a smelly wolf. There's a heap of predators out here, high predator numbers. Maybe some government wolf trappers would help?
- ❖ Didn't trap for a few years, because of low fur prices, but I might set my trap line this coming year. Also this past year we didn't have any snow till late in the year. Also thanks for including me in your questionnaire.
- ❖ I'm not trapping anymore. I tried getting a dozen beavers to experiment with potential to sell locally. Folks are spoiled on commercial tanned hides –I gave them away.
- ❖ You folks are doing a great job!
- ❖ Rabbits are abundant and lynx are coming back in good numbers. Foxes (red) are very abundant. Rabies had affected some this 2003 spring. Weasels are everywhere.
- ❖ Jim Dau does an excellent job, both from management and public relations standpoints. We need more people who balance wise management of species with concern for users.
- ❖ Even though we got a moose we saw less tracks than ever before. We saw 5 cows during the season and only 1 calf. We had 17 years of caribou and wolves kept increasing on the trapline. Then 2 years of no caribou and noticed more wolf killed moose.
- ❖ Open bear hunting earlier for GMU 22C. Change regulation so we may harvest a bear every two years instead of every 4 years in GMU 22C.
- ❖ I appreciate the questionnaire. Keep up the good work.
- ❖ I put at least 6 sets for wolverine, which caught one mink. Some snares for wolves, catching one. I caught 3 wolverines in the same area, two of which were caught in one location. On the other location sets, I had wolverine signs with no catches.

- * Only hunt furbearers if in area during caribou outing, trap 1 weasel just to stop him eating my meat in storage. Still too many red foxes eating all the duck and small nesting bird eggs as well as rabid foxes all winter. Prices are too low to trap/hunt. Any plan on bounty to reduce numbers?
- * The information from other trappers and hunters doing this survey is real interesting from other areas from Alaska.
- * I enjoy reading about other people's trapping experiences and reports.
- * Shorten fox season to end March 1 or Feb. 28. Fur is getting rubbed by middle of February. Wolf season should end before bear season opens to prevent outside hunters from shooting whatever they see. Shouldn't wolf season open Nov. 1 when fur is prime? Not Aug. 1.
- * Keep up the good work. I look forward to the results of the questionnaire each year.

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. 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 Tom Seaton for editing assistance and suggestions.

I hope to get out next year's report earlier in the year so please send back the surveys as soon as you can.

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.

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