

# **Trapper Questionnaire**

**Statewide Annual Report  
1991–1992**

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

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**TRAPPER QUESTIONNAIRE  
STATEWIDE REPORT  
1991-92**

The trapper questionnaire report currently includes information contributed by interior, southcentral, and southeastern Alaska trappers. Our mailing list for the 1991-92 season included 979 trappers. We received information back from 537 individuals (55%). Of these, 116 were from Southeast, 236 from Southcentral, and 185 from Interior Alaska. This report summarizes the information provided by these trappers. Responses to questions asked by your local area biologist are not covered here. Please contact your area biologist for information regarding questions specific to your area. Comments that were written on the back of questionnaires are presented at the end of this report. Names of individuals and references to specific traplines are not included.

**A PROFILE OF ALASKA'S TRAPPERS**

Trappers provided information that helped us learn about how experienced our trappers are, how they run their traplines, and how much effort they put into catching fur in their area.

**Did you trap in 1991-92?**

About 73% of the trappers said they trapped during the 1991-92 season. This is similar to the 1990-91 and 1989-90 seasons, when 71% and 76% of the trappers said they had trapped.

**How many total years of trapping experience do you have?**

The average trapper has been catching fur for almost two decades (19.9 years). The newest trappers have been trapping for only one year, while two individuals said they had trapped for 70 years (A remarkable feat in itself)! During the 1989-90 and 1990-91 seasons, the number of years of trapping experience also averaged close to 20 years and ranged from 1 to 65.

**How many years have you trapped in Alaska?**

Most of our trappers had gained some trapping experience elsewhere before trapping in Alaska. The average number of years of trapping experience in Alaska was 15.7 years, vs. almost 20 years overall. The range in years was from 1 to 70; one of the trappers with 70 years experience did it all here in Alaska. This information is similar to previous years' data.

### **What transportation did you use to get to your main trapping area?**

Trappers generally used snowmachines (36%) or highway vehicles (30%) to get to their trapping area. Some trappers used boats (14%) and airplanes (11%). Very few trappers used dogteams (4%), skis or snowshoes (3%), or 3-4 wheelers (2%).

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

Most trappers ran their trapline with a snowmachine (54%). Some trappers walked their line (14%), used a boat (11%), or used skis or snowshoes (8%). Very few trappers used a highway vehicle (4%), dogteam (4%), airplane (3%), or 3-4 wheeler (2%) to run their trapline.

### **How long was your main trapline in 1991-92?**

The average length of a trapline in Alaska was a little under 40 miles, however, trapline length varied from less than 1 to over 400 miles. The average length of a trapper's main line has not changed much in the past two years.

### **How many years have you been trapping in the same place?**

On the average, trappers have worked the same area for just over a decade (10.1 years), ranging from 1 to 60 years. This information also is similar to that provided in the past two years.

### **What was the approximate number of sets you averaged on your line in 1991-92?**

Most trappers put out relatively few sets. Thirty-one percent of the trappers used less than 25 sets and 27% used 25-50 sets. Twenty-two percent of the trappers made 51-100 sets and 13% said they made 101-200 sets. Very few made 201-300 sets (4%) or more than 300 sets (3%).

### **Was your trapping effort during the 1991-92 season less, the same, or more than the last season you trapped?**

Most trappers indicated that their trapping effort was the same (38%) or less (35%) than the last season they trapped. Twenty-eight percent indicated that their trapping effort was more.

## **ALASKA'S FURBEARER POPULATIONS - WHAT'S HAPPENING**

Most trappers have a pretty good understanding of how the fur population is doing in their area. We asked trappers to help us assess statewide furbearer abundance and indicate whether populations are going up, down, or staying the same.

Many things help trappers decide if fur populations along their line are scarce, common, or abundant. Similarly, other signs can help the trapper determine whether or not the number of animals are fewer, the same, or more this season than they were last season. Unusually cold or warm temperatures, the amount of snow, the amount of trapline actively used, the experience of the trapper, and actual changes in the numbers of animals are among the many things affecting a trapper's judgement as to the abundance of and trends in furbearer populations on the trapline.

In spite of the difficulties, the fact remains that trappers spend a lot of time on the ground observing furbearers and their sign. This is a valuable pool of information that helps us manage the state's resources. On the other hand, many biologists get a broader perspective by gathering information over large geographic areas while doing aerial surveys, talking to many trappers, or by reviewing information such as is provided from this trapper questionnaire. By working together and combining information from all sources, both wildlife biologists and trappers can gain a better understanding of the status of furbearer populations throughout the state.

Tables 1-3 summarize what trappers told us about the relative abundance and trends in furbearer populations over a large area of the state. Table 1 exhibits index values of the relative abundance and trend of furbearer populations in Interior Alaska. The Interior was divided into four descriptive areas: the Lower Tanana River Basin (LTB); the Upper Tanana River Basin, Charlie and Fortymile River (UTB); the Middle Yukon and Koyukuk (MYK); and the Upper Yukon River Basin (UYB). Table 2 exhibits index values for Southcentral Alaska, which was divided into seven descriptive areas: the Copper River and Upper Susitna River Basin (CUS), the Lower Susitna Basin (LSB), Prince William Sound and coastline (PWS), the Kenai Peninsula (KEP), the Kodiak Archipelago (KOI), the Alaska Peninsula (AKP), and Bristol Bay (BRB). Table 3 exhibits index values for Southeastern Alaska, which was divided into four areas: Units 1A and 2 (1A2), Units 1B and 3 (1B3), Units 1C, 1D, and 5 (1CD5), and Unit 4 (U4).

If the numbers in the tables do not seem to make much sense to you, look at the bottom of the table where you will find a word that corresponds to a range of index values. If you are comfortable with numbers, the index values provide a somewhat finer indication of abundance or trend than does the word designation. Both indicators have limitations and are based on assumptions that may not be true. We need to do additional research to improve on the value of these indices.

The relative abundance numerical index presented in the tables is based upon work done on snowshoe hares in Alberta, Canada by Lloyd Keith and his student Christopher Brand. They compared the results of responses to a trapper questionnaire with their estimates of snowshoe hare densities based on their own field work and found there was a good relationship between these two measures. Based on this work, they developed an index for the responses received from trappers on the questionnaire. The index assigns

numerical values to the responses of scarce, common, or abundant that trappers mark on their questionnaires. The index ranges from 0% to 100%. Index values of 0% through 19% were interpreted as indicating hares were scarce, values from 20% through 50% indicated hares were at intermediate levels (=common), and values greater than 50% indicated that hares were abundant.

We do not know if the same ranges of percentages are appropriate for snowshoe hares in Alaska or for any other Alaskan species. Testing such a relationship remains to be done. Also, because of the large size of Alaska, it would be necessary to test out the method in many places and over many years. This testing would be costly and time consuming. However, even untested, the index provides a way to generally compare the trapper questionnaire results from different areas of the state over time.

The relative trend numerical index shows if trappers felt animals were fewer, the same, or more numerous than they were the previous year. This index is slightly different than the relative abundance index. The trend index was calculated by assigning a 1 if the box for fewer was checked, 2 if the box for same was checked, and 3 if the box for more was checked. The responses from all trappers in a geographic area were then summed for each species and this sum was divided by the number of trappers who responded from the area. The trend index value can range from 1 through 3.

Because we do not have another independent measure of trend to compare with as was done in the Alberta snowshoe hare study for the relative abundance index, it is necessary to select arbitrary ranges of values to represent the average opinion of trappers in a geographic area. For purposes of this report, an index value of 1 through 1.66 represents fewer, values from 1.67 through 2.33 represent the same, and values of 2.34 through 3 represent more.

### **Species Relative Abundance and Trend Summary of Tables 1-3**

#### **Interior**

Beaver primarily were reported as abundant, with numbers the same as in the previous season except in the UYB area; beaver numbers in this area were reported to be higher in 1991-92. Lynx were reported as common throughout the Interior, with a general trend toward greater numbers than in the previous season. Snowshoe hare were reported as common to abundant, with numbers the same in 1991-92 as in 1990-91. Grouse and ptarmigan were reported as scarce to common, with a trend toward fewer numbers than in 1990-91. Marten were reported as common to abundant, with numbers the same as in the previous season except in the UTB area; marten numbers in this area were reported to be fewer in 1991-92. Mink were reported as scarce to common, with numbers the same as in 1990-91 except in the UYB area; mink numbers in this area were

reported to be fewer in 1991-92. Red fox primarily were reported as abundant, with numbers the same as in 1990-91. River otter were reported as common, with numbers generally the same as in 1990-91. Wolves were reported as common to abundant, with numbers the same in 1991-92 as in 1990-91 except in the MYK area; wolf numbers in this area were reported to be higher in 1991-92. Coyotes and wolverines were reported as scarce to common, with numbers the same as in 1990-91.

### **Southcentral**

Beaver were reported as common to abundant throughout the southcentral areas, with numbers generally the same as in 1990-91. Coyotes were reported primarily as common to abundant in areas where they occur. Coyote numbers were the same in 1991-92 as in 1990-91 except in the KEP and BRB areas, where numbers were reported to be higher in 1991-92. Lynx were reported as scarce to common where they occur, with numbers the same as in 1990-91 except in the CUS area; lynx numbers in this area were reported to be higher in 1991-92. Snowshoe hare primarily were reported as common, and in most areas hare numbers were the same as in 1990-91. Marten were reported as scarce to common, with numbers the same in 1991-92 as in 1990-91 except in the BRB area; marten numbers in this area were reported to be fewer in 1991-92. Mink primarily were reported as common to abundant, with numbers the same in 1991-92 as in the previous season. River otter were reported as common to abundant, with numbers the same as in 1990-91 except in the KEP area; otter numbers in this area were reported to be higher in 1991-92. Wolves and wolverine were reported as scarce to common where they occur. Wolf and wolverine numbers were reported to be the same in 1991-92 as in 1990-91, except in the PWS and BRB areas where wolf numbers were reported to be higher in 1991-92.

### **Southeast**

Beaver were reported as common to abundant, with numbers the same as in 1990-91 except in the 1CD5 area; beaver numbers in this area were reported to be higher in 1991-92. Marten and mink were reported as abundant throughout the southeastern areas. Numbers of both these species were reported to be the same in 1991-92 as in 1990-91, except in Unit 4 where marten numbers were reported to be higher in 1991-92. River otter were reported as common to abundant, with numbers generally the same as in 1990-91. Wolves were reported as common to abundant in areas where they occur. Wolf numbers were the same as in 1990-91, except in the 1A2 area where wolf numbers were reported to be higher in 1991-92.

## **Response from Ketchikan Area Biologist Doug Larsen to Trapper Questions/Comments (GMU 1A and 2)**

Several of you provided comments on your Trapper Questionnaires last year. I appreciate hearing what you have to say and I will make every effort to act on your suggestions or concerns. One comment I received from a couple of trappers referred to the inconvenience trappers living in remote areas experience in having to seal their furs. I can appreciate the difficulties and I am willing to help minimize the inconvenience any way I can. For example, I've had trappers box their furs, enclose a note with all pertinent harvest information (where and when the furs were caught, method of take, method of transportation used, and license number), and a check made out to the U.S. Postal Service. After sealing the furs for the trappers, I place the furs back in the box, write the address of the trapper's desired fur buyer's office, mail the package using the trapper's check, and send the payment receipt back to the trapper. I have also received boxed furs in the mail which I've sealed and returned directly to trappers. If you happen to be one of the people who is inconvenienced by the sealing requirement, please consider implementing one of these methods. The Department's intent is not to make life difficult for trappers, but rather to allow us to obtain harvest information which can be used in managing furbearers.

Most of the trappers who responded to the questionnaire indicated that they were satisfied with the current season dates and didn't want to see any changes. However, there were a few trappers who suggested specific changes.

Two trappers suggesting extending the season for otters because that species currently appears to be abundant. While I agree that otter numbers appear to be relatively high at this time, I'm not sure that extending the season is all that practical. First, the two-and-a-half month season should give trappers adequate time to catch otters. I would expect, and I think it's been shown, that the greater the abundance of any species, the greater the trapper's catch per unit effort will be. Therefore, I would expect that even with the existing season dates, an abundance of otters would translate into more otters being caught with any amount of effort expended. Second, season dates attempt to coincide with pelt primeness. Although extending the season through the end of February may not result in appreciable loss of primeness, extending much beyond late February would likely begin to result in an increase in singed pelts showing up in the harvest. And third, if season dates differ for different species, incidental captures of species with closed seasons will occur. Therefore, it is most logical and practical either to change seasons for all species simultaneously or change none.

One trapper suggested opening and closing the otter season earlier. Again, however, I would expect that an earlier opening would likely result in a noticeable number of unprime pelts showing up in the harvest. Closing sooner would unjustifiably cut into the period of maximum pelt primeness.

The idea of closing the wolf trapping season by April 1 was suggested because of the chances of catching bears in wolf sets during April. I agree that incidental bear captures are a very definite possibility during April. However, I think that most trappers also recognize this fact and generally stop trapping when they begin to observe bear sign in their trapping areas. Because bear distribution and emergence from dens is not uniform throughout southern Southeast, the liberal April 30 deadline is imposed as a general guideline, but recognizes that there will be some trappers who actually stop trapping wolves much earlier (some as early as March) and others who are able to trap clear to the end of the season without encountering bears. Of course this problem is compounded by the annual, weather-related variability in the dates that bears emerge from dens.

Two trappers believe the beaver season on Prince of Wales Island should be closed by the end of February or the end of March rather than May 15. Another trapper indicated that the beaver harvest needs to be reduced in some areas of Unit 2 (Prince of Wales Island). I have no problem supporting a season reduction for beavers if there is a need and desire to do so. The Board of Game is scheduled to address furbearer seasons and bag limits in the spring of 1995. If there is widespread interest in seeing the Unit 2 beaver season shortened at that time, a proposal could be submitted for the Board's consideration. Of course, if there is believed to be a biological need to reduce seasons sooner, then an emergency order could be implemented to do so. I am not presently aware of any biological crisis relative to beavers in Unit 2, but I would welcome trapper's thoughts and insights on this.

One trapper suggested allowing dogs to be used to pursue furbearers in Alaska, as is legal in some other states. I suspect that most trappers would agree that having dogs to pursue furbearers would not necessarily increase harvest opportunities. I further suspect that most would consider dogs unnecessary and impractical given the species and trapping conditions we work within here in southeast Alaska. Marten, for example, are relatively easily trapped if they are present in an area and dogs would not be necessary. Otters and mink would surely go into dens if chased, and to get them out of dens would likely involve lighting fires and smoking them out, something I don't think most trappers would encourage or support. Chasing wolves with dogs would not be advisable given the wolf's reputation as a dog-killer. Beaver cannot be shot so cornering them with dogs would be ill advised. In short, it seems to me that using dogs to pursue furbearers would be impractical and unjustified here in southeast.

Two trappers suggested having registered trap lines similar to those used in Canada. This was suggested in order to avoid competition among trappers, and to curtail problems with what was described as "a few greedy men who are claiming with signs more shoreline than they can trap," and to help manage species. While registered trap lines could possibly help in managing furbearers and may indeed be necessary some time in the future, I would be inclined not to implement them unless absolutely necessary. Registering trap lines because of a few greedy people creates needless hardship and

restrictions for the many considerate, conservation-minded trappers. I would rather see peer pressure used as a means of persuading the few bad apples than restrictions used to penalize the many good ones. As with any of these issues, I would welcome additional trapper's thoughts and insights on this issue.

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To all of you who contributed to this report, thank you for the information you provided. If you would like to participate, but are not on our mailing list, please let your area biologist know and we will send you next year's questionnaire. In addition, if you have suggestions for improving the trapper questionnaire or the report, please pass them on to your area biologist.

Thank you for your assistance.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Steve Peterson".

Steve Peterson  
Statewide Furbearer Coordinator

Table 1. Indices of relative abundance and trend of furbearer populations in Interior Alaska, 1991-92.

	Descriptive Area							
	Relative Abundance				Trend			
	LTB	UTB	MYK	UYB	LTB	UTB	MYK	UYB
<b>Furbearers:</b>								
Arctic Fox	NP	NP	NP	12	NP	NP	NP	2.00
Beaver	63	44	83	73	2.19	2.25	2.17	2.43
Coyote	29	41	0	10	2.12	2.25	2.00	2.00
Lynx	32	50	40	42	2.47	2.65	2.36	2.20
Marten	42	36	50	55	1.86	1.43	2.08	2.09
Mink	28	24	33	10	1.78	1.93	2.00	1.50
Muskrat	24	45	8	44	1.97	2.00	1.43	2.27
Red Fox	69	50	72	76	2.26	1.85	1.90	2.24
Red Squirrel	62	64	62	57	2.00	2.12	1.67	2.15
River Otter	29	25	50	32	2.00	2.09	2.38	1.85
Weasel	38	36	31	50	1.94	1.75	1.56	2.06
Wolf	53	40	73	29	2.22	2.00	2.58	1.83
Wolverine	15	23	36	29	1.91	2.24	2.08	2.06
<b>Prey:</b>								
Hare	36	31	56	56	1.73	1.68	2.22	1.80
Grouse	17	26	35	21	1.31	1.32	1.40	1.50
Ptarmigan	13	31	10	35	1.44	1.37	1.12	1.80
Mice/Rodents	49	31	45	67	1.96	1.58	2.22	2.00

**Abundance:** Index Values  
 Scarce = 0 through 19  
 Common = 20 through 50  
 Abundant = Greater than 50  
 NP = Not Present

**Trend:** Index Values  
 Fewer = 1 through 1.66  
 Same = 1.67 through 2.33  
 More = Greater than 2.33  
 NP = Not Present

**Interior Descriptive Areas:**  
 LTB = Lower Tanana R. Basin  
 UTB = Upper Tanana R. Basin,  
 Charlie and Fortymile R.  
 MYK = Middle Yukon and Koyukuk  
 UYB = Upper Yukon R. Basin

Table 2. Indices of relative abundance and trend of furbearer populations in Southcentral Alaska, 1991-92.

	Descriptive Area													
	Relative Abundance							Trend						
	CUS	LSB	PWS	KEP	KOI	AKP	BRB	CUS	LSB	PWS	KEP	KOI	AKP	BRB
<b>Furbearers:</b>														
Beaver	48	62	85	56	60	88	73	2.11	2.14	2.33	2.38	2.12	2.31	2.06
Coyote	51	64	64	62	NP	14	31	2.18	2.00	2.11	2.44	NP	2.09	2.67
Lynx	26	10	12	21	NP	14	20	2.54	2.16	1.86	2.14	NP	2.27	2.00
Marten	41	30	50	25	38	17	42	2.17	1.93	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	1.36
Mink	45	41	62	44	0	55	31	1.90	2.04	2.27	1.86	2.00	1.93	2.00
Muskrat	39	61	44	12	25	15	20	1.64	2.29	1.86	2.00	2.00	2.17	2.00
Red Fox	48	38	8	0	60	75	64	1.70	1.93	2.20	2.00	2.00	2.20	2.08
Red Squirrel	70	58	70	86	100	30	60	2.05	2.00	2.60	2.00	2.00	2.25	1.75
River Otter	32	38	54	50	59	65	46	2.08	2.07	1.89	2.43	2.27	2.14	2.00
Weasel	56	43	56	42	55	22	35	2.07	1.85	2.00	2.00	2.20	2.00	2.00
Wolf	32	14	39	38	NP	41	25	1.97	2.00	2.38	2.22	NP	2.07	2.50
Wolverine	12	16	27	23	NP	35	30	1.89	1.95	1.70	2.33	NP	1.94	2.10
<b>Prey:</b>														
Hare	41	26	23	25	39	53	50	1.93	2.10	1.44	2.44	2.25	2.36	1.80
Grouse	21	36	12	44	NP	23	50	1.62	1.97	1.62	1.89	NP	1.89	2.00
Ptarmigan	26	29	36	39	0	56	61	1.57	1.68	1.89	2.00	2.00	1.57	1.82
Mice/rodents	56	64	55	44	57	60	56	2.00	2.14	2.00	2.14	2.00	2.00	1.67

**Abundance:** Index Values  
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 Common = 20 through 50  
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 NP = Not Present

**Trend:** Index Values  
 Fewer = 1 through 1.66  
 Same = 1.67 through 2.33  
 More = Greater than 2.33  
 NP = Not Present

**Southcentral Descriptive Areas:**  
 CUS = Copper R. and Upper  
       Susitna R. Basin  
 LSB = Lower Susitna Basin  
 PWS = Prince William Sound and  
       coastline  
 KEP = Kenai Peninsula  
 KOI = Kodiak Archipelago  
 AKP = Alaska Peninsula  
 BRB = Bristol Bay Area

Table 3. Indices of relative abundance and trend of furbearer populations in Southeastern Alaska, 1991-92.

	Descriptive Area							
	Relative Abundance				Trend			
	1A2	1B3	1CD5	U4	1A2	1B3	1CD5	U4
<b>Furbearers:</b>								
Beaver	56	60	50	50	2.15	2.30	2.50	1.67
Coyote	-	-	21	NP	-	-	1.80	NP
Lynx	NP	NP	14	NP	NP	NP	2.20	NP
Marten	62	61	57	75	2.16	2.08	2.00	2.62
Mink	70	71	57	66	2.06	2.00	2.18	2.27
Muskrat	0	12	0	NP	1.00	2.00	1.60	NP
Red Fox	NP	NP	0	NP	NP	NP	1.60	NP
Red Squirrel	64	83	73	80	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00
River Otter	69	56	50	45	2.12	1.62	2.00	2.00
Weasel	31	62	68	50	2.22	1.86	1.78	1.75
Wolf	70	61	29	NP	2.38	2.00	2.20	NP
Wolverine	0	10	12	NP	2.00	1.33	2.00	NP
<b>Prey:</b>								
Hare	0	0	7	NP	-	2.00	1.67	NP
Grouse	15	50	33	20	1.78	1.67	1.88	1.50
Ptarmigan	0	0	19	30	1.50	2.00	1.57	1.50
Mice/Rodents	66	70	61	68	2.23	2.20	1.90	2.00

**Abundance:** Index Values  
 Scarce = 0 through 19  
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**Trend:** Index Values  
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 Same = 1.67 through 2.33  
 More = Greater than 2.33  
 NP = Not Present

**Southeastern Descriptive Areas:**  
 IA2 = Units 1A and 2  
 IB3 = Units 1B and 3  
 ICD5 = Units 1C, 1D, and 5  
 U4 = Unit 4

**TRAPPER COMMENTS**  
**1991-92**

**INTERIOR AREAS**

- Wasn't too bad of a trapping season. Snow hampered efforts somewhat and presence of Nelchina caribou made wolf trapping difficult. Virtually no marten as lynx are nearing high cycle. Many fox and coyote.
- \* Trapping effort was less this winter due to trip outside.
- \* This new line is high and in an old burn. It drifted closed in places every week. The wolves and fox ate 9 marten. The ground traps would blow closed and most places are too open for snares. I saw a lot of lynx tracks on my other short lines but was not really after them because the price is so low. Rabbit tracks are way down in number. The cats will probably drop off next year. Seems like grouse also. Fox were thick around town as usual. I thought my marten catch was low on the new line, but I don't have a history for it, so who knows.
- \* Good freeze-up on side creeks made travel in my trap area easier than normal. A six week down time due to illness really set me back - so that I got less line set than last year.
- \* The Yukon river ice was jammed up - real rough.
- \* Low population of marten, and across the board less furbearer and prey species. Did not want to impact marten, so I only trapped three weeks.
- \* Lots of snow early made for good trails. Mild temperatures helped too. Lots of wolves this year.
- \* Good trapping conditions.
- \* Conditions were pretty good for mobility and all - marten were more scarce so we made less sets and pulled them sooner. Too many "old time trappers" claiming every where, but trapping no where - hard to find new territory.
- \* I lived a lot farther away from my trapline this winter, which made it harder for me get to it and trap it as effectively.
- \* Got out more because it was a warm winter.

- \* All seasons should open and shut at same time except beaver and muskrat in my area. I would like the season to run first of December to end of February. You can not make sets and expect only animals to get trapped. Easier enforcement.
- \* Warmer than usual winter. Animals didn't seem to move about as much. Caribou didn't migrate through my area as they usually do, so not near as many wolves present. Unit 12 - extend lynx season until end of February. Delay opening lynx until December 1st if necessary, but we need February. Fur is usually not prime until December anyway! Dramatic increase in coyotes here in the last four years. Has all but eliminated the fox population. Marked increase in wolverine population this year, all over our area. Give us February lynx season as they will die off when the rabbits go anyway.
- \* The marten were down in Unit 20E, but up slightly in Unit 12. The weather was good this year and allowed me to check traps more often. If we had a colder winter, I think my catch would have been down from previous years.
- \* Price of fur, temperature, more new hunters with no ethics. Diminishing animal populations.
- \* I would be in favor of some sort of registered trapline system - for Fish and Game to have a map showing current traplines and name of trapper. A person wanting to trap (start a trapline) could look at the map and have an idea "where not to go". I'm sure most area trappers are discouraged by having someone (in the past few years) cut a new line in or near their "area". Under the current system a person can legally cut a new line right along side an existing line and end up catching 1/2 fur in that area.
- \* Something needs to be done to make the rights to a trapping area more confirmed. Give some legal "meat" to the trapper who "cut" miles of line and built cabins - maybe this questionnaire would be a good forum to get input on "hardworking, committed" trappers to get some security from the law and protect the results of lots of hard work. A possible method would be to allow an "official documentation" of when a person starts a trapline. This could help prove that a line has been (at least) established. I'm sure the trappers in this state can collectively come up with something that would be an improvement over what we currently have... (or don't have).
- \* Lynx picked up quite a bit. I caught 13. More signs than in the last fifteen years. Only had one bunch of wolves come through. And twice I had loners.
- \* Poor price of fur and abundance of caribou disrupting trail sets.

- \* The coyote population is growing very fast. Hard on the sheep. The wolves were outside of the mountains, caribou in the area east of Northway.
- \* Large overrun by marten so trapping was extremely easy. No snow, very mild winter. More wolves around than I've ever seen, but not until late in the season (April).
- \* I trap for exercise and I want only 1-2 animals of each species for adornment in my home. I wouldn't want to try to make a living of it.
- \* It seems to be hard to make much sense out of marten populations where I trap. One year there will be very few marten and the next year it might be a record catch. Some years I start with limited effort mainly just to keep someone else from moving in on my area if I'm not there, with the idea of resting the area due to low catches the year before, and then discovering that marten are abundant. Numbers don't seem to have much relationship to snow depth in the mountains, contrary to much local popular opinion. Some years a vast majority of the marten are caught the 1st month with few caught later. This year numbers remained high the entire season. We had the second highest catch for a day that we've had in fifteen years on this line on the last day of the season when we were pulling our traps.
- \* Hides, especially marten, were not as prime as they should have been. Therefore, we had lower prices.
- \* Late snow primarily affected early marten trapping. It does not pay to trap marten later than December because of falling prices. Mainly I wanted to rest the marten lines this winter.
- \* There were no marten - only tracks, and I trapped beaver for the meat and sold a few skins.
- \* There was considerable increase in wolf numbers in the central Brooks Range. I had 43 different wolves working or coming through my area. That was about a 400% increase from last year when I had 11 cross my line. Lynx continued to immigrate into this area from the south and east. The age class of the lynx I took were of a lot younger than ones that were taken in the past few years. Park service bought the carcasses from them so that age comparison can be obtained from NPS. There were a lot more kittens around and also females that had kits, which were not with the mother any longer.
- \* Snow came late and it was necessary to use the 4 wheeler at the beginning of the year. Furbearers were up because of light trapping on my line the last couple of years. Now I have to trap the whole line regardless of fur abundance, or new comers will take over. Lost a line this year, because I let it sit last year. He

refused to pull traps. Legally there was traps. Legally there was nothing I could do. Seems everyone traps anywhere they want, catching all they can, with no respect for established lines. Fur populations will be wiped out in this area if this keeps up in just a couple years.

- \* Cold temperatures. Low fur prices and low animal populations. I had to look for the marten habitat. Lots of snowshoe work. I believe we sustained enough burn policy in our area(GMU 24). All we have now is burned country and it seems like the animals don't come back as quickly. Have to reconsider this concept in the Koyukuk River Valley. I personally believe the biologists don't study this or know enough about the effects of wildfire to continue advocating large scale burning.
- \* I believe the otter is killing off the mink and muskrat.
- \* Maximize opportunities for people relying on for income. Marten should open October 20th in the Interior. Open more units to beaver shooting. The people depending on trapping income are your (ADF&G) best sources of information. Lose them and you lose that info.
- \* Fur prices lowest they have been in a long time. I'd rather not over harvest when the prices are low.
- \* Marten population was lower. I haven't seen a ruffed grouse in the area in four years. Wolves were around more this year. Hares still low for the past two years. I agree with the other trappers about military personnel playing weekend trappers/hunters.
- \* Seem to get more animals in my traps when I don't trap it for two years.
- \* Forest fire burned 75% out of my trap line and destroyed my traps and snares.
- \* During the fire season last summer (1991) the fire destroyed my main trapline including my trapline house and my traps were all destroyed by the seasonal fire.
- \* Lots of wolverine - all of a sudden. Fox had to be thinned prior to marten trapping. High count of marten. Beaver and moose increasing since big fire.
- \* Wolverine eating all my fur and mixing-up my traps.
- \* Hares never seemed to cycle. Lynx slowly coming back. Foxes crashed after all time high last year. Marten numbers seem to be a bit stronger than last year.
- \* Several wolf packs around in the valley. Late spring of 1991 saw pack of about 20 wolves come through valley. Didn't get any, but one fellow shot a young one

from that group.

- \* Too many GI's stealing, fighting over my line. Military want to take over the Flats and kick everybody out.
- ADF&G gets rid of the most knowledgeable wolf biologist at the time the most critical decisions are to be made on wolves. I don't know why I bother to send this in.
- \* The 1990/91 season was one of extremely low effort in the Interior due to record snowfall and continuous overflow. Therefore, catches were way down. Even though that was the case, 1991/92 was not a particularly noteworthy year for marten. They were localized to an unusual extent. Muskrats are now almost non-existent where I trapped in 1991/92. Beaver were way down and some were forced to relocate, even as late as September.
- \* Marten down a lot from last year. Most of those caught were old, old males. I think the wolf population here is getting bigger than the moose can stand.
- \* Fox were so abundant that I could snare them locally during my lunch hour.
- \* Lynx population seems to be up in our area and a little longer season for this fur would be nice - but only one month more.
- \* The main problem for trapping right now is the market which seems depressed for all furbearers.
- People trapping all the lynx before the season opens. I would like to see a change in the law prohibiting the sale of any part of a bear. Bear hides should be allowed to be sold if they are made into a finished product; such as a bear rug, hat, or coat.
- \* Lynx and wolverine populations are up, but during the course of the winter, rabbits and grouse disappeared. Too many fox and coyote. Nobody is trapping them.
- \* Coyote population has skyrocketed over the last few years. Coyotes are the main problem with our sheep population. I have many coyotes on my line that eat nothing but sheep. In my opinion they get more sheep by far than the wolves. I would like to see more studies done on this. I think by now we pretty much have the wolves figured out and can spend some on the sheep/coyote problem.
- \* Predators were extra hungry - lost one lynx and a marten to a wolverine and a marten to a fox. In ten years, I had never seen this.

- \* I may be trapping marten too hard, getting a lot of immature animals.
- \* Lots and lots of fox. Put a good dent in them, but still lots of them left. Saw more cat tracks this year than I have in a long time. Saw good population of mink.
- \* Wolf populations are high and still increasing. Some control measures may be needed in next seasons to come.
- \* Last year is the first year I have seen enough lynx to speak of, and this year I made some set for the first time since 1981. I am glad to see your program working and would like to see the same season for another year or two, instead of a limit they are coming back, I use to wonder!
- \* Need aerial/air wolf hunts by permit drawing - would give interested parties a fair and equal shot at getting a chance to hunt some down. In my opinion, this is needed as the wolf packs of the Tanana Valley are on the rise. Trapping and natural mortality aren't keeping the balance in wolf packs. Still feel that the right to trap should be handled with a limited entry system. Too damn many pilgrims with no respect for the people there before them. This is a very bad problem anywhere near a road system.
- \* There was a coyote caught in our area. I didn't know there were any around. The color of the marten was not good. I never saw one mink track. Foxes and wolves seem to be gaining fast. I think the trapping laws are right for this area.
- \* We saw lots of fox in the fall, but by November 15th, most were gone. Believe this was caused by over population. Trappers just are not interested in them because of a lack of market. If the anti's get their way, this is what will happen to the majority of the furbearers.
- \* I could use another 15 days on lynx as they were absent pretty much all year until January 10 or so. They moved in real well on January 30th, but the season closed, so I couldn't trap them.
- \* Rabbits peaked a couple years ago, followed by lynx last winter. Either trappers cleaned-up on them last winter or they are on the decline again. Lots of fox signs.
- \* Fox at Chena Lakes project seemed to be about the most abundant I've ever seen. At least two wolves were trapped on the project that I know of - these two wolves apparently killed two moose on the project. Other wolves have also been on the project which is much more activity than we normally see this close to town. Grouse were very scarce this fall and winter - less than normal ptarmigan signs this winter and spring. I have seen lynx tracks this spring which I haven't seen here for several years.

- My main comment would be on the number of fox. Almost epidemic in numbers. Caught more this year than the previous 18-19 years combined. No explanation comes to mind for this. Also, over the past 3 years, the wolves have multiplied significantly enough to notice. There was a peak of only 5 wolves covering my area 4 years ago. This year a pilot spotted the pack and counted 28 wolves. Marten is critically low - on a down trend the past few years and concerns me greatly. Do not know if I've over trapped or if they are on a down cycle. No one seems to know how long their down cycles last - nor how low and high they fluctuate. Old timers in my area recall 40 years ago when there was not one to be found anywhere. Most trappers in my area had poor marten trapping, so suspect the low cycle - but, how much does trapping in a low cycle effect the overall future picture?

**Editor's Note: The more breeding stock you remove at the bottom of a "cycle", the longer it will take for the population to recover.**
- There were very few marten this year, but also very few mice so I don't know if there was a downturn in the marten population or they just moved elsewhere for food.
- With current fur prices, you either trap for the love of it, or you need to trap full time for the profit. Low prices knock out the part time trapper who traps for profit. That is the only good side of low fur prices that I can see. I also like the idea the department can regulate the lynx season as they see fit. With a declining cycle, will it really hurt to take all the prime lynx a person can get if they are going to starve anyway?\* I'd be in favor of registered trap lines. I think trapline cabins should be able to be larger than the maximum 200 square feet.

**\*Editor's Note: When hares really disappear, lynx will either starve or survive in "refugia" (little pockets of very good habitat for hares). You should not trap this breeding stock in years of really low abundance.**
- I personally have a real problem with partial seasons on certain species of furbearers. For example, lynx season here is Dec 1 to Jan 31. I realize there are certain sets that are more attractive to lynx than others, however it is difficult to keep them out of any set. I think the Department and Herb have proven that lynx are not really a local animal - they travel. I say open the season from Nov 1 to March 31, like it used to be. If they are there you'll get them, if not, you won't, simple as that. It really hurts to have to give lynx away if you catch one, a week before season. Another thing is that you can shoot fox, wolverine, coyote, wolf, and lynx in some units, longer than it is legal to trap them. I don't agree with that line of thinking and I don't believe a furbearer taken the end of April is worth much or even looks good - not prime anymore.
- Need registered traplines. I must trap area where fur animals are scarce to keep other trappers from moving in on my line. Moose are very scarce. Grouse and

Ptarmigan also very scarce.

- Excellent season for fox and marten. Lynx in 20 A and D are on the rise. Away from the highway system, grouse and ptarmigan were abundant. In areas where people hunt, they are on the decline. Lynx in the above described areas are abundant. The highest since the early 1970s.
- The lynx in my area were definitely a migration from another area. Some stayed and some passed through. I noticed a tremendous amount of tracks in April or maybe late March of 1991 when I was cutting line after my trapping. But, only a few animals stayed in this area and most moved on. My lynx line has been stable for more than the four years I've been trapping in this area. They are common in this area and have stabilized to adjust for the hare population. Of course they are well below what they were in the late 60s and 70s, but so is the hare population. I only take a few each year to maintain this balance, and therefore I do see some kitten tracks, but not many. A true trapper appreciates research help and thus we appreciate the work you are doing.
- I had a lot more coyotes in the areas I trap. Also, cats were abundant - out of 11 cats only 3 were female. All were adults. Cats seems to be coming back in this area!

## **SOUTH CENTRAL**

- I have watched the marten, wolf and wolverine populations drop for the last 25 years in 13, 14, 16. Mink and coyotes have increased during this time. Marten are still found in good numbers in isolated pockets. Lynx appear only in small numbers, mostly where people wouldn't think to look for them.
- I've seen little or no use by other marten trappers in my area. Wolves used packed snow conditions to travel across my line several times this year.
- I feel that ADF&G is doing an outstanding job of managing our wild fur resource. It troubles me that special interest groups, bleeding hearts, and other ill informed individuals are making the job of responsible management so difficult. Of course if they had their way trapping would be outlawed and we would see boom and bust furbearer populations with starvation and disease the rule, with widespread rabies outbreaks. Any trapper worth his weight is aware of proper management, and knows that he must only remove a certain percentage of the furbearers in his area and leave adequate breeding stock for future years, or he will be out of business long before the "antis" close him down. All trappers must become involved, and select political leaders and lawmakers that understand and promote responsible resource management. Don't let Alaska become a giant zoo where you'll need a special permit to trap mice in your own home.

- \* It was a good season. The weather was warm, but deep snow and thin ice hampered my trapping. Had the usual problems with thievery and anti-trapping people. In general, snow conditions were good for access. Had to wear snowshoes when one ventured away from the snowmobile trail. Very few trappers were encountered in those areas where other people trapped in the past. Lots of fur signs throughout the trapline - approx 100 mile long. If one could find the beaver lodge it was easy to punch a hole through the ice. Up to 6' of snow in some areas - covered the lodge and feeding cache. The river beaver were the hard ones to find. Lots of otter sign in my trapping area. My son and I manage to trap 8 in traps and conibears. All were large otters. Noticed extensive ice fishing activity on the larger lakes in the area. Had two mink eaten by coyote while in the trap, but managed to snare the coyotes on return trip as they approached the trap sight. Had lots of fun and companionship with my son who is just as crazy as I am about trapping and the good life!
- \* My financial condition did not allow me to lay out and properly tend a line. However, I do plan to trap in the future. In the area around my home there does seem to be an increase in coyote and fox this past fall and winter.
- \* I did not trap the past 2 seasons, although I did harvest a coyote this past season and a lynx last year using a game call. I do intend to trap the 1992-93 season.
- \* I would like to see the beaver season in 14A and 13 put back to February 1 instead of November 10. Also limited to 10 animals.
- I mainly trap for recreation. I have noticed though that this year saw a noticeable decrease of coyotes along the railroad corridor along with an increase of fox. I think that we might have a high winter kill of beaver this year because of the heavy snow and overflow. The snow load collapses the ice and leaves little or no room under the ice and especially on the smaller shallower ponds. I wonder that due to increased efforts to salvage train killed moose, plus with Fish and Game taking the inedible moose kills for their wolf and bear projects at Delta the past several years has changed the winter habits of the coyotes. No more easy pickings. I'm concerned about otter populations - too much pressure. I don't think we'll ever see rabbits, lynx or marten again in 14A/B in any numbers, even if you shorten or close seasons. We just don't have good habitat and we'll never see enhancement because of the narrow-minded people in the valley. Have noticed an increase in rats. Because of the new road work, backed up more water. I was told that the ADF&G wants to raise the water level 18" between the railroad and Glenn Highway. The contractor put in gates on the culverts under the highway, but can't understand why the water hasn't come up. Without doing the same under the railroad, the water just goes out to the east and runs into the Matanuska. Water will always seek its own level. If they ever figure it out we will really have a muskrat paradise.

- \* Put limit on marten in Unit 16. Limit to ten per season.
- \* Less marten than ever before. Set traps, caught 2 females, 1 male, no more tracks, so I quit. I just trapped beaver, fox and otter for the rest of the season. I don't know why I never see any wolf, wolverine or marten tracks anymore. I have never seen a lynx track higher country as well as low. I really figure that the marten and wolverine will never make a come back, in the Mat-Su area, Talkeetna Mt.
- \* Beaver sealing requirements should be eliminated - the prices are low, trappers are unwilling to go through the ice after them, they are thick as squirrels in most areas and sealing is a nuisance and an unnecessary expense to ADF&G. The sale of wolf skulls taken w/a hunting license should be legal. The dual classification of wolf and wolverines as Big Game and furbearers stinks! A wolverine is not a big game animal, nor is a wolf. If so, then the meat should be salvaged. A better class would be Trophy Game, but first and foremost they are a furbearer and all sale of all parts should be unhindered by bureaucrats B.S. The wolf and maybe the wolverine, is someday going to be lumped in with the "sacred black bear" and us trappers are going to be wondering what happened?
- \* I'm not trapping anymore because it is an absolute profession that has no place in the 90s. Also, the martens and wolverines which were the staple of my trapline have enough problems without me persecuting them. I walked about 20 miles of my former trapline recently and saw not one marten track. This is an area that would sustain dozens per year if not over trapped, which it is. I believe the area around Talkeetna should be closed to marten trapping because the numbers are very low.
- \* I think the decline in wolverine in our area is due to heavy pressure from aircraft. Also too much noise from vehicles in area and Army choppers at night. Snow machines, airplanes, ATV's, all contribute to this. However, our area is a recreation opportunity for many people and I don't wish to see these activities curtailed with the exception of aircraft hunting.
- \* I trapped mainly as a hobby to get furs to have hats and mittens made.
- \* In most of GMU 8, beaver overpopulated. 30 beaver limit not unrealistic. Cost of move in and set-up more than trapper can realize from pelt sale, so no beaver effort!
- \* My trapping effort has been less and less the past few years. I probably will retire from trapping this year. The last few years has only been for our own use as my wife is a skin sewer. Cheaper to buy furs since you can usually get what you want.

- \* Fur prices on Kodiak make trapping a profession without profit. I hope to do some beaver trapping this fall, but it will be a short season.
- \* A bag limit on beaver in Unit 8 is crazy.
- \* The winter was mild. I only had a few otter sets. Ermine over ran our yard. Trapped them for self-defense. There isn't much trapping pressure. The fox are on the increase.
- \* I was very pleased with the interest taken by Fish and Game with furbearers. I have long thought that an important resource such as this should not be ignored. The only problem I have with 90-91 report is the attitude with "a trapper's perception of the abundance of and trends in furbearer populations on the trappers line." A trapper spends more time in field than you biologists dream of. They don't wait for good flying weather and they don't wait around the office planning out going on their line. Most know the animal they trap as well or better than any biologist because they have to catch them. Listen to the trappers about populations, please. I would like to see a season on sea otter. The population is healthy enough in areas I've seen to withstand yearly thinning with no ill effect. A subsistence or resident only pre-register #1 a year permit with whole carcass inspection by Fish and Game very controlled.
- \* The wolf population in our area is very high. This year the wolves killed at least two moose on Lake Clark alone. I would like to see some form of control or aerial hunting to remain open.
- \* I did go out to my cabin and trapline a couple of times this past winter. Mostly to check on my cabin, since hunters were beginning to break into and steal personal property. But due to my recent heart surgery, did not trap. Also need operation on my knee. If everything goes well I hope to trap the 92-93 season.
- \* It would be nice to see the lynx season stay open longer. I am concerned about trapping areas, seems like more people are trapping and making sets anywhere, especially in areas where people have trapped for some time. Would like to be able to stake a claim for that area you have trapped just for trapping only.
- \* I see no reason for a 40 beaver limit in Unit 9B. All the creeks in the area and main river are loaded with active lodges and swamps and ponds are also. Maybe in the past it was necessary, but at present with prices the way they are, no one is trapping. I can see closer to populated areas where a limit might be necessary. So if prices come up in a couple of years, it could be necessary to re-impose a limit. Due to added pressure. But at present it makes little or no sense to me. That is about all I see really wrong in that area. There are lots of fox, otter, mink, and beaver there. Wolves were a lot more abundant than I ever thought they

would be. But that could easily change with the amount taken this year.

- \* Good snow conditions in our area made it possible for airplanes and snowmobiles to intercept and run down most of the wolves and wolverines before they get to our area. Illegal use of these two machines is rampant here with so little enforcement. The honor system isn't working.
- \* Increased use of trapline trail by other users causing fouled sets and increased theft of traps and fur. Think there should be some organized method of identifying trappers and their appropriate traplines. I have seen too many situations where trappers have vacated traplines for a few years to allow furbearers to repopulate, and then some other (usually newcomers) trapper starts trapping on that closed line without finding out whose line it is, and why it was abandoned. Granted that by trapping ethics, any line that has not been trapped for over four years should be considered open to trapping by someone else.
- \* My trapping is done mainly for recreation and personal education. Some furs obtained for personal use, and some for small scale retailing, but the economics of fur pricing is not a factor in my effort.
- \* Beaver should be a shooting season also, because the price isn't worth trapping and they are over populating some areas. Wreaking havoc on the trees especially up some of the creeks.
- \* The weather was milder - more snow on the mountains and the flatlands - moose and caribou stayed bunched up - lots of wolf and wolverine kills of both caribou and moose.
- \* Trapped for wolverine, lynx and fox. Wolves and coyotes are starting to show up around our area. Also the lynx are starting a comeback, but did not sell some of the fur due to low prices. This year there were fewer trappers than usual because of the low prices.
- \* In my opinion, if they (animal activists) are against trapping and trying to ban leghold traps for one trapping. But if we were to change the style of trapping (legholds) it would be some time to learn the new techniques of the traps that are being introduced, but we can always learn to use this system if we have to. Also abolish the land and shoot of furbearing animals, no fair for the ground trappers.
- \* I would like to see registered traplines. There are too many weekend trappers setting traps on other people's lines, I would also favor a reasonable law regulating how often traps must be checked (weather permitting), I think it would give people opposing foot traps less to complain about.

- \* In my opinion, foot traps are the best way to harvest undamaged furs, if checked regularly. There are relatively no chewed-off feet and loss of animals. Conibears and snares being killer traps have the disadvantage of the dead animal thawing the snow it is laying on and then when you get to them they are frozen solid to the snow. I have yet to find a way to keep them from loosening guard hair, either from getting them free of the ground or from transporting them with ice balls on their fur.
- \* Would like regs changed to read "All stray dogs caught, be destroyed". Dogs running free away from town are chasing caribou and killing ptarmigan and rabbits. The only equipment adjustment we should accept is gap jawed hand traps. I caught three dogs this winter (all far from town) and all were released unharmed. In fact, they all made it home before I did. None even had a limp. All fox caught in gap jawed traps are in perfect condition. If I come on them quiet, they are usually asleep. 99% caught in regular jaw traps are not cut. This regulation is not even necessary. Mink traps cannot be gapped. Keep up the good work. We're all in the same boat.
- \* Coyotes are really coming on. High take is needed. No closed season limit might be a good idea. Wolves are around, but are hard to trap because they are always on the move and have set no patterns. Land and shoot should continue in units 9, 17, and 19. State of Alaska needs to manage it's resources and wildlife. The "feds" have too many interests.
- \* Generally on my line wolverine can be found just about anywhere, though there are a few locations I set specifically for them every year. These locations have proven themselves as places where, more or less, I can count on at least one wolverine coming through during the course of the season. As for incidental catch, I have a lot of lynx sets out, more than likely I will catch some of the wolverine in them. A lot of my sets are a combination bait and live. The way I figure it, this type of set has a better chance of catching anything that comes along.  
  
I don't think it matters if the season is closed during the low part of the cycle. When a lynx population gets to the point where a trapper hardly sees any tracks on his line, the effort it takes to catch one lynx in most cases really isn't worth putting out. It goes against common sense to think a trapper would lay out 40 sets on a 20 mile trapline for 3 months to catch 5 lynx, and if he did, I would say he really needed the money. Going by ADF&G data, the 78-79-80 low part of the cycle, the lynx season was open Nov 10-March 31 and the average pelt price \$228., of course not as many lynx were caught as the peak years, but the point is with 5 months open season and an average pelt price 2 1/2 times more than today's. We still have a viable lynx population.
- \* I believe the season closure for lynx in the past greatly helped this animal. For during the winter of 1990, myself and my wife personally saw two lynx in Unit 13

while driving to Anchorage and back from Valdez. And we had never before seen even one in any of the previous years of driving back and forth to Anchorage, during fishing trips, or hunting trips in Units 13 or 11. I believe the season may need to be shortened for wolverine, for even though I didn't have as many sets out this year as in the past, I did not catch one wolverine. But, then again I believe it was because of the lack of wolverine, for I saw very little signs of them compared to past years of trapping. I also think the number of coyotes is very high this year and growing greatly compared to previous years.

- \* Rabbits are on low cycle now, and lynx are going to be dropping in numbers, I believe. I feel that we never really got very much of a peak in the rabbit cycle. Short seasons are not practical because it takes time to set out and pick up traps which shortens the season even more. I would rather protect the lynx at low cycle and have more to trap when the cycle is high. There is already too much red tape in trapping. Come on guys, let's cut the paper work.
- \* Definitely an increase in marten population in my areas. Word is that cat population was up this year in 20D. Could have fooled me, I've seen one set of cat tracks this whole year and I've caught 1 to 10 in past years.
- \* My complaint to a complete lynx closure during low cycles, is that it seems to be difficult to get seasons re-opened after closures. I commend you on doing a good job, during difficult times, in the management of our furbearers.
- \* Alaska needs registered traplines.
- \* Seems to me there is a lot of marten. So, why is the season closed in February? The state's wolf management plan looks fair. How often are fox caught in wolf sets when fox season is closed?
- \* Comments from observations of tracks while flying the area:
  - Beaver - more houses than last year, I think
  - Coyote - no change - maybe spreading range, but numbers about the same in local populations
  - Lynx - rebounding well in most areas - quite a lot of tracks, especially in southern two thirds of unit
  - Marten - healthy number of tracks in most areas - the warm weather seemed to affect their range differently
  - Mink - no comment - tracks hard to see from plane
  - Muskrat - not as many push-ups evident last fall
  - Red fox - numbers down in most areas, but not alarming
  - Otter - lots of tracks on most all drainages
  - Wolf - plenty
  - Wolverine - rebounding slightly - I believe their range has more to do with activity

(man's) than trapping (Example: snow machines out of Eureka)

- \* The seasons seem to be getting shorter on the latter end. I myself would support a season that did not open for marten, fox, lynx until December 1st and extended on marten and lynx until February 15th. It has been my observation over the years that even though we have cold weather, many times these first marten and fox caught are not fully prime. Wolf caught early November seem to be mostly prime, however, they are not sold on the raw fur market, so a slightly unprime pelt makes no difference. Mink caught early November all seem to bring top dollar. While not having caught many lynx, all the reports I have read say don't trap until December. So perhaps an extension to Feb 15th would be more appropriate.
- \* Worked all winter and was unable to get out on the line. I did take one look around trip in December and was pleased by the amount of sign. Marten looked good and there were four otter playing in the creek with a big cross fox watching them.
- \* I would like to see the marten season longer. Some of us have to wait for rivers to freeze to get to our lines. I know they say because of mating and the females traveling, but other areas are open until Feb 15th, Feb 28th, and even March 31 and April 15th. I have caught mostly females one week and the next week more males. So, I'm not sure about females traveling more later on.
- \* Only one wolf track up until 3/1/92. Only one wolverine track up until 3/1/92. Most lynx tracks in 8 years. No caribou in Tazlind Lake Area this winter. Sixteen moose wintering on Lower Nelchina River. Only 2 calves.
- \* I don't support the closure of any fur or game animal. When there is anything closed for whatever reason we never get it back. I try to go along with what our Fish and Game biologists think is best for our fish and game resource, but I don't like to close anything because, give it up, and usually it is gone forever. I thought the caribou in Unit 13 went on the permit system because the head count was down, but when I hear that the late permit hunt is antlered caribou only, I think they are taking 90% cows. Most bulls loose their antlers early, as you well know, so the caribou are gone for good as far as a non permit hunt goes. I know the boys in Juneau would hate to lose that revenue, so kill the cows and keep it on a permit system. I think the moose is on the same path. Don't give up anything.
- \* I have a hard time being convinced that the wolverine is being trapped and hunted out: so as to be listed on the endangered species list; but, I do believe because of political pressure, this is what I am led to believe. It's been my observation that the wolverine lives up in the high country in the roughest terrain they can find. Very inaccessible by man. That's why I really believe it would be almost impossible to over trap or over hunt them. On occasion they do sneak down and

pass through the valley bottom, but not too often. The high wolverine catches come from the trappers who work their tail off getting way back up these valleys and that's why I can answer NO to question 3. Up in the high country, I am seeing an abundance of wolverine sign, in fact, in mid February I saw one run across my trail. (Not one of the ones I trapped either). He disappeared up into the rocks and snow. I could have shot him a hundred times, but did not. I was more amazed at how unafraid it appeared. The only incidental catch I had this season were 2 marten - which I caught in a mink set during November, right along a river bottom in a road culvert. That same set also produced mink. I talked to a few trappers (road trappers) who came down my way this past season from Copper Center and Glenallen - and they always ask me the same question - Where are the wolverine? or have you seen any wolverine sign? My answer to them is always the same - No! none around. I don't tell them you have to get way back up the valleys, then wolverine sign begins.

I got three wolves so far. There was a pack of 4, and I've taken two from the pack -now they seem to have split-up cause I've been seeing two different size tracks in the same area - and they are never together, also this same pack (I believe) had two different moose down - they killed one in November and one in February - about a mile apart. Neither moose was completely eaten. Coyotes really started to show up in abundance in February. Last count I had half dozen or so. Don't know what happened to them November and December cause they sure disappeared.

Another interesting thing happened to me last year - I sold a wolverine to a native gentleman from up north of Fairbanks, can't remember the village or town where he was from. Anyway, I ask him, "Why are you coming to Anchorage to buy your fur when you have the best fur around the area where you are?" He said, "Nobody traps from the village anymore - everybody always drunk, or too lazy." So again, I think the wolverine are out there, just less people trapping them and I think there may also be a few taken that don't get sealed.

On the trapper's questionnaire how come you don't ask for our total catch of each species? I don't mind telling what I trap as long as it's kept confidential. Don't want these animal lovers getting a hold of it. Hope this information is helpful. You guys keep up the good work and don't let those animal lovers influence your decision making process, 'cause they have infiltrated heavily into our local, state and federal government agencies. Something else that's worth mention; I wonder how many wolverine and wolves are taken illegally by air gunners, I bet more than what I'd like to believe, bet they don't get sealed either.

\* There was the same or more amount of tracks as in years before. There were a couple of wolves that showed up. No moose kills as of now.

- \* I have given up trapping, primarily because of encroachment of other trappers (newly arrived population) in area that I had previously managed for 15 years. I have been before and still am, an advocate of registration of traplines so that the resource can be managed to sustain a constant yield rather than exploitation and eventually extermination.
- \* The fact that the lynx did not peak all that high again, (about the same as the 80s cycle, but considerably lower than the 60s and 70s cycles) proves that closing the season was not a factor in determining their population. Since the hares didn't peak either (they definitely declined during the summer of 1991, at least in 13D), it should be obvious to anyone what the problem is. The trappers have not caught them all. If over-trapping is not the cause of the lynx failing to reach their former peaks, then closing the season is not the solution. Trappers with a number of years experience are basically smart enough to know not to try and trap too many lynx during the low years. Killing the goose that lays the golden eggs only hurts yourself. The core of an increasing lynx population are the family units, (mothers and kittens). Generally the F.U. are local residents that do not travel very widely. Some areas can be avoided, but catching a few during the increasing years will have almost no impact on the overall population. Also, the hassle one has to go through to be releasing them all the time when there is no open season is unnecessary and a poor way to treat the resource. And the very low current prices provide no incentive for outlaws.
- \* The area I trap was given to a man in Cantwell to build his trapper cabin in and trap there. The state did not even consider that we trap there and have to watch or we will over trap very easily. I and two or three others told them what was what on Portage, but they chose to do otherwise. This was done out of Anchorage and Wasilla. Do you ever check with each other? Who cares? Trap till they are all gone then close the season. Maybe there will be more fur then.
- \* I did not trap this year because I had trouble with my snow machine. Trapping was good this year, but I missed out. It will be good trapping again next year, cause there's lots of beaver swimming around in the river. Hope I have good snow machine next year.
- \* Beaver season should start in December and lynx and black bear season should be closed.
- \* The fur buyer says ahead of time what the price is. The price was up, but when we sell our fur, they buy for less than what they said earlier. I guess that's why most of the trappers don't believe them much anymore.
- \* Due to the depth of snow which was soft to the ground, could not travel until middle part of January. Did not trap beaver as hard as I did in the past due to

poor price, also did not have time for otters, too much work! Beaver were in bad shape, couple new houses were empty (conibears and snares staged still), also found beaver carcasses below the dams. Possible dying-off due to sickness.

- I don't have a job and we have one month for beaver hunting and most of the people I know don't make much money. I made \$190. for the beaver I trapped and that doesn't go very much.
- Snow problems and below 0 plus chill factors prevented me from checking my line. Also had a late start as sled broke. Gasoline prices too high here. Better luck next year, I hope. Get an earlier start.
- I think the limit of 20 beaver in 17C should be changed to at least 40. I feel the beaver population has grown enough to support this with the price the way they are we need all the help we can get. For instance, I receive \$250. for the biggest beaver, yet the pelt itself sold for \$50. Also, it would be nice to have access to statewide fur buyers. What is the scoop on the banning of leghold traps in the US as requested by Europe?

**Editor's Note: Unless federal law is enacted to forbid the use of leghold traps (for example on federal ground), the Board of Game would have to forbid legholds. We do not expect any action on this for at least 2 years - if then.**

- I'd like to see lynx and wolverine season return to November 10 to March 31. It makes no good reasoning to close the season down in February for us hardworking trappers only to have the many airplane bandits out in March shooting everything that moves. At least if we could be anti-trapping in March we could be paroling our own lines with the hope of at least covering some fuel cost, and it's plenty evident that what we have for enforcement in the Bristol Bay area will never be so much as a real threat to these outlaws of the sky. Beaver season should run till April 15th. We're losing too many to starvation.
- Better trapping, lots less people.
- I'd like to see a trapper season in March for beaver, lynx and wolverine in 9B, 17B, and 19B again. The days are longer then and the traveling conditions usually good. Pelts are prime and in good shape. The way the season is now with the Feb 28th closing, us trappers that work all winter through the cold, dark, and stormy part of winter are shut down when the good conditions come around only to watch the airplanes come through and shoot hell out of everything that has fur and moves. If you want shorter seasons, do away with the fall hunting season on furbearers, they are not prime then anyway.
- Beaver season should be another month or so longer.

- \* I have not trapped since I was in grade school, so I cannot help you much in this area. Thanks for sending the questionnaire.
- \* Lots of snow again. Good to see more wolf and wolverine tracks around, but still not abundant. It's nice to trap them, but great to see tracks in the snow at this day and age. We as trappers need to talk more to the public about our sport. Let them know most trappers are conservationists. That we do care what happens to the wildlife in Alaska. We need to project a positive image towards trapping and the fur trade. The antis are here and it will only get worse if we set by and don't do something.
- \* I had six mink traps stolen and I think I may have had two mink stolen out of other traps. Competition is moving in.
- \* I have a B.S. degree in biology and over the years have monitored and trapped in the Valdez area. I have personally declared an emergency closure on fur animals with coyote and beaver as possible exceptions. Lynx, wolverine, marten populations are at all time low. Every weekend I am out on snowmachine and I see very little sign! You better get your game biology out of the office and into the field. I think they will conclude same. Leave trapping rest to build population back up!
- \* I stopped trapping Big Game because of the number of dogs in the area. I believe they are wild dogs for the most part. Up until last year there was a good otter population in the area. Last year I only saw one set of tracks. I did not see any trappers or evidence of other trapping during season. The tides make this a very difficult place to trap, but there seems to be a good population of mink and marten.
- \* I did not trap this year because I noticed a shortage of game on my line last year. I will evaluate the area next fall and determine then if I should let it rest for another year.
- \* Moving and building a new home along with low fur prices, and a general lack of fur in this local area has made trapping from home not practical. When we are better situated and I can range a little farther from home and prices make it worthwhile, I'll try a little trapping again. Coyote is about all I've seen sign of around here.
- \* Price of fur so low, not worth trapping.
- \* ADF&G has spent money on oil impacted areas for several years now. I would like some information from people doing the furbearer studies to be released to local trappers. I hear about possible reduced populations, birth rates, weights, all being affected, but not one report to trappers. Can't the biologist doing the studies

on land otters and mink at least give us a report on what is happening?\*

Most trappers understand the need for a healthy, stable population and if given information to the contrary would avoid the oil impacted areas. If you give us some real evidence of declines and problems we may not have an emergency closure of the entire area in the future.

**\*Editor's Note: The mink and otter studies are being funded under the Exxon/Oil Spill Project. When the studies are completed you should hear something.**

\* They are clear cutting the North Gulf Coast. They are wrecking it. Alaska doesn't have the same buffer zone laws for secondary streams to primary as down in the lower 48. Goats are disappearing. Look at Icy Bay. They logged the south face. Now, no goats. That used to have a thousand on that Robinson Range.

\* I have spent 41 years trapping in Alaska and no two winters are the same. There's always next winter. We need a December - January beaver season so we can harvest those beaver at timberline. During the February - March season, these beaver are under 6-10 feet of snow (or more). Also, an April season wouldn't hurt.

\* I know that the abundance/trend table is based on the answers from the questionnaires sent in by trappers. From my years of trapping Units 7 and 15, I would question the table on marten, wolverine and red fox.

Marten - are listed as scarce and the trend as fewer. I've used the same marten sets in Unit 7 for many years and my catch has been consistent, 10 to 20 each year. As you know there are few marten in Unit 15. It's just not marten country! There are a few between Russian lake and Skilak lake.

Wolverine - are listed as scarce and the trend as fewer. I find these numbers way off! With no increased effort, the last two seasons produced the best wolverine trapping I've ever had. I caught 12 wolverine in Unit 7. The trappers that reported them scarce didn't try very hard, if at all.

Red fox - are listed as common and the trend as fewer. It's hard to believe that they are listed as more abundant than mink. In 35 years trapping Unit 7 I've never caught a fox, saw a fox, or heard of anyone that has. I know that there are a few in Unit 15 around Homer. I bet you can count all the fox caught on the Kenai River in the last ten years on one hand.

I really appreciate your work on this trapping survey!

\* We should do something about the lice on the wolves here on the peninsula. And they should open a short season for lynx cause I see more and more lynx in my

area. I am looking forward to work with you guys.

- \* I trapped mink for two weeks and had a harvest of 42. There was more than normal competition resulting in smaller than normal catch. I feel the mink population is good. Took one marten and a few weasels, incidental to the mink. There are beaver everywhere and also good numbers of otter. Coyotes also seem to be up some.
- \* Had to work this winter due to poor fishing season. Need to open beaver season in November or extend later in 15A, B, C.
- \* There needs to be a law about people stealing and snapping or pulling other people's traps. Had lots of problems with people last year.
- \* Would like to see mink, marten and otter season extended through February.
- \* Suggest that in Units 7 and 15 that beaver open February 15 and run through April 15. Also, I suggest this report include the number of each species caught. Better management tool and will give an idea of population dynamics.
- \* Lynx seemed up quite a bit over last year in Upper Tanana valley. Marten down quite markedly. Also, red squirrel and weasel seem to be down in direct relation with marten catch. Coyote should be unclassified game! Land and shoot should be restricted to wolf management only! Federal Regulations more than weather keep trappers from utilizing Unit 15. More lynx past 3 years, but still no season. This is overzealous management! There are almost no fox, yet seasons continue. Don't ruin trapping with limited entry (registered traplines). As the state has already ruined commercial fishing. Limited entry will mean only the rich will be allowed the privilege of trapping! Trapper training and mandatory trapper reports will aid in overcrowding and benefit ADF&G.
- \* Wolves didn't move down low until the last part of the season because of early and deep snow. Need longer wolf season.
- \* One of my lines was taken by someone else this season so I dropped it. I had one beaver stolen this season and last season. Average size was much larger than usual just below 67" with the largest at 72". Little to no sign or ptarmigan sign for several years. Lots of coyote sign as usual. Beaver population is doing well considering I'm in a combat trapping area. Access is restricted by open water often and trap/fur theft is much too common.
- \* I feel in some instances the provision for no limit is wrong. Lets take lynx for example. I have friends who live in the Upper River Valley who back in the 70s killed almost 300 lynx in a single season. None became independently wealthy

through this or gave large sums of anything back to the resource as a benefactor of it. The money spent as always and now a lynx is a rare catch on their trapline and cutting a set of tracks is reason for a holiday. Rabbit population has gone through a fairly high cycle in their area and the lynx have not. Any animal will not proliferate if too much pressure is put upon it, pressure of any kind. Food, shelter, ability to find a willing mate, territory, and the ability to have a safe harbor within that territory. Limits also make the resource available to more people, not a handful of good old boys who are unwilling to share anything with anyone. I am opposed to closing seasons. Once closed, things tend not to reopen. Limit the harvest on animals with wavering populations. And get the bureaucracy out of Fish and Game management. Listen to your highly paid biologists and manage our resources for the resources benefit first and our profit will naturally follow.

- \* It was upsetting to see so many anti land and shoot comments from trappers. We have enough anti's in the world without fellow outdoorsmen creating splits along the front lines in our battle against anti hunter/trappers. I personally feel land and shoot is more humane to wolves and coyotes, but I'll always do everything possible to protect the rights of those who use leghold traps.
- \* I'd hate to see my outdoor time cut down, but maybe a slight shortening of the season on wolverine would help, preferably the latter portion of the season. Make it tougher for the airplane trappers to catch those wolverine down low late in the season. Marten are somewhat self-regulating. Lower prices. Fewer trappers. End of problem.
- \* In the areas of 14C and 7 where there is good packing and a lot of skiers and snowmobiles, the rabbit population still seems low. But, once you get off the beaten path a little bit, there are more rabbits and predators. In Unit 7, I regularly cross the tracks of 5 different cats. I would like to see an opening of 6 weeks to 2 months as the rabbit population has started to come back.
- \* People have no respect for trappers anymore or a guy's trapline. I wish I had the answer to this problem. Keep up the good work.
- \* Large fur and marten coming back due to increase of habitat and lack of air hunting. Also increase of moose herd has brought back the wolves. Beaver population decreasing due to carnivore increase and season too late in spring where any damn fool can catch them instead of know how and work through the ice.
- \* Wolverine started a comeback in this area, but were hit hard this spring when flying weather cleared. We will not get a good population of wolf, lynx and wolverine until we get proper enforcement of airplane shooters.

- \* Marten were more abundant than at any time in the past 6 years or so. Trapper effort was less. I personally trapped less than at any season in the past 43 years. Wolverine sign was better than I've seen for 7 or 8 years and there were, to the best I could determine, 3 working the area I trapped. Made no effort to trap them. Saw several sets of lynx tracks, but made no sets for them. Marten season should be opened the 20th of October. Too many coyotes in the area. Season should be opened earlier.
- \* I would rather have a marten season in January, February and March when I can cover my entire area available and the fur is more prime. With the early season in November, December, January, I can only trap close to home, the trail conditions are very difficult and hard on equipment. I am happy to see this questionnaire. I support good management to ensure healthy populations of all species.

### SOUTHEAST REGION

- \* Usually see more wolf and wolverine sign along the bench fringe. Very little in 91-92. Thought maybe open winter made finding a meal easier so animals didn't have to travel so much.
- \* Trappers in the Petersburg area have been trapping close to Homesites in the Wrangell Narrows area. Is the law still in effect that the trapper has to post his set by a sign with his name on it? Can trappers still use traps with teeth on them?  
**Editor's Note: In Alaska, trappers do not have to post their sets. There is no law in Alaska that says you cannot use traps with teeth, therefore you can use them (see pp. 18-19 of Trapping Regulations Book #33).**
- \* I run this trap line with a friend of mine. We are both retired. The prices were not especially good this year. We are going for just marten next season. We did get some nice ones. Do not use foot traps anymore. Set snares a little high this year. No snow so wolves were going under them. Also was getting our marten boxes, knock them right off the tree, but would never go back to the same box.
- \* I'm retired six years ago and trapping in the winter. I really like to get out on the trap line. I do all my trapping from an airboat. Ice don't bother me, but a lot of snow does. We didn't have much snow last year. So I did good on the marten. This year I got 3 wolves. Got no prices for them. One wolverine was all I got. Used to get 3 or 4. Anyway, it's a good job for an old man.
- \* We have worked very hard the past 8 years to manage a healthy animal population on our trapline and are very careful to limit our activities when necessary. We would like to see regular assigned traplines so that if we need to rest our area, anyone else's would be prevented from trapping our trapline.

- \* It's hard to keep on adding more to my line as I am 65 and have three girlfriends and so am more tired than when I started trapping. Next year, I may reduce my line by 1/3 - or drop one girlfriend.
- \* I trap a small area with my boys. Boys trap marten, mink and weasel. I trap wolf, river otter, beaver, wolverine. Next season my oldest boy will start trapping the bigger animals. Trapping gives us time to be with each other. I have a full time job so I don't get to make as many sets as I would like to, due to the time it takes to check them. I hope trapping will continue so my boys, will be able to enjoy this great lifestyle.
- \* More marten this year than in the past four years.
- \* Someone should educate the worthless city people who call themselves "animal rights activists". I am a "conservationist", even though I'm a trapper. I don't know anyone who lives in Alaska and knows anything about nature who is an "activist".
- \* I have 12 years trapping experience. However, I have purchased a trapping license for the past 22 years. For the last 10 years I have been living in Juneau. In this community I don't believe trapping is widely accepted. The times have changed since the late 60s and early 70s. Trapping opportunities in the Juneau area are limited and restrictive. However, I don't believe in weekend trapping anyway. One should be out on the trapline living or tending traps daily. In southeast Alaska wilderness trapping opportunities are extremely difficult to find. Most areas have been logged, roaded and/or a logging camp has taken over the area. Residents of logging camps have their own private hunting, trapping and fishing areas. Once a logging camp goes in, they pretty much own it and harvest all that is near. I see trapping with not much future. The Division of Wildlife Conservation is not helping either. Their direction is one of non-consumptive users.
- \* Trapping for me is wintertime exercise and excuse to get out of the house and run the boats.
- \* The marten population was so high they were being pests. Climbing into equipment and chewing stuff up. The first week of season most females were killed by other martens while in the traps. Some males were also killed. Cannibalism was higher than I thought possible. One month after season there was still lots of tracks in the snow. March's fresh snow showed very little sign. I believe they went up high.
- \* Would like to see wolves transplanted to more southeast islands or other large furbearers.

- \* Trapping, I think was good for 91.
- \* I recognize the need to protect the resources that we have, but I would urge that any future closures or limited seasons/catches be determined as early as possible and publicized to give trappers a chance for planning and preparing.
- \* We are loggers and when we shut down for snow there are only about two of us that trap here. There are so many marten in this area that everyday out on the job we see at least two or three. I don't think we should get closed down every year.
- \* Trapping this year has been a very rewarding family sport for my son and I. I am thankful the opportunity to trap exists.
- \* I'm currently a recreational trapper. I trap small numbers of mink/marten to make clothing item (slippers, etc.) Value for fur has been low for the last few years making fur trapping for monetary gain not worth the time and effort.
- \* I would like to see more protection for the wolf and brown bear. Reduced numbers of deer, moose, caribou, etc. will cause finger pointing in the wolf's direction, but I think the poachers aren't receiving their proper recognition.
- \* I'm 14 years old and trap after school and on weekends.
- \* No limit lynx trapping! Lynx are only overflow from Yukon or BC. So they starve. Not enough feed to support them without rabbits. Better to use them than starve them out like usual.
- \* I enjoy trapping with my son and wish we could do something to get Americans to appreciate the resource of fur that God has given to us, so that trapping could be here for my grandchildren. We are losing the ability to use these resources to those who feel they are "one" with the animals. This is a spiritual conflict that will only be solved if we honor Jesus Christ and the Holy Bible which gives man the responsibility of management, not the right of control! Keep up the good work.
- \* Trapping is more of a hobby for me. Besides it gives me experience and something to do. I also have benefited from its little bit of income in supplies during winter months. I don't know how seriously I will trap in the future or if I will at all, but I still am willing to fill out the report each year, whether I trap or not. Where I live there really is not enough fur to make it a full time job to make a living off of, unless you have the proper equipment and vehicles (snow machines) to run a long line.
- \* My time is very limited during the off season, but I'd like very much to speak with the biologist in charge of this area. I spend nearly half my time in the woods and

feel some observations and thoughts might be useful in managing this area. I'm not trained as a biologist, but have 40 years of careful study and experience to guide me. I strongly feel the early wolf and wolverine season should be dropped as it presents too great a temptation for your average trapper.

- \* We had a very cold, wet spring and summer so that the survival rate of grouse, rodents, etc was very low. I could not see any reason to attempt trapping during the 91-92 season because of that problem and the fact that hundreds of acres of prime wildlife habitat were logged over the past three years. It breaks my heart to see this beautiful area destroyed for the quick timber dollar. The state biologists don't seem to care at all, and the state Department of Forestry does not even acknowledge that trapping is a use of the forest by local people. I trapped one wolverine and only because I was checking things out and couldn't help doing a little trapping for old time's sake. More timber sales will take place this summer.
- \* Excellent population of marten where they were forced down to lower areas by clear cutting.
- \* If weather is warm it's pointless to trap mink during first week of season because fur is bad. If weather is still cold consider keeping season open until February 21st. Mink, weasel and marten must move around a great deal. You see tracks all over during pre-season scouting, then nothing. Only the wolverine stayed until someone else caught him. Few people live between Peterson Creek to Echo Cove. If you are worried about dogs restrict trapping to 110 conibears. The current law basically limits trappers without a boat or snow machine to a very small area and thus limits their catch greatly. What causes matted fur and raw skin to be exposed on the base of mink's tails? (10% of my mink were affected by this).  
**\*Editor's Note: The term used to describe this condition in mink is "tail rot;" we do not know what causes it. We see it in some localities in Southeast, and we usually see it infrequently when it does occur.**
- \* Full time job this year. I decided to hunt deer during my vacation this winter. More land around Juneau needs to be open to trapping, especially tidewater areas.
- \* I think ADF&G should consider the number of marten killed by deer hunters. I know of several hunting parties on Admiralty who "clean house" by shooting all the "vermin marten". They are regarded as pests because they get into food and especially hanging game around the cabins. I think the trails on the Juneau road system should be re-opened to responsible trappers. The only traffic on many of these trails in mid-winter is trapping or skiing related. There is very little chance of harming pets in marten or mink traps. Especially if these traps are above ground. Maybe even an exemption for bucket traps. I am afraid to trap spring beaver because of possible otter catch. Same hold true for wolverine and marten.

- \* Mink were very abundant in all areas trapped. Fewer otter in river areas. Did not trap (target) weasel, but noticed less sign than in last two seasons. Did not target marten due to little sign in areas normally trapped. These two specific marten areas have not been trapped since 89-90 season, due to lack of marten activity.
- \* This season was a lot better for me because I trapped 2 weeks at a different place, then trapped my regular place and it was also good. I think that the season should be opened 2 weeks earlier so we could get a better price for the fur and also closed 2 weeks earlier (especially otter). I think the management of trapping is very good. Thank you for this questionnaire.
- \* As much as wolf need to be controlled, the season should be closed a little earlier as this year the bears were out during wolf season. I suggest an April 1 closing for wolf in southeast.
- \* I would like to see Fish and Game publish an information pamphlet on the history of trapping in Alaska which would include the economic and social roles trapping has had and continues to play in the state. Included in this could be comments from trappers on ethics, etc. Keep up the good work.
- \* Sealing requirements are a pain in the neck for remote residents.
- \* I had quite an experience last year with US Fish and Wildlife. I know ignorance is no excuse, but I feel Fish and Game was responsible for this one. I wrote a letter to Anchorage requesting a reply, but didn't get one. I sent a shipment of marten to Vancouver, BC. All sealed, etc. according to all the regs (I thought). Fish and Game tells us about special tags for wolf, lynx, etc., but doesn't mention Fish and Wildlife 3-177 for marten. I could have went to jail over this one, and I wasn't a very happy camper at the time. Even the sealing agents, at least out here didn't know about this either. I hope the new regulations will take care of this problem. I've told everybody I can think of about it. It only affects furs going out of the country.  
**\*Editor's Note: I don't have a final answer on this at this time, but if the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is going to require it, we will put the notice in next year's trapping regulations.**
- \* The marten population in the area seems to be dropping off, but it's hard to say for sure because 90-91 was such a hard winter. From talking to long time (10 years) locals it is declining. A lot of road trapping and pressure when prices is up. Would like to see a trapper's education course as a prerequisite for a trapping license. Something along the lines of the "Hunter's Safety Course" sponsored by the NRA, or even more thorough like Canada has. The ADF&G, trappers, trapper associations, and everyone interested and connected with trapping needs to learn from and work with the Canadians, where the trapping is taken very seriously. I

think this questionnaire is a step in the right direction. Keep up the good effort and work.

- This year (91-92) was again a disease year in the mink on Prince of Wales Island. 1985 was also a bad year. For lack of a better name I call it tail-rot disease. An infestation in this area where I'm the only trapper of mink in nearly 100 miles of shoreline, destroys about 1/4 of the population. I delivered one severely diseased mink to the Forestry Biologist at Craig and the resultant laboratory tests should be available to any game biologist interested. I put up no signs. Any trappers will be welcome neighbors to this oyster farm operation. Our trapping is just a pleasurable hobby during the slow months at winter. Fur is a renewable biodegradable product. Synthetic fur is not. Only education and a renewed interest in the authentic fur products can save the furbearing animals from extinction if man continues to exploit their space. A large segment of humanity only values those things that produce large sums of money. They would kill the fur industry interest if they can. Fur is small money comparatively. Leg-holds are the only way practical for marten and mink.

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