

IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

Steven M. Huffaker, Director

Project W-170-R-27

Progress Report



FURBEARER

Study III, Job 1

July 1, 2002 to June 30, 2003

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**PROGRESS REPORT
SURVEYS AND INVENTORIES**

STATE: Idaho **JOB TITLE:** Furbearer Survey
PROJECT: W-170-R-27
SUBPROJECT: 1-7 **STUDY NAME:** Statewide Fur Harvest Survey
STUDY: III
JOB: 1
PERIOD COVERED: July 1, 2002 to June 30, 2003

STUDY OBJECTIVES

1. Estimate the population size, structure, and trend of harvested furbearers.
2. Determine hunter and trapper attitudes about and preferences for the furbearer program.
3. Inform trappers/hunters of the biology and status of furbearers.

PROCEDURES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

1. Analyze the mandatory trapper reports to estimate trends in furbearer harvest and the dollar value of species.
This was accomplished and is included in the following report.
2. Continue to collect bobcat harvest information through the mandatory export tag program.
All bobcats harvested were tagged with CITES tags and the method of harvest recorded. This information is included in the report.
3. Compile the sex and age structure of the bobcat harvest from the analysis of lower jaws and sectioned teeth, and use this information to evaluate and monitor the statewide population.
The Idaho Fish and Game Commission decided not to require trappers to surrender the jaws of bobcats harvested in Idaho during the 2000-2001, 2001-2002, and 2002-2003 seasons. This will be re-evaluated when the Commission reviews trapping regulations in the spring of 2004.
4. Conduct surveys to determine the population status of selected furbearers.
A winter track survey protocol for forest carnivores was completed and implemented statewide during winter 2002-2003. This survey is primarily for lynx, wolverine, fisher, and marten. Of these species, only the marten has furbearer status. The other three species are protected.
5. Prepare an annual report on furbearer harvest.
The annual report is found herein.

6. Conduct public meetings to inform the public and obtain information on hunter/trapper acceptance of season regulations.

No public meetings were held. The regulations did not change from the 2001-2002 trapping season.

7. Make presentations on furbearer biology to the public.

The State Furbearer Program Coordinator presented an update at the Idaho Trapper's Association (ITA) convention and was present at the Western Region's National Trapper's Association convention in 2003. Personnel gave a presentation on regulations and the drafting of the 4(d) rule for lynx at the ITA convention in 2002.

ABSTRACT

Trapping licenses sold during the 2002-2003 season totaled 824, which included 690 residents and eight nonresidents. The number of licenses sold was up from the previous year. Harvest reports for the 2002-2003 season were submitted by 583 (71%) of the 824 licensed trappers. This season, the Department changed the method in which trapping data is recorded. Catch-Per-Unit Effort (CPUE) was recorded instead of trapper days afield. CPUE measures the harvest per unit-of-time and will be useful in predicting population trends. The fur harvest, based on 464 reporting trappers, was 27,232 animals, up from the previous trapping season. A total of 19,840 pelts (73% of reported harvest) were sold for a value of \$296,127.12. Trappers sold their pelts for an average of \$14.93 each. The 464 trappers harvested an average of 59 pelts per trapper and sold an average of 43 pelts. Based on an average pelt price of \$14.93 and 43 pelts sold per trapper, trappers earned an average income of \$641.99. The estimated harvest for all trappers, including those that did not submit a report, was 38,355 animals taken, with an estimated statewide pelt value of \$575,950.24. Muskrat, red fox, beaver, coyote, and raccoon, respectively, were the most frequently caught species. Price per pelt (for all harvested species) ranged from an average of \$214.68 for bobcats (\$115.02 in 2001-2002) to \$2.01 for muskrats (\$2.24 in 2001-2002). In total statewide value of pelts sold, the top five furbearers included bobcat, red fox, coyote, beaver, and muskrat. Pelt values were up for all furbearers except badger, mink, muskrat, and raccoon. Bobcat trappers and hunters checked 1,277 animals from a two-month mid-December to mid-February season. The lynx season remained closed. The largest number of bobcats harvested (81% of the total) came from the Department's Panhandle, Clearwater, Southwest, and Magic Valley Regions. The Department affixed state tags to 109 legally-harvested otters statewide during the trapping season. Trappers reported 23 non-target otters trapped during the 2002-2003 season, equivalent to the previous season.

METHODS

Mandatory Trapper Harvest Reports

By Idaho law, licensed trappers are required to report to the Department the number of wild animals they catch, kill, and pelt during the open season and the amount received for the sale of these pelts. This report must be submitted by 31 July. Any trapper failing to send in a report by this date is refused a trapper's license the following year. Harvest reports for the 2002-2003 season were submitted by 583 (71%) of the 824 licensed trappers. Until the 1996-1997 season,

this information appeared on the back of the trapping license. Once the Department switched to point-of-sale machines for the purchase of licenses, this option was no longer available. A mandatory trapper report card has been used since the 1996-1997 season. This self-addressed and stamped folding card is sent to trappers each spring so they may conform to Idaho law.

Mandatory trapper reports are used to estimate the statewide harvest of furbearers by licensed trappers, the distribution of the harvest, and the market value of the state's furbearer harvest. Previously, questions on how many days the trapper spent afield scouting and setting/checking traps, and how many hours, on the average, the trapper spent afield each day was included. These questions were initially included in the mandatory report beginning with the 1993-1994 trapping season and were used to gather information on trapping effort. Results of this information were then projected to estimate the statewide trapping effort both in total hours and days afield. Beginning with the 2002-2003 trapping season, these questions were changed to include CPUE. CPUE measures the harvest per unit of time and will be useful in predicting population trends. This is calculated by multiplying the total number of nights trapped by the average number of traps set per night and dividing this by the number of animals trapped. Comments by trappers (Appendix I) are also accepted on harvest reports. Trappers that ask specific questions (in the comment section) receive a personal call from the appropriate Department personnel.

Idaho Trapper Survey

Mandatory trapper reports may also be used to collect specific survey data as needed. The input from trappers can be important, as the secretive nature of most furbearers generally makes it difficult to obtain good data on their status. Beginning with 2002-2003, CPUE will be included. As described above, CPUE measures the harvest per unit of time and will be useful in predicting population trends.

Bobcat Check-ins, Jaws, and Export Tags

By Fish and Game Commission (Commission) rule, trappers and hunters are required to have all bobcats tagged with Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) export tags by the Department within ten days after the close of the trapping/hunting season. During the period 1977-1978 through 1980-1981, CITES export tags were made available to trappers and hunters, but they were not mandatory. Mandatory reporting has been in effect since the 1981-1982 season. During the 1979-1980 and 1980-1981 seasons, it was not mandatory to turn in jaws, but the Department issued export tags only when jaws were submitted. Starting with the 2000-2001 season, the Commission directed that it was not mandatory to turn in bobcat jaws. The Commission will re-evaluate rules for mandatory submission of bobcat jaws at their spring 2004 meeting. It is unlawful to possess raw, untagged bobcat pelts after ten days following the close of the season, and to sell, offer for sale, purchase, or offer to purchase any raw bobcat pelt which does not have an official export tag attached. Trappers and hunters are required to present the pelts of all bobcats to a regional office, the McCall office, or official checkpoint to obtain the appropriate pelt tag and complete a harvest report. Information on the harvest report includes the sex of the animal, harvest location, date harvested, method of take (trapping, calling/hunting, with hounds, incidental hunting) and

beginning with the 2002-2003 season, CPUE. Mandatory harvest report data continue to be used to estimate the total statewide bobcat harvest by Department administrative region and big game management unit.

River Otter Check-ins, Jaws, and Export Tags

Trappers are mandated to surrender the entire river otter carcass to the Department within 72 hours of harvest. A two-year graduate research project is utilizing the carcasses for analyses of toxin levels, reproductive rates, age and sex structure, and general information on the overall status of the state's river otter population. River otter canine teeth are sent to Matson's Laboratory, Milltown, Montana where cementum annuli are counted to determine the age of the animal. All of the collected data is provided to the Division of Scientific Authority for assessment of the issuance of CITES export pelt tags for river otters harvested in future trapping seasons. The Department was approved for CITES export pelt tags for river otters in February 2003 for animals harvested during the 2002-2003 trapping season.

Non-target Catches

By Commission rule, any trapper who captures and kills a non-target species (any species for which the season is closed) must notify the Department through the local conservation officer or regional office within 72 hours to make arrangements for Department personnel to retrieve the animal. The regulation has been in effect since the 1988-1989 season. Since the 1990-1991 trapping season, the Department has paid trappers \$5.00 for each accidentally caught fisher and river otter turned in to the Department. Since a river otter season was initiated in 2000-2001, only otters trapped after the regional quota was reached must be surrendered to the Department. Beginning with the 1996-1997 season, trappers also received \$5.00 for each accidentally caught lynx or wolverine. Most non-target animals turned in were sold at the Department's annual auction. Money from the sale of these animals was deposited into the general account in 1989 and 1990. Since 1991, the proceeds have been earmarked for use in trapper education and associated activities.

STATEWIDE RESULTS

Trapping License Sales

Trapping licenses sold during the 2002-2003 season totaled 824 and included 690 residents (564 adult and 126 junior-residents under 18 years-of-age) and eight nonresidents (Table 1). The number of licenses sold increased by 177 licenses, a 27% increase.

Catch-Per-Unit Effort (CPUE)

Questions on how many days the trapper spent afield scouting and checking traps, and how many hours, on the average, the trapper spent afield each day, were collected from the 1993-1994 season through the 2001-2002 season (Table 2). Beginning with the current trapping season, the Department is collecting data on CPUE. This is recorded per species (Table 3).

Mandatory Trapper Harvest Reports

Harvest reports were submitted by 583 (71%) of the 824 licensed trappers for the 2002-2003 season. The percent compliance is down nine percent from the average of the previous six seasons that the mandatory report card has been used. This was due to a Departmental change in the method of data entry of licenses sold, which resulted in trappers that purchased licenses after January 1, 2003 not receiving harvest report forms prior to completion of this report. However, harvest by these trappers is being collected and will appear in future reports.

The information submitted on these reports was used to compile the reported and estimated statewide harvest and market value of the different furbearer species taken, including the badger, beaver, bobcat, coyote, marten, mink, muskrat, otter, raccoon, red fox, spotted skunk, striped skunk, and weasel.

The fur harvest, based on 464 reporting trappers who trapped, was 27,232 animals (Table 4), up from 20,576 the previous trapping season. Of this total, 19,840 pelts (73%) were sold for a value of \$296,127.12. Trappers sold their pelts for an average of \$14.93 each, compared to \$10.22 for the previous year. The 464 trappers harvested an average of 59 pelts per trapper and sold an average of 43 pelts. Based on an average pelt price of \$14.93 and 43 pelts sold per trapper, trappers earned an average income of \$641.99, up from \$347.48 the previous season. The estimated harvest for all trappers, including those who did not submit a report, was 38,355 animals taken with an estimated statewide pelt value of \$575,950.24, up from \$271,816.71 in the previous season.

The muskrat, red fox, beaver, coyote, and raccoon, respectively, were the most frequently caught species. Average price per pelt for these species were \$2.01, \$28.78, \$13.34, \$27.11, and \$7.99, respectively. Price per pelt (for all harvested species) ranged from an average of \$214.68 for bobcats (\$115.02 in 2001-2002) to \$2.01 for muskrats (\$2.24 in 2001-2002). In total statewide value of pelts sold, the top five furbearers included bobcat, red fox, coyote, beaver, and muskrat (Table 5). Pelt values were up for all furbearers except badger, mink, muskrat, and raccoon. (Table 4).

Harvest data reported by trappers were compiled, by county, for individual furbearer species (Table 6). While harvest distribution is partly a function of where trappers live, it identifies areas of higher harvest and may indicate areas of high furbearer populations.

Mandatory Bobcat Tagging and Harvest Reports

Bobcat trappers and hunters checked 1,277 animals from a two-month (mid-December through mid-February) season (Table 7); two animals were reported as being confiscated by Idaho Fish and Game. The lynx season remained closed; no accidental captures were reported. The largest number of bobcats harvested (81% of the total) came from the Department's Panhandle, Clearwater, Southwest, and Magic Valley Regions (Table 8). Trapping accounted for 69% of the statewide bobcat harvest, followed by the use of hounds (21%).

During the 2002-2003 season, the Commission did not require hunters and trappers to surrender jaws for aging (Table 9). This will be reassessed when the Commission reviews trapping regulations during the spring of 2004.

Some local populations in highly accessible areas may be more vulnerable to trapping and hunting than those in more remote areas, as suggested by Koehler and Hornocker (1989). While there are many remote areas in Idaho that act as “refugia” and contribute to more accessible populations where bobcat numbers may be reduced due to harvest pressure, the Department will continue to monitor the harvest for over-exploitation.

Mandatory River Otter Tagging and Harvest Reports

The first river otter trapping season since 1972 was authorized during the 2000-2001 trapping season. The Idaho Fish and Game Commission approved a quota of 100 otters statewide. Once the regional quota was reached, trappers had 48 hours in which to have additional otters tagged, with a maximum allowable harvest statewide set at 121 otters. The harvest quota was changed for the trapping season 2002-2003 to 102 animals, and the individual trapper’s quota was decreased from five to two river otters.

The Department affixed state tags to 109 legally-harvested otters statewide during the trapping season (Table 10). The otter season is closed 48 hours after the harvest quota for a region is met. Trappers are allowed to keep otters within this 48-hour period, provided their personal quota of two has not been reached, which may cause the total harvest to exceed harvest quotas. Harvest quotas were met in all regions except the Upper Snake Region. Once the season is closed, trappers must surrender the entire river otter carcass within 72 hours of harvest. Carcasses are being collected for a two-year graduate research project, which is providing analyses on toxin levels, reproductive rates, age and sex structure, and general status of the river otter population statewide. Trappers reported 23 non-target otters trapped during the 2002-2003 season, equivalent to the previous season.

Canine teeth from 110 otter carcasses were sent to Matson’s Laboratory for aging. This data is not available to date but will be provided in next year’s report. Of the total carcasses collected, including incidental captures, 59 (49%) were male and 61 (51%) were female (Table 11).

Reported Non-target Catches

Trappers were paid \$5.00 each for 23 otters surrendered to the Department for reimbursement. Since the 1990-1991 trapping season, eight fisher and 378 otters have been turned in to the Department for reimbursement (Table 12). These animals were sold at the Department’s annual auction with proceeds earmarked for trapper education and related projects. Among the non-target species reported trapped was a variety of birds and mammals. Non-target animals with minimal injury were released at the site of capture. Trappers reported 256 non-target animals captured (Table 13).

Furbearer Surveys

Winter track survey routes are currently being delineated and were implemented in each of the Department's administrative regions as a pilot project during the winter 2002-2003. Due to a lack of snow statewide, most regions were limited in the amount of routes they were capable of surveying. Target species being monitored by the winter track surveys include: American marten, fisher, Canada lynx, and wolverine. Other species to be monitored include: snowshoe hare, red squirrel, bobcat, coyote, mountain lion, and gray wolf.

Furbearer Research

The Department continues to cooperate with the Hornocker Wildlife Institute (Wildlife Conservation Society) on a wolverine and fisher research project along the Idaho and Wyoming border. A departmental employee and Boise State University graduate student began a river otter research project with the 2002-2003 trapping season. The project includes analyses for toxins (PCBs, mercury and other heavy metals, and organochlorines), assessing reproductive rates, age and sex structure, and general body condition of individual river otters harvested.

Furbearer Depredation

Beaver continue to be live-trapped in several regions to solve damage complaints. When feasible, these animals are translocated to other areas in attempts to improve riparian habitat or increase the local beaver population. Department conservation officers frequently issue Furbearer Depredation Control Permits (Form WL-2) to individuals as a valuable tool in handling beaver and other furbearer damage complaints quickly and efficiently. Beginning in January 1995, Department administrative regions were required to keep accurate records on the number of permits issued and the number of animals removed. Each region is retaining this information in case questions surface regarding past depredation complaints. Beaver are typically the most common species in which kill permits are issued, followed by muskrat and raccoon.

Administrative Activities and Coordination

Department staff participated in a variety of furbearer-related activities during the year. Several state office and regional staff are involved in the Forest Carnivore Committee, a group of individuals representing state and federal agencies and non-governmental organizations. The primary focus of this group involves forest carnivores, including marten, fisher, lynx, and wolverine. Several personnel represented the Department at the 2nd annual Western Region National Trappers' Association convention in Pocatello. Personnel also represented the Department at the Idaho Trappers' Association convention in Gooding. Personnel were available at the annual fur sale, held in Gooding in 2003, for tagging river otter and bobcat pelts with CITES tags. Department staff throughout the state were involved in the collection of furbearer harvest data, including tagging bobcat and river otter pelts and collecting river otter carcasses for the two-year graduate research project.

Management Implications

In 1990, Department regional furbearer coordinators (RFCs) were appointed in each region and the McCall office in compliance with the 1991-1995 Furbearer Management Plan. The function of the RFCs is to serve as a liaison with trapping organizations, trappers and other user groups, and other agencies on trapping and furbearer issues. While the RFCs have diverse natural resource backgrounds, they all share some level of expertise or interest in furbearer management in Idaho. These RFCs continue to play an important role in maintaining good working relations with trappers and other agencies and are helping the Department meet its furbearer management goals and objectives.

Observations made by Department personnel, trappers, and hunters during this reporting period provided no indication that Idaho trapping and hunting seasons have adversely impacted furbearer populations. Variable and unpredictable pelt prices continue to influence trapper/hunter participation and, consequently, the harvest of furbearers. Available information also suggests that furbearer populations are not declining.

We believe the Department is meeting its goals and objectives regarding furbearer season structure, maintaining populations and distribution, and some management programs. Conversely, some strategies proposed in the furbearer plan, including development of habitat management guidelines, mandatory trapper education, and monitoring of some species, have not been implemented.

LITERATURE CITED

- Johnson, N. F., B. A. Brown, and J. C. Bosomworth. 1981. Age and sex characteristics of bobcat canines and their use in population assessment. *The Wildlife Society Bulletin* 9 (3): 203-206.
- Koehler, G. M. and M. G. Hornocker. 1989. Influences of seasons on bobcats in Idaho. *Journal of Wildlife Management* 53 (1): 197-202.

Table 1. Trapping license sales and usable harvest reports received from trappers for the 1993-1994 through 2002-2003 trapping seasons.

Year	Licenses Sold				Reports Received		Reporting Trappers who Trapped		Estimated Active Trappers ^a
	Resident	Jr.	Nonres.	Total		%	%		
1993-1994	588	-	8	596	489	82	425	87	518
1994-1995	738	-	10	748	547	73	432	79	591
1995-1996	631	-	7	638	445	70	362	81	518
1996-1997	772	-	7	779	590	76	463	78	610
1997-1998	740	130	12	752	586	78	473	81	609
1998-1999	612	110	14	626	502	80	381	76	476
1999-2000	451	98	9	558	459	82	362	79	441
2000-2001	504	97	6	607	492	81	390	79	480
2001-2002	546	91	10	647	519	80	415	80	518
2002-2003	690	126	8	824	583 ^c	71	464	80	659

^a Estimated active trappers is determined by multiplying the number of licenses sold by the percent of trappers who reported that they actually trapped, based on the total number of reports received.

^b Reflects 111 trappers that did not receive a harvest report form prior to this report being written. The data is being collected from these trappers and will be included in future reports.

Table 2. Estimated trapper days afield, 1994-1995 through 2002-2003, based on trappers' reports received.

Year	Reporting Trappers who Trapped	Trappers Reporting Time Afield	%	Average Time Afield Per Trapper		Projected Statewide Time Afield		
				Hrs/Day	Days/Yr	Estimated Active Trappers	Total Hours	Total Days
1994-1995	432	330	76	4.4	35.5	591	92,314	20,981
1995-1996	362	271	75	4.1	38.4	517	80,139	19,546
1996-1997	463	441	95	4.9	42.7	608	127,212	25,962
1997-1998	473	404	85	4.4	35.6	609	95,394	21,680
1998-1999	381	335	88	4.1	33.2	476	64,793	15,803
1999-2000	362	357	99	4.2	38.0	441	70,384	13,549
2000-2001	390	383	98	3.9	31.9	480	59,717	12,209
2001-2002	415	414	100	4.0	32.9	518	68,169	13,627
2002-2003 ^a	464	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

^a The trapper report card form was changed for the 2002-2003 season and no longer records the days and time afield per trapper.

Table 3. Catch-Per-Unit Effort data from trapper report cards^a.

Species	Number of Animals Trapped (a)	Total Number of Nights Trapped (b)	Average Number of Traps Set/Night (c)	Catch-Per-Unit Effort (b x c / a)
Badger	261	1,156	12	54
Beaver	2,485	4,927	6	12
Bobcat	709	5,455	16	126
Coyote	2,231	6,677	16	48
Fox	2,431	5,504	13	29
Marten	737	887	20	25
Mink	729	2,681	11	42
Muskrat	15,082	3,806	19	5
Otter	93	781	4	32
Raccoon	1,140	4,639	10	39
Spotted skunk	26	197	14	104
Striped skunk	817	2,593	9	28
Weasel	75	543	9	63

^a Reflects only animals trapped and does not include animals hunted.

Table 4. Statewide harvest and pelt value of furbearers trapped during the 2002-2003 season based on 465 trappers who reported they trapped.

Species	Trappers Reporting a Harvest	Animals Taken (a)	Pelts/ Trapper	Animals Sold (b)	% Sold (b / a)	Money Received (c)	Price/ Pelt ^a (c / b = d)	Total Value (a x d = e)	Estimated Statewide Pelt Value ^b (e / .71)	% of Total Value
Badger	58	264	5	199	75	3,944.17	19.82-	5,232.48	7,369.69	1.28
Beaver	224	2,485	11	1,303	52	17,376.18	13.34+	33,149.90	46,690.00	8.11
Bobcat ^c	167	728	4	495	68	106,265.48	214.68+	156,287.04	220,122.59	38.22
Coyote	205	2,478	12	2,268	92	61,495.33	27.11+	67,178.58	94,617.72	16.43
Marten	46	737	16	520	71	10,821.56	20.81+	15,336.97	21,601.37	3.75
Mink	128	729	6	466	64	3,533.79	7.58-	5,525.82	7,782.85	1.35
Muskrat	179	15,082	84	11,662	77	23,434.95	2.01-	30,314.82	42,696.93	7.41
Otter ^c	68	93	1	43	46	3,075.87	71.53+	6,652.29	9,369.42	1.63
Raccoon	196	1,159	6	620	53	4,952.95	7.99-	9,260.41	13,042.83	2.26
Red Fox	203	2,556	16	2,087	82	60,056.71	28.78+	73,561.68	103,608.00	17.99
Spotted Skunk	11	26	2	2	8	25.56	12.78+	332.28	468.00	.08
Striped Skunk	114	820	7	142	17	996.61	7.02+	5,756.40	8,107.61	1.41
Weasel	20	75	4	33	44	147.96	4.48+	336.00	473.24	.08
Actual Total (71%)		27,232	-	19,840	73	296,127.12	14.93+	408,924.67	-	100.00
Estimated Total (100%)		38,355	-	27,944	-	417,080.45	-	-	575,950.24	-

^a Plus and minus reflects upward or downward trends in pelt value.

^b Estimated totals and statewide pelt value were determined based on the assumption that the harvest reported by trappers represented 71% of the actual harvest if all active trappers had submitted a harvest report.

^c Reflects only the number reported by trappers on the mandatory report card.

Table 5. History of statewide rank by value for animals trapped.

Species ^a	Rank by Value					
	1997-1998	1998-1999	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003
Badger	9	9	9	11	11	11
Beaver	1	1	2	3	3	4
Bobcat	3	2	1	1	1	1
Coyote	5	5	5	4	4	3
Marten	8	8	10	6	10	6
Mink	7	7	7	9	8	10
Muskrat	2	4	4	5	5	5
Otter ^b	-	-	-	8	7	8
Raccoon	6	6	8	7	6	7
Red fox	4	3	3	2	2	2
Spotted skunk	12	12	12	13	-	12
Striped skunk	10	10	6	10	9	9
Weasel	11	11	11	12	12	13

^a Non-target "Other" species trapped are excluded from this ranking.

^b Otter was not included on the trapper report card until the 2000-2001 season.

Table 6. Distribution of the furbearer harvest in Idaho by county, as reported by trappers for the 2002-2003 season.

County	Badger	Beaver	Bobcat	Spotted Skunk	Coyote	Fox	Marten	Mink	Muskrat	Raccoon	Otter	Striped Skunk	Weasel
Ada	23	70	1	0	95	87	1	111	256	75	1	126	0
Adams	1	16	4	0	60	16	4	13	30	20	2	18	3
Bannock	2	25	20	0	15	19	0	17	617	31	0	11	0
Bear Lake	1	100	4	0	9	125	0	19	141	44	0	45	0
Benewah	1	40	4	0	5	1	0	9	11	5	1	2	29
Bingham	1	156	5	0	73	169	0	7	450	96	2	17	0
Blaine	0	71	8	0	2	32	0	1	0	0	3	6	0
Boise	0	29	1	0	49	64	19	0	12	15	1	0	0
Bonner	0	63	10	0	8	60	17	11	71	14	4	30	7
Bonneville	4	84	4	0	30	290	23	3	393	24	0	31	1
Boundary	0	52	0	0	1	0	0	14	35	25	3	8	1
Butte	1	32	6	0	2	10	0	0	6	0	0	0	0
Camas	20	15	0	0	5	45	0	0	20	16	1	25	0
Canyon	52	162	0	0	52	112	0	118	1676	81	2	51	0
Caribou	1	85	3	0	40	63	0	37	181	6	0	10	0
Cassia	5	28	24	1	32	60	0	27	6	5	2	14	0
Clark	1	0	2	0	36	0	6	1	0	3	0	0	0
Clearwater	0	75	16	0	21	0	4	14	12	10	5	0	0
Custer	3	85	30	0	36	55	172	2	45	33	3	5	0
Elmore	30	56	23	0	119	48	0	27	461	30	9	40	0
Franklin	3	65	0	5	14	74	0	19	342	130	0	14	0
Fremont	1	120	0	0	10	96	102	19	309	69	4	53	0
Gem	0	121	1	0	14	54	0	87	870	36	3	10	0
Gooding	4	88	24	7	69	61	0	32	2720	56	10	71	0
Idaho	0	35	89	2	42	1	6	13	9	29	1	8	0
Jefferson	4	108	0	0	54	195	0	14	383	60	1	49	0
Jerome	0	0	0	0	22	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Kootenai	0	142	27	0	142	0	1	8	898	41	5	15	9
Latah	0	7	26	0	74	0	0	1	24	21	0	13	1
Lemhi	11	170	43	1	271	95	34	29	878	66	7	25	0
Lewis	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lincoln	12	13	28	0	106	20	0	3	14	12	3	14	0
Madison	0	43	0	0	11	35	0	19	281	15	0	8	0
Minidoka	0	4	3	0	36	170	0	4	38	4	0	20	0
Nez Perce	0	18	6	0	23	0	0	1	5	8	8	0	0
Oneida	0	10	0	0	1	5	0	1	2	4	0	14	0

Table 6. Continued.

County	Badger	Beaver	Bobcat	Spotted Skunk	Coyote	Fox	Marten	Mink	Muskrat	Raccoon	Otter	Striped Skunk	Weasel
Owyhee	24	76	170	9	262	22	0	10	3441	15	3	11	0
Payette	7	25	0	0	13	51	0	4	62	1	0	4	0
Power	0	13	6	0	14	15	0	0	45	1	0	6	0
Shoshone	18	107	21	0	14	0	29	19	61	5	2	1	23
Teton	0	17	0	0	13	10	11	4	148	2	0	1	0
Twin Falls	27	8	71	1	262	53	0	1	90	11	0	19	0
Valley	4	10	12	0	67	204	308	10	1	13	7	18	1
Washington	0	41	17	0	7	16	0	0	38	8	0	8	0

Table 7. Bobcat and lynx pelts checked in at IDFG offices by trappers and hunters and tagged with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service export tags, 1993-1994 through 2002-2003.

Year	Pelts Tagged	
	Bobcat	Lynx
1993-1994	533	0
1994-1995	794	0
1995-1996 ^a	421	0
1996-1997	1,018	0
1997-1998	929	0
1998-1999	715	0
1999-2000	885	0
2000-2001 ^b	1,026	0
2001-2002 ^c	959	0
2002-2003 ^d	1,277	0

^a The lynx harvest season was closed following the 1995-1996 season.

^b Three bobcats confiscated by IDFG are included in this total.

^c Six bobcats confiscated by IDFG are included in this total.

^d Two bobcats confiscated by IDFG are included in this total.

Table 8. Bobcat harvest report for the 2002-2003 season by Region and method of take^a.

Region	Total Harvest	Method of Take										
		Trapping		Calling		With Hounds		Incidental Hunting		Unk.		
		%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	
Panhandle	197	15	115	58	6	3	68	34	5	3	3	2
Clearwater	290	23	136	47	13	5	120	41	18	6	3	2
Southwest	349	27	280	80	21	6	34	10	12	3	2	2
Magic Valley	205	16	187	91	12	6	4	2	2	1	0	0
Southeast	96	8	56	58	4	4	26	27	10	10	0	0
Upper Snake	44	3	33	75	0	0	7	16	4	9	0	0
Salmon	96	8	80	83	4	4	8	8	4	4	0	0
Total	1,277	100	887	69	60	5	267	21	55	4	8	1

^a Percentages rounded to the nearest whole number.

Table 9. Sex and age of harvested bobcats, based on examination of canines and cementum analyses, 1993-1994 through 2002-2003.

Year	Teeth Examined ^a	Adult Females	% ^b	Adult Males	% ^b	Juveniles ^c & Subadults (<2 Years)	% ^b
1989-1990	725	184	25	293	40	248	34
1990-1991	418	92	22	148	35	178	43
1991-1992	581	126	22	247	42	208	36
1992-1993	754	168	22	268	36	318	42
1993-1994	504	223	44	211	42	70	14
1994-1995	776	218	28	253	33	305	39
1995-1996	413	102	25	150	36	159	38
1996-1997	948	217	23	385	41	346	36
1997-1998	913	221	24	450	49	241	26
1998-1999	490 ^d	164	33	152	31	173	35
1999-2000	782 ^e	305	39	143	18	330	42
2000-2001 ^f	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2001-2002 ^f	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2002-2003 ^f	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	7,304	2,020	-	2,700	-	2,578	-
Average	664	184	28	246	37	234	35

^a Milk canines and those with open root canals were aged as juveniles; male canines with closed root canals were aged as adults; female canines with closed root canals were sectioned and the annuli counted, sex based on canines with closed canals was determined by measurement (Johnson et al. 1981). Sex of juveniles was not determined.

^b Percent is based on the total number of teeth examined.

^c Age reflects age at last birthday, using April as the approximate date of birth.

^d The sex of one additional adult was not determined.

^e The sex of four additional adults was not determined.

^f Bobcat jaws were not collected.

Table 10. Summary of river otters trapped and tagged during the 2002-2003 otter season in Idaho.

Region	River Otter Harvest and Quotas by Region		
	Harvest Quota	Date Quota Reached	Total Harvested ^a
Panhandle	15	2/28/03	16
Clearwater	15	12/27/02	15
Southwest	30	1/17/03	37
Magic Valley	20	1/22/03	21
Southeast	2	12/3/02	2
Upper Snake	10	Not reached	8
Salmon	10	1/2/03	10
Total	102	-	109

^a Total harvest may exceed harvest quota. The otter season closes in each region 48 hours after the harvest quota for that region is met. Trappers are allowed to keep otters within this 48-hour period provided their personal quota of two has not been reached.

Table 11. Sex distribution of river otters harvested in Idaho during the 2002-2003 season.

Region	River Otter Harvest	
	Male	Female
Panhandle	6	10
Clearwater	5	7
Southwest	21	14
Magic Valley	14	15
Southeast	Unknown	Unknown
Upper Snake	2	4
Salmon	7	8
McCall	4	3
Total	59	61

^a These figures include carcasses collected from river otters that were legally harvested and incidentally-captured.

Table 12. Fisher and otter caught accidentally by trappers and turned in to the Department for a payment of \$5.00 each, 1993-1994 through 2002-2003^a.

Species	Region Where Animal was Trapped ^b							Unk.	Total
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Fisher									
1993-1994	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1994-1995	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
1995-1996	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
1996-1997	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1997-1998	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1998-1999	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1999-2000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2000-2001	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
2001-2002	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2002-2003	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Total	1	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	6
Otter ^c									
1993-1994	9	4	6	2	0	2	6	0	29
1994-1995	10	9	4	3	1	1	4	0	32
1995-1996	4	1	4	11	0	4	12	0	36
1996-1997	7	1	8	4	0	6	9	0	35
1997-1998	9	2	12	9	3	3	7	0	45
1998-1999	0	1	6	21	0	0	3	0	31
1999-2000	6	0	5	19	0	0	1	4	35
2000-2001	1	0	2	5	0	0	0	0	8
2001-2002	8	0	8	3	0	3	1	0	23
2002-2003	0	1	6	10	1	0	5	0	23
Total	54	19	61	87	5	19	48	4	297

^a Regions: 1=Panhandle, 2=Clearwater, 3=Southwest, 4=Magic Valley, 5=Southeast, 6=Upper Snake, 7=Salmon, Unk.=Unknown.

^b Figures do not include road-kills and other unknown mortalities.

^c 2000-2001 is the first season since 1972 that river otters could be legally trapped.

Table 13. Non-target animals captured in the 2002-2003 trapping season.

Species	Captured	Released	Found Dead	Unknown Status
Badger	2		2	
Bobcat	7	7		
Bird	9		3	6
Domestic cat	83	12	39	32
Deer	3	3		
Domestic dog	3			3
Domestic sheep	2	2		
Duck	6	4	2	
Fisher	5	3	2	
Goose	1		1	
Grouse	1		1	
Magpie	3		2	1
Marmot	11			11
Mountain Lion	7	4	3	
Mouse	11		11	
Other	1			1
Otter	23	4	14	5
Porcupine	29	17	2	10
Rabbit	6	1	3	2
Skunk	3			3
Squirrel	41	28	1	12
Total	257	85	86	86

APPENDIX I

2002-2003 Idaho Trapper Survey Comments

BEAVER

Season should begin November 1st. No October openings!

An open season in Latah County for beaver would be nice.

Beaver would be primer on the Snake River November 10.

Beaver seasons should not be opened before November 1.

You could put out another permit in Latah on main river for about 15 beaver, where most people have trouble with them (Palouse River).

Due to early freezing and late thaw in the Little Lost Valley, beaver season should be extended in the fall and spring. A week to two weeks would help.

BOBCAT

I hope Idaho stays away from a cat limit because that will only hurt the honest people.

I think the bobcat season should be open December 1.

Longer bobcat season.

Bobcat season should be January 5 or 10 to February 28 or March 10.

I would like to see the cat season in Fremont County done different. The way it is gives us no time to use the desert.

I would like to see the cat season adjusted in Fremont County to allow a person a better opportunity to trap the desert before it closes to human activity.

We would very much like the bobcat season moved to November 15 through January 15. Coyote and cat trapping go hand-in-hand. February coyotes are very rubbed and very low value. I believe this is what Nevada and Utah are doing.

I would like to see the bobcat season moved to February and March, as this will allow trappers to target toms during the mating season.

The trappers, which there aren't many of us left, would like the season for bobcats to start November 1 so we would have a chance before hound hunters have them run out of the country. I would like to have a chance at a cat or two. Thanks.

Living in Valley County our bobcats are prime by December 1. I would like to see bobcat season start December 1 and continue until March 1.

You need to lengthen the bobcat season from December 1 to February 28. Make sure all offices have sufficient bobcat tags.

Please place a limit (6) on bobcats or the number of traps set per day, so trappers and out-of-state trappers don't bring Oregon or Nevada cats to Idaho to be tagged.

Put the bobcat season so it runs to the end of February.

I would like to see bobcat season extended by 15 more days.

I think the bobcat season should be changed to November 15 through January 15. I know some coyote and fox trappers are catching some during late November. Some get turned loose and some don't. Some of the cats turned loose die because of stress and foot damage. Most coyote and fox trappers are closing down by January 15.

I like the 2-month bobcat season. In my area it would be nice to start the cat season on November 15. Keep up the good work.

Bobcat season should be December 1 through February 28. Give trappers up to 12 tags.

Start the bobcat season December 1 and end February 28.

Bobcat tags are being used to stalk and child trappers and hunters. There are people bringing in cats for other people saying they are friends' or fellow hunters but really are profiteers that are verbally buying the hides without the tags. Tags should only be sold to the trapper or hunter before they trap.

A two-month bobcat season is too long. Our bobcat population is on the decline because of lost habitat and a long season. Some areas of the Magic Valley have almost none. Maybe a one-month season is plenty long.

Close the bobcat season during December. Only have it open from January to mid-February. The fur price is large and I feel they are killing too many cats.

I trapped all season long for bobcats in unit 69 and never saw a track all season long, where I usually take 6 or so cats. I think hound hunters have knocked the hell out of them. More hound hunters out than I have ever seen.

COYOTE

I own a small sheep herd and I trap coyotes all year long. I shoot coyotes any chance I can. My lamb and ewe losses were about 20 head, a value of \$1200.00. Put a bounty on coyotes. Make it worthwhile for people to help control them. Thanks.

Get a \$20.00 bounty on coyotes.

Put a \$20.00 bounty on coyotes.

FISHER

We need research on fisher and to establish a season where the numbers are high, such as in the Riggins area.

Have a limited fisher season in Region 2.

Have a limited quota system, similar to otter, for fisher in Region 2.

FOX

Season should begin November 1.

I have trapped the South Fork from Heise to Lorenzo for 26 years and there has always been lots of fox to catch! As you can see no fox this year! There is only one way to get rid of all those fox and that is to poison them so you can plant turkeys!!!

MARTEN

The marten season should be opened up sooner. Marten country usually gets deep snow by November 15 and we only get two weeks of trapping. The marten caught in early November seem to be very prime. I know Wyoming opens their season in October. Thanks.

MINK

Season should begin November 1. No October openings!

Mink season opens too early, should be at least November 1.

MISCELLANEOUS

I believe the report is a good thing and a man's honesty to also be good. I sell furs when and where I like. So glad that is not regulated too!

I probably had 8 traps stolen this year. All of them were well marked and placed legally. Greater steps should be taken in all game proclamations to show that removing traps is not only unlawful but is stealing and against the law.

Please do not make report mandatory by April 30. The license is good until June 30. ADC work can be done until then. Also, please send a license application with the report, so ADC work can be done and so applications for controlled trapping permits can be made without a rush.

You need to open Hagerman WMA February 20. Most of it is frozen up January 15. Close it February 28. There seems to be more ducks on it in January besides it being mostly frozen.

The exposed bait regulation should be looked at – at present it is far too restrictive.

You need to make the trapping license part of the Sportsman Package to get more people interested in trapping.

Due to the continued low fur prices and reduced interest in trapping I feel the cost for resident trapping should be lowered. It seems to still be carrying the increase that was added many years ago to fund a fisher study.

For the first time in over 30 years I found this report card to be extremely difficult to fill out! Number of nights? Average number of traps? I've never kept those kinds of records. I don't count the number of traps that I set out, and I rotate them all season. Wild guessing is all I can do!

I had a great time trapping, this being my first time. I froze myself. I caught one weasel. I spent a small fortune on traps and had half stolen. I was laughed at, got disgusted, and packed up my remaining traps halfway through the season. But I will be out again next year.

This is my first trapping year. We trap and release for audio and video viewing. We used 4-inch ankle traps during the bobcat season. One of my box traps was stolen from a trap site in Hagerman. We study each animal caught and released in Idaho.

I would like to see Fish and Game put more effort forth to paint a positive image of trapping. I would like to see a trapping display set up at the various Fish and Game offices, so the public can better understand trapping and the benefits of it.

We need to set our visible bait law the same as Montana's. Theirs works well and ours is very confusing.

I had three of my traps stolen and a nasty note left with propaganda and anti-trappers' literature left. What can I do?

I don't understand why road kills have to be left on the road and a person that finds them can't have them.

You give no clear definition on the number of traps set per species. I.E., my raccoon was an incidental catch on a beaver set, but this survey makes it look like I intentionally set traps for the raccoon. You may want to address this in the future.

My primary reason for trapping this season was to help a friend take care of a beaver damage problem, and to teach he and his 11-year old grandson how to trap and snare. I thoroughly enjoyed the few days I spent setting and checking traps and snares with them.

I do Animal Damage Control work and by issuing kill permits to the public it hurts my business.

I chose not to trap this year because the fur prices were not high enough to make even the money for gas to go trapping. I also found no predators causing problems to local areas in my area. I plan on trying again next year – if we get any.

Lower the price of the non-resident fur buyer license. The amount (\$126.00) discourages non-residents from attending our fur sales. The dollars generated to the department is only a drop in the bucket.

Thanks for the great support you guys give trappers. Have a lifetime trapper's license available.

I have called and reported stolen traps and bobcats out of my traps, and I feel that IDFG is not taking the proper actions and precautions to prevent this. I spend too much time and money to have other trappers steal from me. If nothing is done it makes me and other trappers not even want to put out the effort to trap.

In the last three years I've had so many of my traps, animals, and equipment stolen, shot up, and ruined, that it gets harder and harder to keep on trapping. I think that the fines, etc. should be increased when these people are caught. I feel there needs to be more enforcement officers' time spent pursuing these problems. Thank you.

MOUNTAIN LION

Having numerous mountain lion tearing out snares, would like to suggest being able snare mountain lions.

I would maybe like the ability to trap cougars.

Why is it ok to run lions with dogs and shoot them out of a tree, but you can't trap or snare one? It's not like they are endangered.

MUSKRAT

Season should begin November 1. No October openings!

Muskrat season opens too early, should be at least November 1.

Muskrat would be primer on the Snake River November 10.

Muskrat season should not be opened before November 1.

Market Lake WMA near Roberts, Idaho should be closed to muskrat trapping for 3 or 4 years. Mud Lake WMA muskrat season should be November 1 to December 1 or 31.

OTTER

The Main Salmon and its tributaries have a good number of otter but no season. I trap locally and stay close to home. Otters are very territorial and make no bones about killing one another or beaver for that fact.

Please have CITES tags for otter much earlier. Not having this tag for the January sale cost me several dollars in lost income.

I didn't get any export tags for my 2 otters just state tags. We need export tags on them so they can be sold for the overseas market for the best prices.

Otter in Clearwater and Nez Perce are everywhere and see absolutely no reason why limit should not be raised. Thank you.

Fewer restrictions on otter trapping.

I would like to see more relaxed otter take on the upper stretch of the Henrys Fork of the Snake River.

I came into contact with and viewed many otters in my area. I believe our otter season should be more liberal in the take.

Please consider an increase of the otter quota in the Southwest Region and Magic Valley. If the otter quota is increased also increase number of otter per trapper.

You need to increase the otter harvest by 100% and start the season December 1.

I would like to have the otter season opened from Chester Dam to Ora Bridge.

The reduction in Southeast Idaho of two tags for otter is neither reasonable nor based on otter population. Its reduction was based solely on how many otter were turned in which reflects effort not population. Having only two tags prevented me from trapping otter this year because both were filled before they were prime. I recommend increasing back to 10 tags in Southeast Idaho.

You need to up the number of otter each trapper can take to 3 or 4. The number in Region IV trapped was 17 early so I quit trapping otter. One month later the quota wasn't met.

I think if you find an otter during the trapping season in the open area that has been hit by a vehicle and you skin it out it should be yours. It should be a judgment call and your McCall office need to get a real attitude adjustment on judgment calls.

Allow each licensed trapper 1-2 otter tags or to apply for them by lottery.

The otter seasons and areas are completely out of balance. All streams should be open from November 15 through December 30 with no limit. All main rivers should be closed.

Increase the limit of otters in the Southwest Region. There is a large amount of sign of these animals.

Make it easier to tag otters, and turn in incidentally caught otters. Right now I have to drive 70 miles and waste ½ a day.

RACCOON

Season should begin November 1. No October openings!

WOLVERINE

During the last four seasons I have been observing a very heavy depredation on the wolverine population in the Central Idaho area by wolves. We have only a few individuals of wolverines remaining in my area now. When I mapped out the wolverine population for Jeff Copeland's study I had over 18 wolverines on my traplines. Wolves have heavily hit coyotes and fox as well. This was very interesting to note as other prey species were available.

WOLVES

Get rid of the wolves. What good have they done? I would like to know!

Submitted by:

Gina Patton

Wildlife Technician

Approved by:

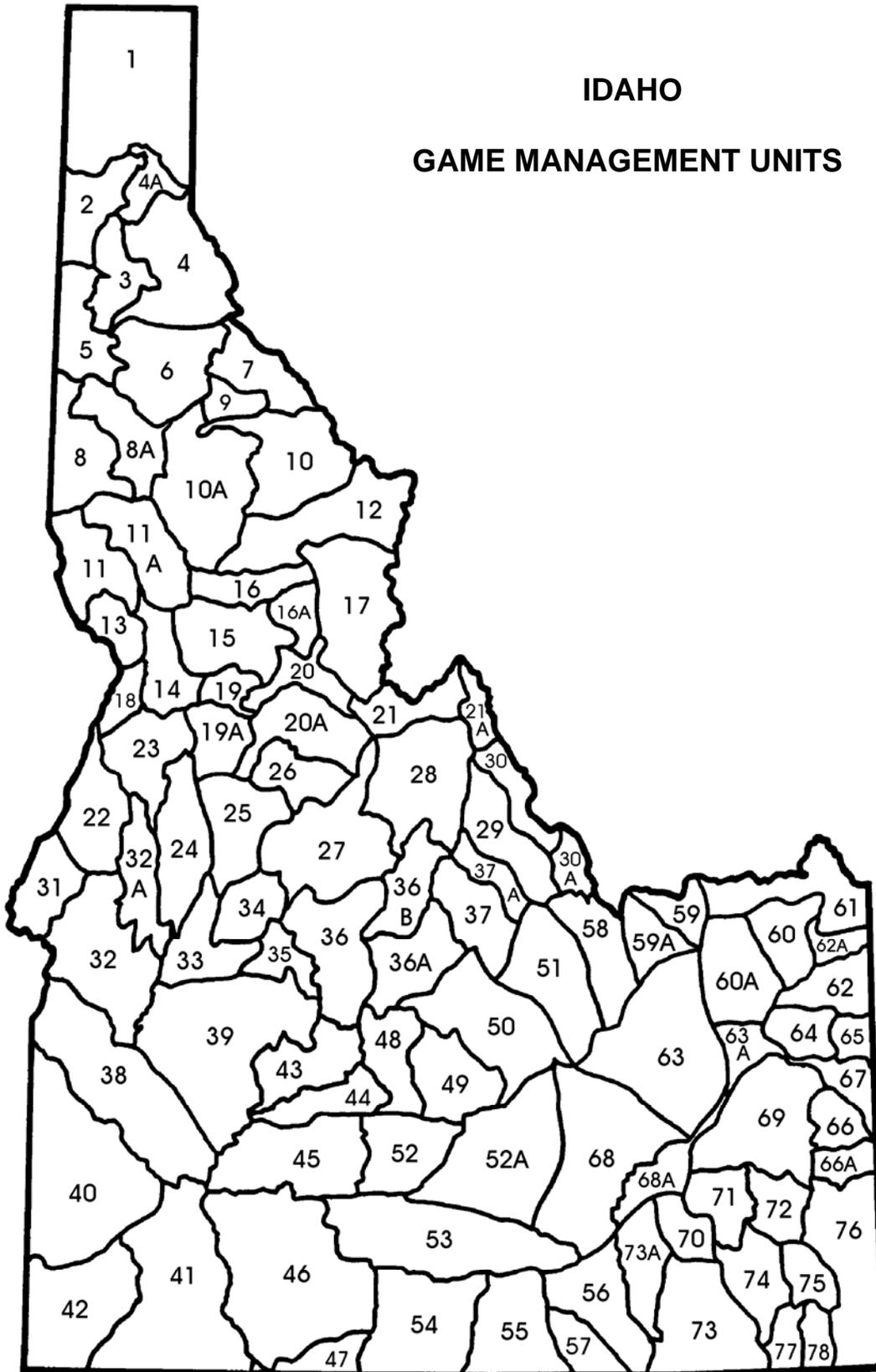
IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

Dale E. Toweill
Wildlife Program Coordinator
Federal Aid Coordinator

James W. Unsworth, Chief
Bureau of Wildlife

IDAHO

GAME MANAGEMENT UNITS



FEDERAL AID IN WILDLIFE RESTORATION

The Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Program consists of funds from a 10% to 11% manufacturer's excise tax collected from the sale of handguns, sporting rifles, shotguns, ammunition, and archery equipment. The Federal Aid program then allots the funds back to states through a formula based on each state's geographic area and the number of paid hunting license holders in the state. The Idaho Department of Fish and Game uses the funds to help restore, conserve, manage, and enhance wild birds and mammals for the public benefit. These funds are also used to educate hunters to develop the skills, knowledge, and attitudes necessary to be responsible, ethical hunters. Seventy-five percent of the funds for this project are from Federal Aid. The other 25% comes from license-generated funds.

