

Nova Scotia TRAPPERS Newsletter

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2004




NOVA SCOTIA
Natural Resources

Collections required this year: Fisher, otter and incidental catches of marten and lynx. Submission of accidental catches of flying squirrels is voluntary.

Regulation changes for 2004/2005

The major regulation changes affecting furharvesters for the 2004/2005 season are:

1. The season for most furbearers (except Otter and Bobcat) has been extended until March 31, 2005.
2. Some changes have been made to regulations respecting setting of traps, primarily dealing with season length.
3. No body - gripping trap having a jaw spread greater than 6.5 inches (16 cm) (eg. conibear 220,330) can be set for any furbearer except (a) in or over water (b) in a dog proof enclosure (c) where the trap is set at least 5 feet off the ground. When such a body gripping trap is set over the frozen surface of any water body, it must be at least 24 inches above the surface.

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Anyone seeking further information on furbearer management or wishing to provide input to the Department of Natural Resources should contact their local office, a Regional Biologist, or the Furbearer and Upland Game Section of DNR, Attn: Mike O'Brien, 136 Exhibition Street, Kentville, NS, B4N 4E5. By e-mail: obrienms@gov.ns.ca
 Phone: (902) 679-6091 Fax: (902) 679-6176. The Furbearer Section, including Trappers Newsletter, is on the Internet: <http://www.gov.ns.ca/natr/wildlife/furbers/furbs.htm>

**Accidental catches or sightings of rare species may also be reported by calling
 1 (800) 565-2224.**

Mandatory Fur Harvester Education Course

Courses take place each year in late September. Since 1986, 77 Fur Harvester courses have been held and there have been a total of 1611 students. Application forms are available at all local DNR offices. As well as on one of two web sites,

www.trappersassociationofnovascotia.ca

and

www.gov.ns.ca/natr/wildlife/furbers/furbs.htm

and the Trappers Association of Nova Scotia. These forms may be submitted throughout the year. Registration and payment must be received by TANS secretary not later than August 15 in order to guarantee a place in a course for the fall. Students registered by August 15 will receive notification of their course date and location in early September; participants are required to confirm their attendance by September 15. Anyone unable to attend must also notify DNR, Wildlife Division in Kentville, otherwise their name will be removed from the course waiting list, and their registration fee forfeited.

Furbearer Report

By Mike O'Brien and Mike Boudreau

The number of fur harvester licenses sold in the 2003-04 season increased by 6.9 % to 1630.

The level of effort by those who did buy a license and catch fur has increased from 61.3% in 2002-2003 to about 63.9 % in the 2003-2004 season.

Fur prices decreased in almost every species with the exception of beaver, mink, raccoon, squirrel and fisher which sold at slightly higher average prices. Bear and bobcat moved at slightly lower average prices in the range of 38 and 28 % lower than the previous year. Many trappers did not trap early in the season, mainly because of poor forecast for early unprimed fur and waited to go after fur when it was prime. This along with an apparent shift in demand for long hair may have had an influence on the

rising prices. Otters seem to be the exception to the rule and continue to do well. Even with a 7 % drop in the average price there seems to be a good demand for these pelts from the markets in China.

Snowshoe Hare

Snowshoe hares or rabbits as we Nova Scotians call them, are an important prey species for many furbearers. Abundance rankings made by furharvesters as well as small game hunters show an overall increase in snowshoe hare across the province, with a hand full of counties showing a slight decrease in abundance rankings. The mandatory upland game harvest survey showed a very poor return rate for these report cards again this year. The number of snowshoe hares harvested, increased (by 21%) with an estimated harvest of 126,131 overall. The annual pellet plot surveys for the province showed little change for snowshoe hare.

Bobcat

The bobcat harvest was up by 21 % from the last year, with a total of 1205 animals taken. This increase is likely a direct response to the higher average prices paid for cats in the previous three years. Even with a 39% decrease the price remains relatively high as compared to recent years. Undoubtedly the higher prices will encourage trappers to target this species in the upcoming season. Abundance rankings for the province continue to show a slight trend downward with the exception of Shelburne, Queens, Cumberland, and Inverness counties, all of which continue to show a slight increase. Cape Breton county is the only county which showed no change in the abundance rankings for cats.

Beaver

The provincial beaver harvest increased by 21 % to 5281 animals. This increase in harvest may be explained in part by the general perception of higher prices. Indeed pelt prices increased slightly, again this

year. Provincial abundance rankings showed a slight increase province wide. After discussions with Department field staff and trappers, the bag limits have been set at the same levels as last year in all four zones. We recognize the fact that trappers often trap other aquatic furbearers (such as muskrat, otters, and mink) over a geographic area that extends beyond the boundaries of the current beaver zone in which they permanently reside. As a result, regulations were changed to allow trappers to retain beaver taken in any zone. This is provided that they do not exceed, in total the bag limit for the zone in which they permanently reside, and do not take in any one zone more than the bag limit for that zone. It appears that this change has not resulted in any major harvest management problems, and is providing us with an improved picture of the geographic distribution of our beaver harvest.

Otters

Otter harvests have increased this year, by 15 % to a level of 696 animals. This is still in the middle of the range for harvest in recent years. The average price decreased by 7.5 % from the previous year. This represents the second highest average price in recent history. Abundance rankings showed a slight decrease on the provincial scale, but still remain in the low to medium range. In light of the fact that average prices are at an all time high. We are again requesting that all pelts be stamped and carcasses are to be turned in to the Department of Natural Resources this year. With the information gathered we hope to continue to improve our understanding of what is happening with the otter population. Preliminary results suggest that otter, like other fish-eating species, are being affected at least in some parts of Nova Scotia by environmental mercury contamination. The status of this species will be monitored and collections will continue, to ensure the maintenance of a sustainable population.

Muskrat

Muskrat catches increased by 21 % to reach a level of 19,340 animals. This represents the

highest level since the 1998-99 season. The average price decreased to \$3.32 which is the third consecutive drop in the same number of years. Corresponding with harvest the provincial abundance rankings are up slightly, from the previous year.

Fisher

Fisher abundance rankings, provided by licensed furharvesters took a slight decrease this year. Although the abundance ranking decreased over the past season the provincial ranking remains high, albeit in the low range. The harvest remained stable with no change from the previous year at a total of 138 animals. While the harvest over the past nine seasons continues to be encouraging, we need to continue close monitoring of this species to ensure continuous population recovery and expansion. As with otter the pelt must be stamped and carcass of all fishers presented to a DNR office. Regulations remain the same as last year; trappers resident in Cumberland, Colchester and Pictou counties are permitted to retain one accidentally caught fisher, if caught in Cumberland, Colchester and Pictou counties, with the remainder of the province closed. Fisher that are accidentally caught in all other areas of the province must be turned over to D.N.R. In turn these animals are used to illustrate proper pelt handling technics during the trapper education workshops. As with all species the season and bag limits, are reviewed annually, by department biologists.

Raccoon

Raccoon harvests have increased by 15 % to a level of 3551 animals. These harvest figures are about half compared to harvest figures from the mid to late 1990's. Abundance rankings increased slightly on a provincial scale as well as all counties with the exception of Kings, Antigonish and Richmond. Average price for raccoons increased slightly from last year, and have reached levels not seen since 1997/98. With

an increasing average price, trapping effort will likely start to increase, resulting in increase kill as well as increased abundance rankings.

Fox

Fox harvest increased by 16 % to a level of 805 animals. Provincial abundance rankings dipped slightly with marginal changes in a hand full of counties. Although the average price decreased after three increases in a row, prices still remain at relatively high levels compared to the past tens years.

Coyote

Coyote harvest increased by 25.3 % and reached new levels at 2422 animals. This harvest was the highest since coyotes made their way into the province during the late 1970's. Overall abundance rankings dropped slightly but continue to remain in the moderate range. The overall average price decreased by 25.3 % this year, but still remains in around the \$30 average.

Other Species

Squirrel harvest decreased significantly by 35 % to a level of 3161. Weasels on the other hand increased again by 20 % to 1477 animals.

Skunk harvest decreased by 18 % to reach a level of 150. Average price for squirrel dropped by 35 % and the average price for weasel also dropped about the same. Lynx and marten continue to be taken accidentally each year and trappers should make every effort to avoid accidental capture of these species. In some cases the only option may be to avoid certain areas altogether.

Accidental Captures

Furharvesters who accidentally catch a protected species or an animal in excess of their bag limit should try to release them alive if practical. If this is not practical, you must report your catch to an office of the Department of Natural Resources before the animal is removed from the trap site. This may be done by calling any DNR office, during normal working hours or calling the toll free number 1-800-565-2224, after hours. During the fall of 2002

trappers were given the option to take possession and transport an animal immediately, provided the accidental harvest form is completed at the trap site. These forms are now available in the Hunting and Furharvesting Summary Regulation booklet. Upon arriving at their place of residence the furharvester is required to notify a DNR office, and report their accidental catch. Your local DNR office will advise you on how to handle the situation. Furharvesters found in the position of an animal to which they are not entitled without first notifying the Department or having the appropriate form filled out may be charged. Most animals turned into DNR are used for student demonstration and pelt handling training at the TANS annual workshop, which is usually held in early March. These pelts along with other pelts which are turned over to the Department are then given to the Trappers Association of Nova Scotia. Proceeds from the sale of pelts are used to help support trapper education.



North American Fur

Producers Marketing Inc.
65 Skyway Ave, Rexdale ON M9W 5C7
Phone: 416-675-9320
Nova Scotia Representative

Furafée Trading Inc.

115 Brunswick St., Truro NS B2N 4P6
Phone: 902-895-2511

Furharvesters Auction Inc.

Furharvesters Auction Sales Inc.
1971 Bond St., North Bay ON P1B 4V7
Phone: 705-495-4688
NS and Prince Edward Island
Representative

Mark Marshall

RR 1, Barton, Digby NS
Phone: 902-837-4300

2004-2005 Auction Dates:

Sale Date: January 9, 2005
Last Receiving Date: December 6, 2005

Sale Date: February 12-17, 2005
Last Receiving Date: January 10, 2005

Sale Date: May 23-26, 2005
Last Receiving Date: April 4, 2005

Sale Date: September 2005
Last Receiving Date: June 1, 2005

2004-2005 Auction Dates:

Sale Date: February 22 & 23, 2005
Last Receiving Date: January 8, 2005

Sale Date: May 30, 2005
Last Receiving Date: April 16, 2005

Sale Date: June 21, 2005
Last Receiving Date: May 28, 2005

**Fur Harvest as Calculated from License Returns
and Fur Buyer Slips in 2002-2003**

| County | B'ver | M'krat | Otter | Mink | B'cat | Fox | R'coon | S'knk | S'qrrel | W'sel | C'yote | Fisher |
|----------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|------------|---------------|--------------|----------------|--------------|---------------|---------------|
| Anna. | 178 | 805 | 24 | 41 | 85 | 40 | 40 | 0 | 284 | 46 | 96 | 2 |
| Digby | 255 | 764 | 17 | 679 | 33 | 39 | 187 | 2 | 1970 | 129 | 98 | 8 |
| Kings | 178 | 946 | 9 | 63 | 61 | 19 | 337 | 32 | 204 | 34 | 104 | 3 |
| Lunen. | 306 | 174 | 53 | 86 | 104 | 77 | 197 | 3 | 383 | 90 | 88 | 2 |
| Queens | 117 | 50 | 17 | 47 | 48 | 11 | 36 | 13 | 69 | 28 | 39 | 0 |
| Shelb. | 118 | 1099 | 23 | 32 | 38 | 7 | 21 | 0 | 50 | 5 | 23 | 0 |
| Yar. | 183 | 1720 | 17 | 360 | 59 | 7 | 154 | 0 | 181 | 127 | 54 | 5 |
| Anti. | 224 | 454 | 35 | 17 | 74 | 27 | 201 | 2 | 85 | 56 | 121 | 4 |
| Col. | 288 | 1355 | 27 | 43 | 89 | 70 | 338 | 4 | 361 | 54 | 139 | 24 |
| Cum. | 742 | 5293 | 26 | 85 | 92 | 88 | 592 | 4 | 207 | 109 | 240 | 49 |
| Guys. | 121 | 155 | 73 | 59 | 72 | 6 | 40 | 0 | 191 | 129 | 88 | 1 |
| Halifax | 381 | 480 | 89 | 145 | 142 | 52 | 244 | 7 | 222 | 120 | 107 | 5 |
| Hants | 208 | 289 | 21 | 36 | 64 | 50 | 209 | 5 | 44 | 32 | 116 | 1 |
| Pictou | 359 | 528 | 31 | 18 | 136 | 72 | 354 | 111 | 67 | 22 | 129 | 37 |
| CB | 227 | 267 | 35 | 32 | 31 | 59 | 38 | 0 | 32 | 19 | 66 | 0 |
| Inv. | 139 | 580 | 35 | 18 | 24 | 23 | 14 | 0 | 638 | 131 | 152 | 0 |
| Rich. | 94 | 229 | 44 | 39 | 24 | 14 | 11 | 0 | 108 | 37 | 67 | 0 |
| Vic. | 48 | 86 | 15 | 11 | 17 | 16 | 6 | 0 | 56 | 11 | 82 | 0 |
| Total | 4,166 | 1,5274 | 591 | 1,811 | 1,193 | 677 | 3,019 | 183 | 5,152 | 1,179 | 1,809 | 141 |



Fur Harvest System - Harvest as calculated from licenses for 2004

| County | B'ver | Mskrt | Otter | Mink | Bobcat | Fox | Rac'on | Skunk | Sq'rel | Weasel | Coyote | Lynx | Marten | Fisher | Other |
|--------------------|-------------|--------------|------------|-------------|-------------|------------|-------------|------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|----------|----------|------------|----------|
| Annapolis | 200 | 1332 | 17 | 78 | 81 | 24 | 106 | 0 | 92 | 24 | 112 | 0 | 0 | 15 | 0 |
| Digby | 264 | 652 | 17 | 555 | 37 | 31 | 189 | 0 | 1319 | 101 | 113 | 0 | 6 | 3 | 0 |
| Kings | 105 | 1731 | 22 | 81 | 58 | 47 | 339 | 10 | 65 | 15 | 151 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 |
| Lunenburg | 471 | 293 | 58 | 114 | 119 | 147 | 286 | 2 | 193 | 103 | 145 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 |
| Queens | 218 | 49 | 31 | 40 | 90 | 6 | 55 | 0 | 41 | 39 | 77 | 0 | 1 | 5 | 0 |
| Shelburne | 156 | 1088 | 43 | 41 | 118 | 13 | 58 | 0 | 15 | 29 | 70 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Yarmouth | 242 | 1399 | 23 | 279 | 71 | 18 | 237 | 1 | 344 | 40 | 76 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 0 |
| Western | 1656 | 6544 | 211 | 1188 | 574 | 286 | 1270 | 13 | 2069 | 351 | 744 | 0 | 7 | 33 | 0 |
| Antigonish | 265 | 867 | 29 | 32 | 46 | 35 | 194 | 0 | 56 | 87 | 155 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 |
| Colchester | 355 | 1327 | 30 | 56 | 66 | 61 | 425 | 9 | 89 | 85 | 213 | 0 | 0 | 27 | 0 |
| Cumberland | 848 | 6294 | 24 | 162 | 72 | 85 | 667 | 28 | 100 | 150 | 255 | 0 | 0 | 43 | 0 |
| Guysborough | 230 | 292 | 84 | 73 | 96 | 8 | 46 | 7 | 154 | 132 | 116 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Halifax | 403 | 540 | 101 | 219 | 100 | 57 | 210 | 21 | 74 | 191 | 138 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Hants | 265 | 748 | 17 | 67 | 66 | 47 | 229 | 10 | 83 | 78 | 204 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Pictou | 496 | 801 | 37 | 37 | 85 | 52 | 368 | 62 | 36 | 22 | 152 | 0 | 0 | 31 | 0 |
| Eastern | 2862 | 10869 | 322 | 646 | 531 | 345 | 2139 | 137 | 592 | 745 | 1233 | 0 | 0 | 105 | 0 |
| Cape Breton | 312 | 530 | 21 | 53 | 35 | 59 | 75 | 0 | 27 | 41 | 92 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Inverness | 207 | 625 | 33 | 81 | 26 | 36 | 42 | 0 | 325 | 171 | 129 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Richmond | 142 | 407 | 66 | 55 | 24 | 36 | 11 | 0 | 78 | 111 | 95 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Victoria | 102 | 365 | 43 | 26 | 15 | 43 | 14 | 0 | 70 | 58 | 129 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Cape Breton | 763 | 1927 | 163 | 215 | 100 | 174 | 142 | 0 | 500 | 381 | 445 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Province | 5281 | 19340 | 696 | 2049 | 1205 | 805 | 3551 | 150 | 3161 | 1477 | 2422 | 0 | 7 | 138 | 0 |

Average Value of Wild Fur for Nova Scotia (Per Pelt)

| Species | 94/95 | 95/96 | 96/97 | 97/98 | 98/99 | 99/00 | 00/01 | 01/02 | 02/03 | 03/04 |
|----------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|----------|----------|----------|-----------|----------|
| Beaver | \$27.34 | \$32.37 | \$43.00 | \$34.90 | \$25.39 | \$ 31.06 | \$32.16 | \$27.28 | \$ 26.46 | \$29.14 |
| Muskrat | \$ 3.26 | \$ 3.82 | \$ 7.06 | \$ 4.32 | \$ 3.17 | \$ 4.22 | \$4.36 | \$5.58 | \$ 4.39 | \$3.32 |
| Otter | \$88.73 | \$63.65 | \$72.42 | \$72.43 | \$53.50 | \$ 92.19 | \$90.57 | \$111.58 | \$ 139.34 | \$128.82 |
| Mink | \$15.16 | \$19.54 | \$19.09 | \$18.84 | \$15.70 | \$ 17.85 | \$14.83 | \$17.00 | \$ 14.52 | \$18.17 |
| Bobcat | \$66.84 | \$44.32 | \$76.96 | \$58.95 | \$48.92 | \$ 54.37 | \$61.86 | \$128.40 | \$204.66 | \$125.47 |
| Fox | \$25.69 | \$24.43 | \$25.59 | \$23.38 | \$16.79 | \$ 29.16 | \$30.89 | \$37.83 | \$ 48.06 | \$30.84 |
| Raccoon | \$14.35 | \$14.62 | \$23.97 | \$21.53 | \$12.14 | \$ 8.15 | \$16.66 | \$19.38 | \$ 17.91 | \$19.78 |
| Weasel | \$ 3.05 | \$ 3.61 | \$ 5.69 | \$ 2.88 | \$ 2.90 | \$ 3.26 | \$4.94 | \$3.83 | \$ 3.53 | \$2.40 |
| Squirrel | \$ 1.00 | \$ 0.77 | \$ 2.42 | \$ 1.05 | \$ 0.74 | \$ 0.99 | \$1.73 | \$1.98 | \$ 0.79 | \$1.22 |
| Skunk | \$ 3.60 | \$ 4.29 | \$ 4.00 | \$ 1.97 | \$ 4.37 | \$ 1.76 | \$8.85 | \$8.41 | \$ 5.83 | \$5.34 |
| Fisher | \$19.95 | \$29.79 | \$46.64 | \$39.93 | \$28.12 | \$ 22.31 | \$32.87 | \$44.09 | \$ 31.42 | \$43.47 |
| Bear | \$64.59 | \$51.12 | \$99.21 | \$76.47 | \$70.57 | \$113.21 | \$149.43 | \$117.28 | \$ 112.37 | \$80.18 |
| Coyote | \$22.36 | \$20.00 | \$33.14 | \$20.25 | \$20.53 | \$ 25.83 | \$25.02 | \$31.33 | \$ 43.75 | \$32.66 |

Bag Limit Changes

Bobcat

- bag limit increased to two province wide in 1990/91
- bag limit reduced to one province wide in 1991/92
- bag limit increased to two province wide in 1993/94
- bag limit reduced to one in Cumberland and Colchester Counties in 1994/95
- bag limit increased to three province wide (except Cumb/Col) in 1995/96
- bag limit increased to four province wide (except Cumb/Col) in 1996/97
- bag limit increased from one to four in Colchester County in 1997/98
- bag limit increased from four to five province wide except for Cumberland County in 1998/99
- bag limit increased to five province wide in 1999/00 - 2004/05

Fisher

- season closed in 1988/89 to 1994/95
- one mistake fisher allowed in 1995/96, 1996/97 and in 1997/98
- one mistake fisher allowed in Cumberland, Colchester and Pictou Counties in 1998/99 to 2004/05.

Marten

- season closed

Lynx

- season closed

Fur Bearing Animals Taken by Furharvesters from 1995-2004

| Species | 95/96 | 96/97 | 97/98 | 98/99 | 99/00 | 00/01 | 01/02 | 02/03 | 03/04 |
|-----------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Beaver | 6,090 | 8,642 | 6,385 | 5,807 | 4,126 | 3,828 | 5,792 | 4,166 | 5,281 |
| Muskrat | 22,118 | 36,834 | 31,531 | 26,623 | 15,859 | 13,391 | 18,779 | 15,274 | 19,340 |
| Otter | 797 | 765 | 555 | 478 | 440 | 447 | 625 | 591 | 696 |
| Mink | 1,829 | 2,168 | 1,681 | 1,724 | 1,686 | 1,267 | 1,889 | 1,811 | 2,049 |
| Bobcat | 703 | 976 | 1,029 | 1,103 | 1,403 | 1,163 | 1,394 | 1,193 | 1,205 |
| Fox | 1,118 | 1,549 | 898 | 841 | 662 | 491 | 797 | 677 | 805 |
| Raccoon | 5,435 | 6,490 | 6,165 | 5,577 | 2,018 | 1,409 | 2,725 | 3,019 | 3,551 |
| Weasel | 1,375 | 1,037 | 602 | 468 | 1,156 | 561 | 96 | 1,179 | 1,477 |
| Squirrel | 8,355 | 6,890 | 5,199 | 6,543 | 1,486 | 2,554 | 4,251 | 5,152 | 3,161 |
| Skunk | 131 | 229 | 74 | 151 | 247 | 108 | 96 | 183 | 150 |
| Fisher | 124 | 217 | 184 | 131 | 115 | 84 | 128 | 138 | 138 |
| Coyote | 1,155 | 1,311 | 1,031 | 1,254 | 1,388 | 835 | 1,587 | 1,809 | 2,422 |

2005 Trappers Workshop and Annual Meeting

Kentville, March 3-5, 2005

Sleeping space available - bring your own bedroll.

Contact Paul Tufts, President of the Trappers Association of Nova Scotia for details. Phone: 742-2771. Fax: 742- 1277

The 2004 Trappers Workshop was held in Kentville. To date we have held 52 workshops with over 1,579 students. See also

www.trappersassociationofnovascotia.ca/convention.html.

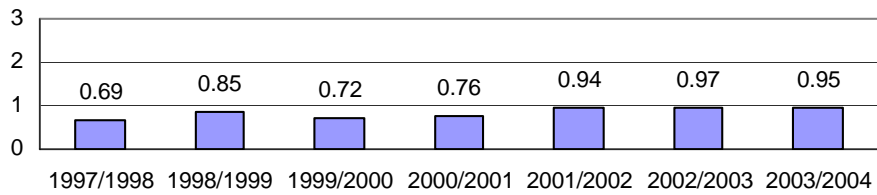
Fur Harvester License Sales

| | 95/96 | 96/97 | 97/98 | 98/99 | 99/00 | 00/01 | 01/02 | 02/03 | 03/04 |
|--------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Annapolis | 92 | 96 | 102 | 77 | 69 | 66 | 66 | 65 | 75 |
| Antigonish | 70 | 82 | 75 | 68 | 62 | 67 | 59 | 66 | 68 |
| Colchester | 136 | 137 | 115 | 83 | 127 | 113 | 115 | 118 | 110 |
| Cumberland | 200 | 216 | 181 | 137 | 163 | 159 | 165 | 158 | 171 |
| Digby | 102 | 110 | 86 | 108 | 75 | 88 | 78 | 97 | 95 |
| Guysborough | 66 | 71 | 77 | 84 | 60 | 56 | 73 | 77 | 68 |
| Halifax | 139 | 190 | 190 | 104 | 119 | 90 | 153 | 152 | 139 |
| Hants | 89 | 99 | 107 | 70 | 40 | 79 | 72 | 80 | 82 |
| Kings | 110 | 111 | 106 | 97 | 84 | 82 | 88 | 74 | 83 |
| Lunenburg | 116 | 117 | 106 | 107 | 84 | 87 | 84 | 94 | 94 |
| Pictou | 157 | 169 | 159 | 140 | 118 | 109 | 144 | 128 | 140 |
| Queens | 68 | 76 | 76 | 65 | 44 | 40 | 59 | 48 | 59 |
| Shelburne | 99 | 100 | 94 | 90 | 74 | 69 | 69 | 69 | 81 |
| Yarmouth | 127 | 151 | 145 | 128 | 114 | 117 | 108 | 111 | 128 |
| Cape Breton | 94 | 97 | 110 | 83 | 74 | 73 | 74 | 82 | 78 |
| Inverness | 85 | 82 | 80 | 75 | 69 | 71 | 70 | 68 | 67 |
| Richmond | 68 | 76 | 70 | 74 | 58 | 64 | 60 | 55 | 64 |
| Victoria | 32 | 37 | 24 | 20 | 29 | 19 | 22 | 24 | 28 |
| Total | 1,850 | 2,017 | 1,903 | 1,610 | 1,463 | 1,449 | 1,559 | 1,556 | 1,630 |

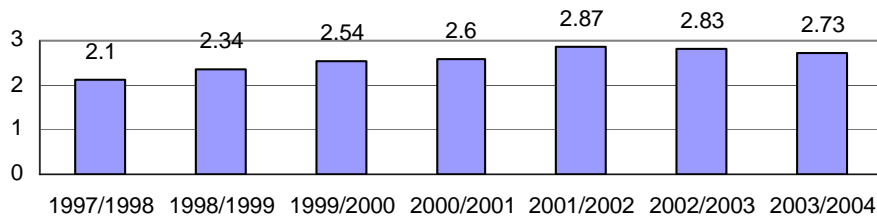
Fur Harvest Abundance Estimates for 2004

| County | B'ver | Mskrt | Otter | Mink | Bobcat | Fox | Rac'on | Skunk | Sq'rel | Weasel | Coyote | Lynx | Marten | Fisher | Bear | Hare |
|----------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Anna. | 2.75 | 1.96 | 1.44 | 1.66 | 1.78 | 1.24 | 1.67 | 2.23 | 2.76 | 1.68 | 2.94 | 0.14 | 0.36 | 1.17 | 2.28 | 1.84 |
| Digby | 2.17 | 2.11 | 1.02 | 2.15 | 1.35 | 1.10 | 1.78 | 0.89 | 2.56 | 1.59 | 2.42 | 0.27 | 0.67 | 1.07 | 1.38 | 1.43 |
| Kings | 1.76 | 1.80 | 0.90 | 1.43 | 1.53 | 1.14 | 2.27 | 2.18 | 2.24 | 1.21 | 2.92 | 0.06 | 0.15 | 0.60 | 1.33 | 1.67 |
| Lunen. | 2.22 | 1.84 | 1.53 | 1.69 | 1.97 | 1.89 | 2.16 | 1.70 | 2.63 | 1.89 | 2.59 | 0.18 | 0.18 | 0.74 | 1.73 | 1.67 |
| Queens | 2.56 | 1.62 | 1.81 | 1.84 | 2.21 | 1.20 | 2.34 | 1.35 | 3.03 | 1.83 | 2.88 | 0.14 | 0.23 | 0.67 | 2.16 | 2.27 |
| Shel. | 2.03 | 2.10 | 1.74 | 1.41 | 2.22 | 1.39 | 2.28 | 0.40 | 3.09 | 1.96 | 2.98 | 0.13 | 0.13 | 0.33 | 2.16 | 2.10 |
| Yar. | 2.25 | 2.06 | 1.47 | 1.73 | 1.57 | 1.23 | 2.19 | 0.65 | 2.80 | 1.64 | 2.59 | 0.07 | 0.24 | 0.81 | 1.88 | 1.50 |
| Western | 2.23 | 1.95 | 1.41 | 1.68 | 1.82 | 1.36 | 2.09 | 1.41 | 2.72 | 1.69 | 2.76 | 0.14 | 0.28 | 0.76 | 1.83 | 1.77 |
| Anti. | 2.43 | 2.20 | 1.56 | 1.31 | 1.69 | 1.50 | 2.03 | 1.92 | 2.85 | 2.31 | 3.03 | 0.04 | 0.04 | 0.94 | 2.08 | 2.33 |
| Col. | 2.53 | 2.36 | 1.75 | 1.74 | 1.69 | 1.83 | 1.98 | 2.32 | 2.83 | 2.40 | 2.88 | 0.07 | 0.04 | 1.86 | 2.68 | 2.09 |
| Cum. | 2.27 | 2.25 | 1.34 | 1.60 | 1.54 | 1.64 | 2.21 | 2.08 | 2.64 | 2.00 | 2.51 | 1.25 | 0.50 | 1.51 | 2.33 | 1.49 |
| Guys. | 2.59 | 2.02 | 1.98 | 1.64 | 1.68 | 0.96 | 1.66 | 1.26 | 3.04 | 2.26 | 2.52 | 0.13 | 0.10 | 0.36 | 1.92 | 2.43 |
| Halifax | 2.22 | 1.72 | 1.51 | 1.75 | 1.74 | 1.54 | 1.75 | 1.55 | 2.40 | 2.18 | 2.54 | 0.09 | 0.08 | 0.31 | 2.20 | 1.98 |
| Hants | 2.19 | 2.00 | 1.56 | 1.82 | 1.57 | 1.35 | 2.06 | 2.14 | 2.31 | 2.00 | 2.87 | 0.14 | 0.09 | 0.62 | 1.90 | 1.85 |
| Pictou | 2.40 | 1.98 | 1.72 | 1.67 | 1.80 | 1.55 | 2.21 | 2.56 | 2.94 | 2.27 | 2.82 | 0.61 | 0.53 | 1.77 | 2.28 | 2.37 |
| Eastern | 2.36 | 2.05 | 1.62 | 1.66 | 1.68 | 1.50 | 2.01 | 2.02 | 2.71 | 2.19 | 2.71 | 0.20 | 0.15 | 1.17 | 2.21 | 2.05 |
| C.B. | 2.42 | 1.98 | 1.59 | 1.98 | 1.76 | 1.76 | 2.13 | 0.00 | 2.68 | 2.46 | 2.90 | 1.35 | 1.00 | 0.00 | 1.50 | 1.29 |
| Inv. | 2.14 | 1.73 | 1.42 | 1.90 | 1.57 | 1.41 | 1.59 | 0.12 | 3.23 | 2.66 | 2.78 | 0.74 | 0.35 | 0.19 | 2.22 | 1.60 |
| Rich. | 1.73 | 1.94 | 1.72 | 1.59 | 0.97 | 1.57 | 1.19 | 0.00 | 2.57 | 2.44 | 2.51 | 0.38 | 0.07 | 0.04 | 0.30 | 1.41 |
| Vic. | 1.55 | 1.64 | 1.42 | 1.43 | 1.19 | 1.94 | 1.00 | 1.00 | 3.00 | 2.63 | 2.80 | 1.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 1.83 | 0.93 |
| Cape B | 2.10 | 1.88 | 1.56 | 1.79 | 1.42 | 1.64 | 1.61 | 0.13 | 2.82 | 2.53 | 2.75 | 0.77 | 0.20 | 0.09 | 1.38 | 1.35 |
| Province | 2.27 | 1.99 | 1.53 | 1.69 | 1.69 | 1.47 | 1.99 | 1.65 | 2.73 | 2.05 | 2.73 | 0.26 | 0.21 | 0.95 | 1.98 | 1.85 |

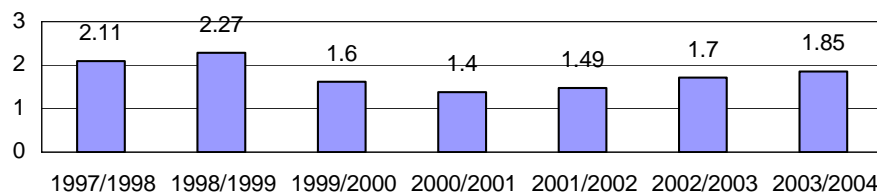
Fisher
Fur Harvester Abundance Ranking



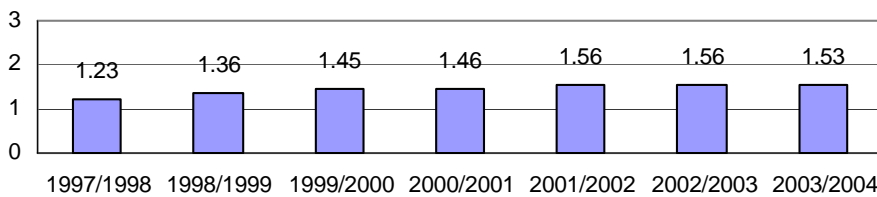
Coyote
Fur Harvester Abundance Ranking



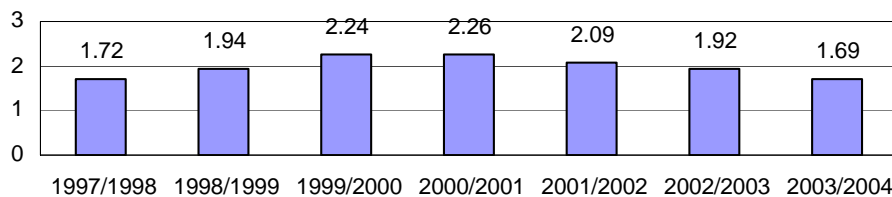
Snowshoe Hare
Fur Harvester Abundance Ranking



Otter
Fur Harvester Abundance Ranking



Bobcat
Fur Harvester Abundance Ranking



TRAPS MEETING REQUIREMENTS OF AGREEMENT ON INTERNATIONAL HUMANE TRAPPING STANDARDS AND CERTIFICATION STATUS

Updated: July 21, 2004

| Species | Traps tested and found to meet the requirements of the AIHTS | Traps CERTIFIED to meet the requirements of the AIHTS* |
|--|--|--|
| Beaver (on land and underwater) | Belisle Super X 330 | √ |
| | BMI 330 Body Gripper | |
| | Bridger 330 | √ |
| | LDL C330 | √ |
| | Rudy 330 | √ |
| | Sauvageau 2001-11 | √ |
| | Species-Specific 330 Dislocator Half-Magnum | |
| | Species-Specific 440 Dislocator Half-Magnum | |
| | Woodstream Oneida Victor Conibear 330 | √ |
| | | |
| Beaver (underwater) | Belisle Classic 330 | √ |
| | Belisle Super X 280 | √ |
| | BMI 280 Body Gripper | |
| | LDL C280 | √ |
| | Rudy 280 | √ |
| | Sauvageau 2001-8 | √ |
| | Woodstream Oneida Victor Conibear 280 | √ |
| | | |
| Fisher | Belisle Super X 160 | √ |
| | Belisle Super X 220 | √ |
| | Koro #2 | √ |
| | LDL C160 Magnum | √ |

| | | |
|----------------------|---|---|
| | Sauvageau 2001-5 | √ |
| | Sauvageau 2001-8 | √ |
| | | |
| Lynx | Woodstream Oneida Victor Conibear 330 | |
| | | |
| Marten | Belisle Super X 120 | √ |
| | BMI 126 Magnum Body Gripper | |
| | LDL B120 Magnum | √ |
| | Rudy 120 Magnum | √ |
| | Sauvageau C120 Magnum | √ |
| | Sauvageau 2001-5 | √ |
| | | |
| Muskrat (on land) | Triple M | |
| | Woodstream Oneida Victor Conibear 110 | |
| | Woodstream Oneida Victor Conibear 120 | |
| | | |
| Muskrat (underwater) | Any trap set as a submersion set that exerts clamping force on a muskrat and that maintains a muskrat underwater meets the requirements of the AIHTS for muskrat. | |
| | | |
| Raccoon | Belisle Classic 220 | √ |
| | Belisle Super X 160 | √ |
| | Belisle Super X 220 | √ |
| | BMI 160 Body Gripper | |
| | BMI 220 Body Gripper | |
| | Bridger 220 | √ |
| | LDL C160 | √ |
| | LDL C220 | √ |
| | Rudy 160 | √ |
| | Rudy 220 | √ |
| | Sauvageau 2001-6 | √ |

| | | |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---|
| | Sauvageau 2001-7 | √ |
| | Sauvageau 2001-8 | √ |
| | Species-Specific 220 Half-Magnum | |
| | Woodstream Oneida Victor Conibear 160 | √ |
| | Woodstream Oneida Victor Conibear 220 | √ |
| | | |
| River Otter (underwater) | Woodstream Oneida Victor Conibear 330 | |
| | | |
| Weasel | Victor Rat Trap | |

*CERTIFIED trap models are given exclusive identification letters that manufacturers will have to mark on traps they manufacture in 2007 and beyond. Trappers may still legally use these same trap models after the implementation of the AIHTS (2007), regardless of whether they bear this mark.

Restraining Traps

| Species | Traps tested and found to meet the requirements of the AIHTS | Traps CERTIFIED to meet the requirements of the AIHTS* |
|---------------|--|--|
| Bobcat | Belisle Foot Snare | √ |
| | | |
| Coyote | Belisle Foot Snare | √ |
| | Bridger #3 equipped with 5/16-inch offset, double rounded jaw laminations (3/16-inch on topside of jaw and 1/4-inch on underside of jaws), with 4 coil springs and a swivel centre mounted on base plate | |
| | | |
| Lynx | Belisle Foot Snare | √ |
| | Victor #3 Soft Catch (unmodified) | |
| | Victor #3 Soft Catch equipped with 4 coil springs | |
| | Victor #3 equipped with 3/16-inch jaw laminations and 4 coil springs and a swivel centre mounted on base plate | |

*CERTIFIED trap models are given exclusive identification letters that manufacturers will have to mark on traps they manufacture in 2007 and beyond. Trappers may still legally use these same trap models after the implementation of the AIHTS (2007), regardless of whether they bear this mark.

Trap Standards - 2004 Update on the EU Agreement

By Mike O'Brien

In late 1997, the European Union (EU), Canada, and Russia signed the Agreement on International Humane Trapping Standards (AIHTS or the Agreement). The Agreement averted the implementation of European legislation that would have prohibited the importing of 13 species of wild furs into Europe from Canada. The effects of such a ban would have been very serious, directly affecting all our major furbearing species except mink and fox. Likely even the market for these would have been indirectly affected. The industry has been seeking and developing alternate markets (for example Asian countries), but the European market still currently accounts for approximately 70 per cent of the market for Canadian wild fur.

Shortly after the conclusion of the AIHTS, the US concluded a separate, non-binding Agreed Minute with the EU which is similar to the Agreement concluded by Canada, though a bit more lenient. Consequently, complications and negative effects of having US fur blocked out of EU markets were also averted.

On June 1, 1999 Canada ratified the Agreement on a bilateral basis with the EU. The bilateral option had been included to allow for the Agreement to move forward in the event that Russia was unable to ratify within a reasonable time period. After careful consideration of the options available, including the risks and uncertainties of leaving the Agreement unratified in the face of changes in the EU administration, the various Canadian stakeholders asked the federal government

to proceed with the bilateral ratification. Prior to ratification, consultations had taken place with our US counterparts on this issue. After Canada's ratification in June, the US decided in August 1999 to also bring their 'understanding' into force as of June 1, 1999. Canada continues to make every effort to encourage and support Russian ratification at the earliest possible opportunity. Last year Russian representatives indicated that we might expect ratification by their government soon, but this has still not occurred. The signing of the Agreement with the EU has kept the critical European marketplace open to Canadian wild furs. However, it was reached only at considerable cost to the wild fur producing nations. With the initialing of the original Agreement in 1997, we became obligated to ban the use of conventional steel-jawed leghold restraining traps, *for species listed in the Agreement*, not later than the end of the 2000-01 trapping season. This ban was required regardless of whether or not the performance of these traps would meet thresholds set for restraining traps in the Agreement (which is very likely for some species). In 2001 the Canadian provinces and territories made the necessary regulatory changes to ensure that we were in compliance with our commitments in relation to this particular aspect of the Agreement. Please consult the 2004 Nova Scotia Hunting and Furharvesting Licence and Summary of Regulations booklet (also available on the internet at <http://www.gov.ns.ca/natr/hunt/regulations/default.htm> or contact your local DNR office for information on which restraining traps are currently permitted for various species.

The bilateral ratification of the Agreement on June 1, 1999 by Canada and the EU started the clock ticking on the schedule for testing of various other restraining and killing trap systems against the standards set out in the AIHTS. Considerable work had already been done prior to that time and significant progress has been made in the past five years, through the Fur Institute of Canada's Trap Research and Development program (see the List of Traps which have been found to meet the AIHTS on the website of the Fur Institute of

Canada at <http://www.fur.ca>. Watch the FIC website for regular updates as more results become available). Significant effort and expense over a relatively short time frame will continue to be required to test and improve traps and trapping systems, to ensure that trappers will be able to continue to efficiently and humanely harvest wild furbearers.

There was great uncertainty about the future of the Canadian trap testing and research program earlier this year. Historically a significant portion of the cost of the trap testing component of the AIHTS implementation had been funded by federal government contributions, (together with contributions from the fur industry) and there was a serious threat that this Government of Canada funding might be lost. However after considerable difficult negotiation, the Canadian Wildlife Ministers have been able to resolve this impasse between the Canadian provinces and territories and the federal government. Requested funding has been restored for 2004-05 fiscal year with a firm commitment to work out an adequate and acceptable long term funding formula for AIHTS implementation.

In late September 1997, a meeting was held in Quebec City between representatives of federal, provincial, and territorial government agencies, aboriginal peoples, and trappers to discuss the implications and requirements of the Agreement. While the federal government coordinated negotiations and signed the Agreement on behalf of Canada, the actual mandate for managing furbearing species rests with the provincial, territorial, and aboriginal land-claim governments. Consequently, only they can implement the requirements of the

Agreement, and approaches for doing this might vary between jurisdictions.

Following the meeting in Quebec, discussions between the various jurisdictions and interest groups on implementation and coordination have continued both nationally and internationally. The Trap Research and Development Committee of the Fur Institute of Canada is leading the trap testing and development work for our country. Its primary goal is to ensure that effective, economical, safe and humane traps are available for Canadian trappers, no matter what the purpose of the trapping activity. The FIC, together with representatives of the provinces and territories, have maintained a close and coordinated cooperation with US and Russian collaborators in trap research and other issues around the implementation of the AIHTS. Following on the success of the FIC research program in developing computer models for rating killing traps against the AIHTS standards, Canada and the US are working on the cooperative development of trap performance models for leghold restraining devices. The results of this project have potential to significantly enhance our ability assess performance of such restraining traps. The Canada-US cooperative approach should allow exploration of this potential more quickly than either party would likely have been able to do independently. The FIC also plays a key role in facilitating communications between players, information dissemination and education, in addition to many other processes and activities necessary for the implementation of the Agreement.

The Canadian Furbearer Management Committee (CFMC - a national committee on furbearer management issues comprised of representatives from each of the provincial and territorial government wildlife agencies, reporting to the Provincial/Territorial Wildlife Directors) continues to work on various issues to ensure harmonization and coordination of interpretation and implementation of the Agreement in the various Canadian jurisdictions. The CFMC developed the process for "certification" of traps, as required in the Agreement. This process

has now been put in place for use by the provincial and territorial wildlife agencies and provides the framework for certification of traps, by these 'competent authorities', as complying with the requirements of the AIHTS. In addition to considering performance of traps against the animal welfare requirements of the AIHTS, certification also takes into account safety and efficiency of trapping devices. The requirement for traps used to capture furbearers to be certified as meeting the AIHTS does not actually go into effect until 2007. However, with the certification process now in place, manufacturers have already begun to submit qualifying traps for certification. As a result, manufacturers, trappers, and wildlife management agencies will now have the opportunity to know as soon as possible which devices have been certified as meeting the AIHTS, well in advance of the 2007 deadline. In order to provide information to trappers on which traps have actually been certified, the current list of traps which have been found to meet the animal welfare requirements of the AIHTS now also includes a second column to indicate whether the trap has been certified. The CFMC also advises the Wildlife Directors on other furbearer management related issues, and provides representation for the provincial and territorial jurisdictions at various international meetings pertaining to the implementation of the Agreement. Canada hosted a provisional meeting of the Joint Management Committee of the AIHTS in June of 2000 in Edmonton. After some delay, a second provisional meeting was hosted by the EU in Brussels, Belgium in October 2002. The third provisional meeting of the Joint Management Committee of the AIHTS was held in St. Petersburg, Russia in late October 2003. The

fourth provisional meeting was held in early November in New York City, USA. Attendance at these meetings has consisted of representatives of Canada and EU (currently the only signatories who have ratified the Agreement), along with invited representatives of Russia and the USA. Reports tabled at the meetings have detailed the status to date of trap testing and research in the respective jurisdictions. Each year Canada, US and Russia have had considerable trap testing progress and success to report at these meetings. Traps also continue to be used in the EU for a variety of purposes, but up to this time most effort in the EU has been directed at simply assessing the implications of implementation of the Agreement for the EU member states and considering the most appropriate process for implementation, with little actual trap testing/certification work initiated to date. The implementing Directive for the AIHTS is currently under consideration by the EU.

As a result of the AIHTS, the markets for North American wild furs are still open. We can certainly be proud of the many capable representatives from the various players in the fur industry (including government agencies, aboriginal groups, the Fur Institute of Canada, trapper and fur farmer organizations, fur auctions, etc.) who have made, and continue to make, important contributions toward dealing with this situation. Unfortunately, this is not simply an issue of science, factual information, and technological improvement, but also of animal rights, public relations campaigns, strong emotions, and politics. And though the threat to the EU markets may have been successfully resolved, lobby groups opposed to any use of animals will undoubtedly continue their attacks on the industry in other arenas. Canada's leadership in humane trap standards, trapping system research and development, fur harvester training, furbearer conservation and management, and in implementing this Agreement are strong demonstrations of our commitment to humane, sustainable furbearer resource utilization. Trappers and trapper organizations continue to play key roles in various aspects of the efforts surrounding this

Agreement, including participation in FIC initiatives and committees, cooperation in trap testing, research and development, delivery and development of furharvester education, representation on international delegations, and direct input to provincial and territorial governments. Anyone wanting more details on the Agreement on International Humane Trapping Standards, and how it will affect trappers here and in other parts of Canada; as well as information on the significant successes of trap testing and research efforts, trap certification, or related topics, should contact the Furbearers and Upland Game Program of the Wildlife Division, Nova Scotia Department of Natural Resources.

Undoubtedly the sustainable use of wild furbearer resources will continue to face challenges now and in the future. However, sound, science-based furbearer conservation and management programs, together with continued hard work and cooperation between government, fur harvesters, and other players in the industry to identify, promote and maintain use of appropriate, humane harvest tools and practices, should ensure the continued wise use of this natural resource, as well as the survival of a distinctly North American industry and way of life.



Bear

Bear hunting season was extended through to the end of the general open season for deer hunting in 2003. Hunters were not required to hunt at registered bait sites during the extended season, therefore bear hunting licences could be (and had to be because of increased licence sale prediction) sold by vendors throughout the province. As a consequence the bear hunting report form was provided to hunters as a postcard type removable page in the Licence-Summary of Regulations booklet.

Although bear hunters are required by law to submit the completed report form, regardless of success, returns for fall 2003 have been dismally low. Consequently, there is low confidence in the harvest estimate numbers for hunting and snaring, as well as hunter success rate, are provided in Table 3 below. This is a serious problem in that we have poor sampling on which to derive key indicators on bear age/sex ratio and number of bears taken from specific areas or from the province as a whole, to demonstrate that the kill is within acceptable/sustainable limits.

Hopefully this problem can be rectified when a new Nova Scotia Hunter-Firearms card is introduced and an alternate method of hunter reporting is implemented.

Table 3 BEAR HARVEST SUMMARY, 1993-2003

| Year | License Res. | License Non-Res. | Hunter Harvest | Hunter Success | Snaring Permits | Snaring Harvest |
|------|--------------|------------------|----------------|----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| 1993 | 286 | 44 | 111 | 44.2% | 129 | 60 |
| 1994 | 481 | 37 | 248 | 47.9% | 181 | 110 |
| 1995 | 708 | 81 | 286 | 36.2% | 227 | 91 |
| 1996 | 656 | 102 | 247 | 32.6% | 184 | 67 |
| 1997 | 540 | 116 | 191 | 29.2% | 162 | 65 |
| 1998 | 505 | 109 | 243 | 39.6% | 142 | 65 |
| 1999 | 522 | 123 | 208 | 32.2% | 101 | 33 |
| 2000 | 498 | 153 | 264 | 40.6% | 127 | 54 |
| 2001 | 544 | 101 | 226 | 35.0% | 155 | 54 |
| 2002 | 584 | 84 | 284 | 42.6% | 197 | 96 |
| 2003 | 1322 | 87 | 393 | 27.9% | 156 | 39 |

Otter Project Update

A few years ago a study using trapper-harvested otter carcasses from the South Western end of Nova Scotia, determined that otter in inland habitats had mercury levels ten times higher than those from coastal habitats. Using this preliminary study as a basis for a new project, began to live-trap otter in the spring of 2004. The goal of this live – trapping is to surgically implant a transmitter device in otter, from both coastal and inland watersheds, take blood and fur samples for mercury analysis, release the otter back into its area of capture and track the otter using radio telemetry receivers to determine its home range. By determining the home range of each animal and comparing it with the mercury level analyzed from blood and fur samples we will be better able to pinpoint the sources of mercury and to further study the inland vs. coastal pattern that was revealed during the preliminary study.



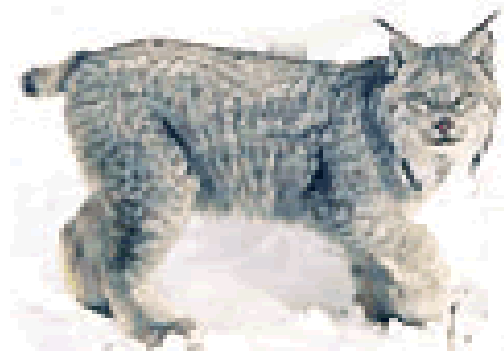
This spring we successfully captured, implanted and released three otter (two males and a female) in the southwestern end of the province. All three otter we captured from coastal habitats. These otter are currently being tracked by helicopter on a weekly basis. We have collected numerous location points for each otter and will continue to track them throughout the winter. This October we plan to continue live trapping on the coast. Next spring we will live trap otter from inland habitats.

Sarah Spencer
MSc Candidate
Acadia University

Where are the Lynx?

The Canada Lynx was once very common throughout Nova Scotia during the 1800's, but is now relegated to the highland areas of Cape Breton.

Competition with bobcat and coyote, along with other factors (i.e. a low in the hare population cycle), has contributed to a significant population decline in recent years. This decline has lead the Province to list the lynx as endangered under the Species at Risk Act. DNR staff are trying to determine the present range and numbers of lynx on the island.



As a trapper, you can help in several ways:

- Carefully release any live lynx accidentally captured in a trap.
- Report any lynx accidentally killed in a trap to your local DNR office.
- Keep a written record of where and when you see lynx or lynx sign during the trapping season. Return it along with your Fur Harvester Report at the end of the trapping season. The form at the bottom of this page can be used to record your information.

Lynx Sightings

Trapper Name:

Trapper Code:

| Date | Location | Number of Live Animals | Number of Tracks |
|------|----------|---------------------------|---------------------|
| | | | |
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| | | | |
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| | | | |

How to Avoid Incidental Take Of Canada Lynx While Trapping or Hunting Bobcats and other Furbearers.



The purpose of this information is to reduce injury and mortality to the Endangered Canada Lynx population caused by the hunting or trapping bobcats and/or other furbearers. Lynx and bobcat are similar in appearance and habits, and their ranges overlap with other furbearer species, and to some extent each other. Therefore, it is important for trappers and hunters to know how to distinguish lynx from bobcats, to recognize their preferred habitat types, and to avoid capturing or harvesting lynx. Trappers must also learn what to do if a lynx is caught incidentally.

Canada lynx Current Status

The Canada lynx (*Lynx canadensis*) was listed as an “endangered species” in Nova Scotia in the fall of 2002. As a

result, lynx and their habitat are now protected under Nova Scotia’s *Endangered Species Act*. The harvesting of lynx is not permitted in Nova Scotia. Lynx may be encountered throughout the province, but the highlands of Cape Breton are where most lynx occur. The current lynx population on Cape Breton Island is estimated at between 100 and 200 animals.

Time is of the essence

Small localized wildlife populations, like the lynx on Cape Breton Island, are vulnerable and risk local extinction due to such things as starvation, habitat loss, and certain random events like disease, fire, and severe weather. We **must act now** if we are to ensure the future of the lynx on Cape Breton Island.

Recovery Efforts

In 2001, a Nova Scotia Marten and Lynx Recovery Team was formed, consisting of scientists and resource managers from the Nova Scotia Department of Natural Resources, Parks Canada, Natural Resources Canada (Canadian Forest Service), StoraEnso, and local universities. Unfortunately, not a lot is known about the lynx on Cape Breton Island and some basic questions still require better answers, including: How many animals are there? Where are they located? What type of habitat do they require for survival? Recovery activities are focussed on answering these questions, as well as on determining the genetic distinctiveness of the lynx on Cape Breton Island compared to other North American populations.

Stewardship is Key

Partnerships with local stakeholders—trappers, landowners, and forestry operators—are central in our efforts to recover this population. Due to the nature of the threats facing the lynx on Cape Breton Island, and because of the existing knowledge gaps, the information that you may have about lynx numbers and past and present distributions could be highly valuable in helping to direct recovery efforts. Also, local community support to help minimize accidental lynx deaths and further habitat degradation is crucial to ensuring the future of the lynx in Nova Scotia.

Threats to the Population

Causes of mortality in lynx populations include starvation, illegal trapping, loss of habitat, competition from other carnivores, inbreeding, emigration, vehicle strikes, diseases such as canine distemper, and predation. The loss of just a few individuals to a small lynx population could significantly impact the entire population.

Historically, the most significant threat to lynx populations was fur harvesting. In Nova Scotia the lynx-trapping season has been closed since 1975 and accidental captures of lynx in traps and snares legally set for other furbearers is reportedly small.

Other major threats are the loss and degradation of lynx and snowshoe hare habitat by forest insect invasions from species such as the spruce budworm, and improperly planned forest-harvesting practices. The presence and expansion of

the bobcat and coyote populations on Cape Breton Island may also limit lynx population growth, due to increasing competition for prey and habitat.

Description

The Canada lynx is a medium-sized wild cat similar in appearance to its close relative the bobcat (*Lynx rufus*). Adult males of both species are usually larger than females. Lynx weights average 11 kilograms for males and 9 kilograms for females. Bobcat weights average 14 kilograms for males and 9 kilograms for females. Average lengths (from nose to tip of tail) are very similar for lynx and bobcats: 86 centimetres for males of both species, 81 centimetres for female lynx, and 79 centimetres for female bobcats.

Compared to the bobcat, the lynx has longer ear tufts, an entirely black-tipped tail, and a lighter, less-spotty coat with dense greyish-brown fur. The most distinctive features of the lynx are its long hind legs and large well-furred padded paws that allow the lynx to move swiftly through deep snow.

Bobcat pelts may be light grey, yellowish- or reddish- brown, to completely brown or buff. They are streaked or spotted with black or dark brown. The underside of the body is white with black spots and black bars on the fore legs. Lynx generally have more grey and less red in their pelts than bobcats and the belly fur is greyish-white or buff-white with mottled, indistinct black spots.

Lynx have ear tufts and facial ruffs on their cheeks that are larger and more conspicuous than those on bobcats. Ear tufts are usually longer than 2.5 centimetres on lynx and shorter than 2.5 centimetres on bobcats.

Bobcat and lynx tails are approximately 10-15 centimetres long and match their pelt colour except for the tip. The tip of the tail on bobcats is usually black on the upper side whereas on lynx the entire tip is black.

The hind legs of both bobcats and lynx are larger than their fore legs, which help them when springing to catch prey. However, the hind legs are even more disproportionately large on lynx than on bobcat, causing them to have a stooped appearance. Lynx also have much larger feet than bobcats. This gives them a “snow-shoe-like” advantage chasing prey in deep snow.

Signs

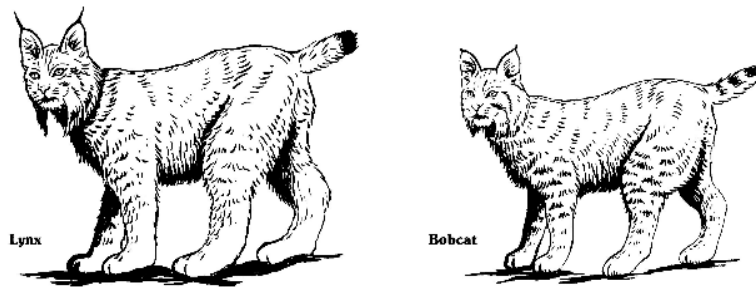
In snow, lynx tracks are generally less distinct than those of bobcat and often display a powder-puff appearance as a result of their abundant foot hair. In wet or compacted snow, lynx tracks will sometimes display smaller toe pads than are evident in bobcat tracks. Back feet often follow in the front foot tracks of both species. When walking, the stride (distance between footprints of the same foot) is 30-70 centimetres for lynx and 13-40 centimetres for bobcats. Both lynx and bobcat track trails tend to “wander” compared with the more straight-line patterns of wild canids (foxes and coyotes). Lynx and bobcats travel and hunt with a deliberate and methodical walking pattern, rarely bounding unless chasing prey.



Ear of bobcat



Ear of Canada lynx



Comparison of lynx and bobcat. Note the difference in size, length of ear tufts, and banding on tail.



Belly Markings: Lynx (left), Bobcat (right)

Lynx spots are mottled. Bobcats have more distinct spots contrasted with whiter fur.



The tail of the Lynx appears much the same viewed the top or bottom. The lynx's tail tip (top left and bottom left) is completely black all around, while bobcat's tail shows black bars with a white tip when viewed from above (top right) and show a mostly white underside (bottom right).



Sign (contd.)

Lynx tracks are approximately 7.5-9.5 centimetres long and 9-11.5 centimetres wide in dirt and up to 11.5 centimetres long and 12.5 centimetres wide in snow. Bobcat tracks are approximately 4.5-6.5 centimetres long and 4.5-6.5 centimetres wide in dirt and 6.5 centimetres long and 7 centimetres wide in snow. Both bobcats and lynx have 4 toe pads on the front and hind feet. Tracks from both species typically do not show claws as they do with canids. This gives the tracks a rounded appearance as opposed the more elliptical canid tracks.



Life History and Diet

Lynx normally breed during March-April. Litter sizes vary from 4 to 5 when prey is abundant to 2 to 3 when prey is scarce. Young lynx are independent by the age of 1, and by 2 years of age they have grown to full size and usually breed.



Ruffed Grouse

The snow hare is by far the most important prey item for lynx. Secondary prey species may include red squirrels and grouse. It is well documented that the availability of snowshoe hares largely regulates lynx abundance across most of their range.



Red Squirrel



Snowshoe Hare

Distribution and Habitat Preferences

The range of the lynx extends across the northern United States and throughout most of Canada. Once common throughout Nova Scotia, today lynx mainly exist on Cape Breton Island, with individuals occasionally showing up in other parts of the province. Additional northeastern populations of lynx are found in Maine, the Quebec Gaspé and New Brunswick.

North American range
of the Canada lynx
(*Lynx canadensis*)

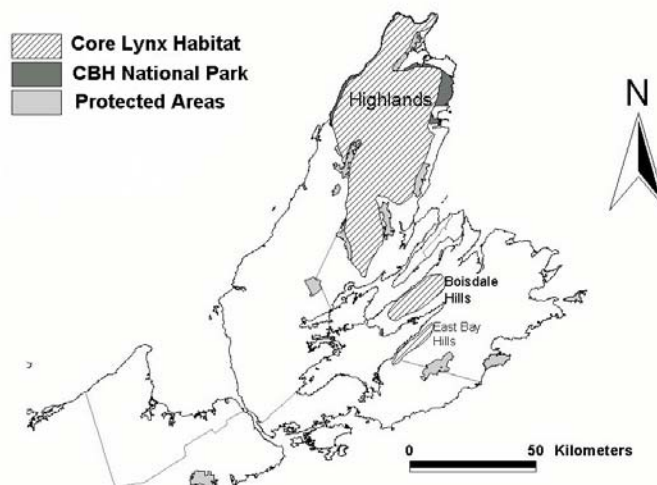


Habitat types preferred by lynx are variable, ranging from old-growth coniferous forests to regenerating coniferous or mixed forests. Forests that are growing back after fire or logging often provide excellent food and cover for hares, thus attracting lynx. Unlike bobcats, it is rare for lynx to be found in farmland habitats.

Bobcats are widely distributed across North America, and common throughout the southern Maritimes, though they may tend to avoid areas of dense human populations. Their northern distribution may be limited by snow depth.

Bobcats seem to prefer areas with high prey abundance and dense understory vegetation. Forest edges, rocky ledges and rocky outcrops are also important terrain features. Bobcats can thrive in a variety of habitats including dense old-growth forests, hardwood and hardwood-mixed forests, brushy habitats and farmland habitats.

**Approximate current distribution of
core lynx habitat on Cape Breton Island**



Trapping Methods to Help Avoid Catching Lynx

To avoid catching lynx while trapping bobcats, trap sets should be made where bobcats are known to exist. Making trap sets near existing bobcat tracks is often successful because bobcats usually reuse the same travel patterns within their territories. Bobcats also tend to use areas where snowshoe hare are abundant. Trap set locations for bobcat that may avoid lynx include open meadows, pastures, and crop lands. Lynx rarely use agricultural lands and generally prefer to hunt and travel in forested or shrubby areas.

Trap sets, lures and baits that are effective for bobcats also appeal to lynx. Whenever a lynx track is identified, trap and snare sets should not be made in the vicinity. Visible baits of hare, beaver, or parts of hare and beaver should not be used if lynx might frequent the area. As well, flags or other suspended sight-attractants (bird wings, feathers, pieces of fur, etc.) should not be used near the traps if lynx are in the area.

Using a proper-sized foothold trap can reduce incidental captures of lynx. Traps smaller than number 3 help discriminate against lynx captures due to a relatively small trap-jaw spread compared to the foot size of lynx. However, these sized traps maintain excellent efficiency for bobcats (as well as foxes and coyotes).

Lynx often avoid traps set for foxes and coyotes when traps are placed in open fields. The use of tainted rather than fresh meat baits tends not to attract lynx while still remaining attractive to coyote and fox.

The typical walking behaviour of a lynx usually allows it to notice and avoid

getting caught in snares. However, should lynx target bait sites or trap sets the best way to avoid accidental captures is to remove traps, snares and bait sites. It has been suggested that a 5/64 inch thick cable or thicker, and a snare loop size of at least 20 cm may enable a lynx to avoid or remove the snares.

Bobcat Hunting Methods to Help Avoid Taking Lynx

Tracks should be closely examined and measured before any trailing dogs are released (see “Signs”). Any treed bobcat should be carefully identified and confirmed as not being a lynx before it is harvested. A treed lynx should be abandoned immediately with harnessed dogs in tow.

If predator calls are used in areas lynx frequent, it is essential to identify and confirm the species responding. Since it may be difficult, or impossible, to positively identify a moving or partially hidden animal, it is best not to shoot at all whenever identity is uncertain.

Reducing Mortality and Injured to Incidentally Captured Lynx

All trappers need access to a catchpole to allow safe release of any unintended animal captures. Care should be taken to approach any trapped animal slowly and quietly to minimize stress to, and agitation of the animal. A trapped lynx may allow the catchpole loop to be placed over its head, but it can be expected to react when the loop is tightened. Tighten the catchpole loop only sufficiently to restrain the lynx securely without disrupting its ability to breathe. It is important to keep the head of the lynx pinned to the ground so that the front end of the body is restrained. Once the head is down, quickly place a

foot, with light pressure only, on hindquarters to restrain rear legs. A heavy canvas, blanket, coat or tarp is also useful to protect the trapper from the cat's claws. Once the lynx is immobilized, the canvas or tarp can be placed over the prone animal to quiet it as the trap or snare is removed quickly. At this point the catchpole loop should be relaxed and removed to free the lynx. If a catchpole is not available, use a strong forked stick to pin the lynx's neck and shoulders to the ground while the trap is removed.

Never attempt to render a trapped lynx unconscious with a blow to the nose or head or by any other means. Striking the lynx may result in a life threatening injury to the animal.

Care should be taken at all times when releasing or handling a lynx as they are capable of injuring the trapper with their teeth or claws. Wearing thick gloves to release trapped animals is always wise.

If you need help releasing a lynx from a trap, please contact your local DNR office (Monday-Friday) for assistance, or 1-800-565-2224 evenings and weekends.

What *you* can do

- Learn about the Canada lynx.
- Inform and share your knowledge with others.
- Support lynx recovery efforts by reporting any lynx sightings, tracks, scats, and captures to your local DNR office, or to the Wildlife Division in Kentville, and by implementing the described avoidance methods.

- Carefully and immediately release any live lynx accidentally captured in traps, and inform the DNR right away.
- Fill out the accidental harvest form on the back of your licence if a lynx is trapped.
- Bring any lynx specimens, new or old, to your local DNR office.

For more information contact:

Nova Scotia Department of Natural Resources, Wildlife Division, Kentville
Tel: (902) 679-6091

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Species at Risk in Nova Scotia

Wildlife species protected under the Nova Scotia Endangered Species Act

Every fall the Minister of Natural Resources releases the names of new species to be added to the growing list of species protected under the province's Endangered Species Act. Endangered means they could become extinct in Nova Scotia if steps to remove the threats to these species are not taken.

Currently, two fur-bearing species, the Cape Breton populations of marten and lynx, are listed under the Act. Both populations are centered in the highlands of Cape Breton. However, the mainland population of marten is still "red listed" (At Risk, Maybe at Risk). Red listed species covers those species for which a formal detailed risk assessment has been completed (COSEWIC assessment or a provincial equivalent) and that have been determined to be at risk of extirpation or extinction. Species that maybe at risk of immediate extirpation or extinction and are therefore candidates for interim conservation action and detailed risk assessment by COSEWIC or the Province.

For more information on the status of wildlife in Nova Scotia visit the general status web page

<http://www.gov.ns.ca/natr/wildlife/genstatus/>

For up-dates on provincially listed species under the Endangered Species Act visit endangered species list web page

<http://www.gov.ns.ca/natr/wildlife/endngrd/specieslist.htm>

As a trapper, you can help in several ways:

- Carefully release any live marten or lynx accidentally captured in a trap.
- Report and submit any lynx or marten accidentally killed in a trap to your local DNR office.
- Keep a written record of where and when you see a lynx or marten, or any sign of these species during the trapping season. Return it along with your Fur Harvester report at the end of the trapping season.

For more information contact your local DNR office or the Wildlife Division office in Kentville at 679-6091.

