

# Nova Scotia TRAPPERS Newsletter

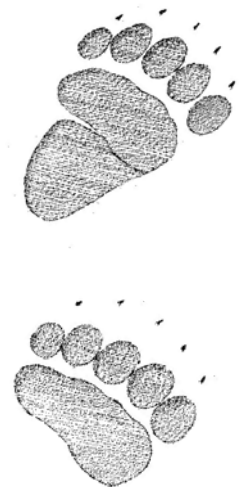
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Photo © Keith Boyle and Kelvin Fraser



**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 2006/2007**

**The major regulation changes affecting furharvesters for the 2006/2007 season are:**

1. The Wildlife Resources Card Number replaces the Furharvester Code Number as required identification number for furharvesters.
2. Beginning October 15<sup>th</sup> 2006, furharvesters must clearly and permanently mark traps and snares set for furbearing species.
3. Furharvesters anywhere in Nova Scotia will once again be allowed to keep and sell one fisher taken accidentally in a trap lawfully set for another species.

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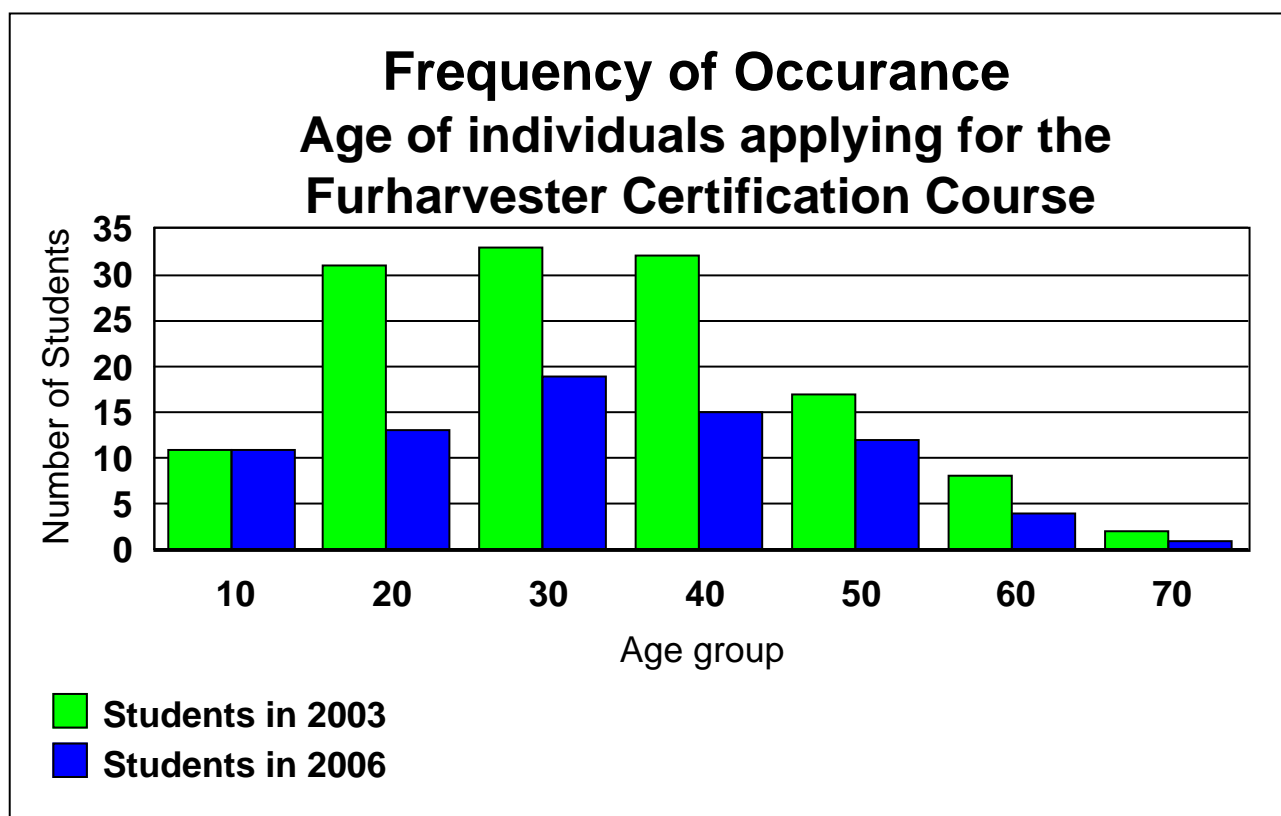
Anyone seeking further information on furbearer management or wishing to provide input to the Department of Natural Resources should contact their local office, a Regional Biologist, or the Furbearer and Upland Game Program of DNR, Attn: Mike O'Brien, 136 Exhibition Street Kentville, N.S. B4N 4E5. Email: [obrienms@gov.ns.ca](mailto:obrienms@gov.ns.ca) Phone: (902) 679-6091 Fax: (902) 679-6176. The Furbearer and Upland Game Program, including previous editions of the Trappers Newsletter, can be found on the following website: <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 Furharvester Courses

*By Mike Boudreau*

Courses take place each year in late September. Since 1986, 83 Furharvester courses have been held and there have been a total of 1762 students. Application forms are available at all local DNR offices, as well as on online at: [www.trappersassociationofnovascotia.ca](http://www.trappersassociationofnovascotia.ca), or [www.gov.ns.ca/natr/wildlife/furbers/education.htm](http://www.gov.ns.ca/natr/wildlife/furbers/education.htm). These applications may be submitted throughout the year. Registration and payment must be received by the TANS (Trappers Association of Nova Scotia) secretary not later than August 15 in order to guarantee a place in a fall course. 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 or their name will be removed from the course waiting list and their registration fee forfeited.



Above is a chart which represents the number of students who successfully completed the Furharvester Certification Course. Students were grouped (ie:20-29) to illustrate the number of students of similar age.

The average age of students who successfully completed the course in both 2003 and 2006 remained fairly constant at 37.88 and 37.67 years old, respectively.

## Home study option

Over the years, prospective students and instructors have commented on the fact that timing was an issue when trying to schedule the Furharvester Certification (FC) Course. Courses were traditionally held during the early fall over the span of a couple of weekends. This limited the options which students had to complete the FC course, resulting in some students being unable to attend each year. In the interest of trying to make the course more accessible, a pilot “home study” project was initiated during the 2004-05 season. This home study project gave students the ability to complete the classroom portion of the course at home. It was primarily set up for those furharvesters who had held a license at one time, but had not purchased a license in more than 4 years, therefore, making them ineligible or inactive to purchase a furharvester license without completing the FC course. The home study course has since been expanded to allow any person to take the course regardless of whether or not they had any trapping experience with minor differences in course length and content.

The student application form can be obtained from any DNR office or printed from either of the following websites:

<http://www.trappersassociationofnovascotia.ca/> or <http://www.gov.ns.ca/natr/wildlife/furbers/trapapp.htm>. Once registered, each student will receive a copy of the *Nova Scotia Wild Furharvester's Student Manual*. As mentioned above, the course curriculum is slightly different for those students who have not held a license as compared to those who have had trapping experience. These differences are outlined below.

### Furharvesters with a Tcode:

Individuals who have previously held a Nova Scotia furharvester licence, have not trapped in more than four years and have not successfully completed an approved trapper certification course (any course completed **after** August 1<sup>st</sup>

1986) are eligible to take the home study course as described below.

To apply for the home study course, send a cheque or money order to the Trapper's Association of Nova Scotia (address is found on the application form). Upon receipt of payment and completed application, a student manual and supplemental information will be sent to the student. Accompanying the manual is a set of student questions, which must be completed and returned to Mike Boudreau, DNR Wildlife Division, 136 Exhibition St. Kentville N.S. B4N 4E5.

Once the completed student questions are received, a set of 8 instructional DVD's with additional review questions will be mailed to the student for a two week loan period. The DVD's are to be viewed and the corresponding review questions answered. The review questions must be completed and returned, along with the DVD's, within two weeks, to Mike Boudreau, Wildlife Division. Once the student's review questions have been corrected a final exam will be sent to the District office most convenient to the student. The student will be notified by District staff and an appointment will be scheduled for the student to write the final exam. The completed exam and question sheet will be returned to the Wildlife Division for final grading.

Students are only given one opportunity to take the home study option. If a student fails the home study exam (pass mark is 80%), the only remaining option will be to resubmit an application (including fee) for the next available Furharvester Certification Course (held annually each Fall).

### New Furharvesters:

Students who have never trapped or held a furharvester license in Nova Scotia prior to registering for the Furharvester Certification Course must complete all the steps mentioned above as well as **register and participate** in the TANS annual two day workshop held in

early March at the Kentville Legion. Completing the practical aspect of the course will allow a hands-on approach to the material covered in the manuals and DVD's. This is mandatory in order to complete the requirements of the Furharvester Certification Program.

For clarification on the home study option contact Mike Boudreau at the Wildlife Division (902) 679-6150.

**2007 Trappers Workshop  
and Annual Meeting  
- Kentville -  
March 2-4, 2007**

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 2006 Trappers Workshop was held in Kentville. To date we have held 51 workshops with over 1,661 students.

### Furharvester License Sales

YEAR	97/98	98/99	99/00	00/01	01/02	02/03	03/04	04/05	05/06
Annapolis	102	77	69	66	66	65	75	67	67
Antigonish	75	68	62	67	59	66	68	63	63
Colchester	115	83	127	113	115	118	110	112	112
Cumberland	181	137	163	159	165	158	171	150	150
Digby	86	108	75	88	78	97	95	68	68
Guysborough	77	84	60	56	73	77	68	47	47
Halifax	190	104	119	90	153	152	139	142	142
Hants	107	70	40	79	72	80	82	73	73
Kings	106	97	84	82	88	74	83	74	75
Lunenburg	106	107	84	87	84	94	94	85	85
Pictou	159	140	118	109	144	128	140	116	118
Queens	76	65	44	40	59	48	59	54	56
Shelburne	94	90	74	69	69	69	81	63	73
Yarmouth	145	128	114	117	108	111	128	113	116
Cape Breton	110	83	74	73	74	82	78	73	75
Inverness	80	75	69	71	70	68	67	40	66
Richmond	70	74	58	64	60	55	64	45	59
Victoria	24	20	29	19	22	24	28	10	24
<b>Total</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>1903</b>	<b>1649</b>	<b>1497</b>	<b>1449</b>	<b>1552</b>	<b>1630</b>	<b>1395</b>	<b>1469</b>

## **Furbearer Report**

*By Mike O'Brien and Mike Boudreau*

The number of furharvester licenses sold in the 2005-06 season increased by 6.25 % to a total of 1488. The level of effort of those who bought a furharvester license and caught fur has changed very little, with a decrease from 57.5% to 57.2% in the 2005-06 season.

Average fur prices increased for almost every species with the exception of coyote, which sold at 12.3% lower average than the 2004-05 season. Otter sales have dropped to a trickle mainly because China continues to have problems with importing otter into the country. Although the average price for otter appears to be stable as compared to averages over the last couple of years, many remain unsold. Demand for otter appears to be good, however this market is exclusively dependent on the demand from China. Bear and bobcat recorded average fur prices, which increased by 16.91%, 22.5% respectively from the previous year, and continue to sell at relatively high prices.

### **Snowshoe Hare**

Snowshoe hares, or rabbits as we Nova Scotian's call them, are an important prey species for many furbearers. Abundance rankings reported by furharvesters and small game hunters show an overall increase in snowshoe hare across the province. The only exception is Yarmouth county, which recorded a slight drop in abundance rankings. The mandatory upland game harvest survey showed a very poor return rate for these report cards again this year. However, the number of snowshoe hares harvested increased by 39.92% with an estimated provincial harvest of 214,908 overall.

### **Bobcat**

The bobcat harvest was down by 1.3 % from the previous year, with a total of 740 animals taken. The average price, however, remains relatively high to average prices in recent years due to a 22.5% increase. Undoubtedly these

higher prices will continue to encourage trappers to target this species in the upcoming season. Abundance rankings for bobcats took a slight drop on the provincial scale. The western end of the province followed the provincial trend, with the exception of Lunenburg county which reported a slight increase in abundance. The eastern counties showed a marginal increase in all counties with the exception of Cumberland and Hants. On the other hand, Cape Breton county was the only county on Cape Breton Island to show any increase in abundance.

### **Beaver**

The provincial beaver harvest increased by 5.16% to 5244 animals, bringing the harvest of animals to the levels taken in 2003/04. This increase in harvest may be explained in part by increased pressure as a result of rising prices. With beaver abundance on the rise and a price increase of 22.18%, many trappers will be looking at beavers during the upcoming season. Abundance rankings showed a slight increase on the provincial scale, with most counties in the east and Cape Breton reporting a slight increase in rankings. The western counties all recorded a drop with the exception of Yarmouth county which seemed to follow the trend of the eastern counties.

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.

### **Otter**

Otter harvests have decreased this year by less than 20% to a level of 551 animals. This is still in the middle of the range for harvest in recent years. The average price increased by 5.3 % from the previous year. This represents the third highest average price paid out in the last decade.

Abundance rankings showed a slight decrease on the provincial scale, however the bulk of the decrease seems to be occurring in the western counties of the province. The eastern and Cape Breton counties are showing an upward trend. Otter abundance rankings continue to remain in the low to medium range. In spite of the fact that the price has increased for the first time in three years, the average price remains relatively low. Although the price seems to have started upward again last season, many pelts remain unsold. Currently the price and demand is largely set by buyers from China and both demand and price will continue to be affected until the issue surrounding the importing of otter skins into China is resolved.

We are again requesting that all otter pelts be stamped and carcasses submitted 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 harvest.

### **Muskrat**

Muskrat catches increased by 3.11 % to reach a level of 18,559 animals. This harvest represents about half of the harvest during the 1996-97 season. The average price increased to \$8.05 which was an increase of about 56.5% from the previous season. This will undoubtedly encourage trappers to target this species in the upcoming season. The harvest and the provincial abundance rankings were both up by about 3% from the previous year.

### **Fisher**

Although the abundance rankings over the last 7 seasons remain relatively unchanged. Fisher

abundance rankings, provided by licensed furharvesters, took a slight increase this year. Rankings never seem to rise much above the low range. While the harvest over the past decade is encouraging, we need to continue to monitor this species. The harvest has remained fairly stable with little change over the previous 4 years, leaving the recorded harvest at 137 animals. As with otter, the pelt must be declared, stamped and the carcass of all fisher presented to a DNR office. Regulations have been changed this year; all furharvesters are permitted to retain one accidentally caught fisher, if caught in a trap set for another species. Any fisher which are caught over the accidental harvest of 1 are to be turned into the Department of Natural Resources office nearest the trapper's residence. In turn these animals are used to illustrate proper skinning and pelt handling techniques during the trapper education workshop held in March. As with all species, the season and bag limits are reviewed annually by department biologists.

### **Raccoon**

Raccoon harvest decreased by 64 % to a level of 2997 animals. These harvest figures are back to the harvest figures from the late 1990's when the average price was down to \$8.05. Abundance rankings increased on the provincial scale as well as all counties with the exception of Guysborough, Cape Breton, Yarmouth and Digby. Average price for raccoons increased slightly from last year, and remain at levels not seen since the late 1990's. With little change in the average price, trapping effort will undoubtedly continue to drop, resulting in a low harvest in the upcoming harvest season.

### **Fox**

Fox harvest increased by 9.9 % to a level of 660 animals. Provincial abundance rankings crept up slightly with marginal changes in a hand full of counties. After a couple of years of declining prices for this species, the market seems to be rebounding slightly but still remains at a relatively high level as compared

to average prices paid out over the past ten years.

### **Coyote**

Coyote harvest increased by 29.8 % and reached a level of 2620 animals. This harvest is the highest harvest since coyotes made their way into the province during the late 1970's. Overall abundance rankings climbed by 5.5 %, but continue to remain in the moderate to high range. The average price paid for coyotes decreased by 14.1 % this year, but still remains in the \$25 to \$30 range.

### **Other Species**

Squirrel harvest decreased by 51% to a level of 3941. Weasel harvest, on the other hand, increased again by 40.8 % to 1691 animals. This harvest represents the highest recorded harvest in the last decade and is no doubt related to the high prices paid for weasel pelts last season. Skunk harvest decreased by 12 % to reach a level of 125. Average price for squirrel increased by 29 % and the average price for weasel jumped by 42.5%. Unfortunately, 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 that furharvesters have to avoid catching these animals may be to avoid trapping in 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 a Department of Natural Resources office 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 possession 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. 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 Auctions**

65 Skyway Ave., Rexdale, Ontario M9W 5C7  
 Phone: 416-675-9320  
 Fax: 416-675-6865  
 website: [www.nafa.ca](http://www.nafa.ca)

**Nova Scotia Representative**

Furafree Trading Inc.  
 115 Brunswick St., Truro, N.S. B2N 4P6  
 Phone: (902) 895-2511

**Furharvesters Auction Inc.**

1867 Bond St., North Bay, Ont. P1B 8K6  
 Phone: 705-495-4688  
 Fax: 705-495-3099  
 Website: [www.furharvesters.com](http://www.furharvesters.com)  
 Email: [ffa@furharvesters.com](mailto:ffa@furharvesters.com)

**Nova Scotia & Prince Edward Island Representative**

John Richard, 3101 Route 180  
 South Tetagouche, N.B. E2A 7C1  
 Phone: (506) 548-3018  
 Cell: (506) 544-6883

**2006-2007 Auction Dates:**

Sale Date: January 7<sup>th</sup>, 2007  
 Last Receiving Date: December 4<sup>th</sup>, 2006

Sale Date: February 10-15<sup>th</sup>, 2007  
 Last Receiving Date: January 8<sup>th</sup>, 2007

Sale Date: May 20<sup>th</sup> -25<sup>th</sup>, 2007  
 Last Receiving Date: March 26<sup>th</sup>, 2007

Sale Date: To be announced  
 Last Receiving Date: June 7<sup>th</sup>, 2007

**2006-2007 Auction Dates:**

Sale Date: December 15, 2006  
 Last Receiving Date: December 2, 2006

Sale Date: February 20<sup>th</sup> & 21, 2007  
 Last Receiving Date: January 13<sup>th</sup>, 2007

Sale Date: May 20<sup>th</sup> -22<sup>nd</sup>, 2007  
 Last Receiving Date: April 14<sup>th</sup>, 2006

Sale Date: June 15<sup>th</sup>, 2007  
 Last Receiving Date: May 26<sup>th</sup>, 2007

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

Species	96/97	97/98	98/99	99/00	00/01	01/02	02/03	03/04	04/05	05/06
<b>Beaver</b>	\$43.00	\$34.90	\$25.39	\$ 31.06	\$32.16	\$27.28	\$ 26.46	\$29.14	\$26.90	\$34.57
<b>Muskrat</b>	\$ 7.06	\$ 4.32	\$ 3.17	\$ 4.22	\$4.36	\$5.58	\$ 4.39	\$3.32	\$3.50	\$8.50
<b>Otter</b>	\$72.42	\$72.43	\$53.50	\$ 92.19	\$90.57	\$111.58	\$139.34	\$128.82	\$112.37	\$118.73
<b>Mink</b>	\$19.09	\$18.84	\$15.70	\$ 17.85	\$14.83	\$17.00	\$ 14.52	\$18.17	\$16.92	\$23.82
<b>Bobcat</b>	\$76.96	\$58.95	\$48.92	\$ 54.37	\$61.86	\$128.40	\$204.66	\$125.47	\$112.80	\$145.70
<b>Fox</b>	\$25.59	\$23.38	\$16.79	\$ 29.16	\$30.89	\$37.83	\$ 48.06	\$30.84	\$21.53	\$31.48
<b>Raccoon</b>	\$23.97	\$21.53	\$12.14	\$ 8.15	\$16.66	\$19.38	\$ 17.91	\$19.78	\$12.14	\$12.78
<b>Weasel</b>	\$ 5.69	\$ 2.88	\$ 2.90	\$ 3.26	\$4.94	\$3.83	\$ 3.53	\$2.40	\$3.20	\$5.57
<b>Squirrel</b>	\$ 2.42	\$ 1.05	\$ 0.74	\$ 0.99	\$1.73	\$1.98	\$ 0.79	\$1.22	\$1.05	\$1.48
<b>Skunk</b>	\$ 4.00	\$ 1.97	\$ 4.37	\$ 1.76	\$8.85	\$8.41	\$ 5.83	\$5.34	\$4.27	\$10.11
<b>Fisher</b>	\$46.64	\$39.93	\$28.12	\$ 22.31	\$32.87	\$44.09	\$ 31.42	\$43.47	\$36.47	\$83.60
<b>Bear</b>	\$99.21	\$76.47	\$70.57	\$113.21	\$149.43	\$117.28	\$112.37	\$80.18	\$74.70	\$89.91
<b>Coyote</b>	\$33.41	\$20.25	\$20.53	\$25.83	\$25.02	\$31.33	\$43.75	\$32.66	\$30.23	\$26.49

**Fur Harvest As Calculated From License Returns and Fur Buyer Slips in 2004 - 2005**

County	B'ver	M'krat	Otter	Mink	B'cat	Fox	R'coon	S'knk	S'qrrel	W'sel	C'yote	Lynx	Marten	Fisher
Anna.	154	1791	38	50	62	27	163	5	361	89	150	0	0	14
Digby	246	497	22	394	44	12	380	6	3181	154	126	0	0	0
Kings	104	15491	12	68	36	21	445	3	184	7	111	0	0	2
Lunen.	408	212	54	132	80	94	423	0	483	96	101	0	0	0
Queens	141	59	27	74	48	4	106	4	140	55	31	0	0	4
Shel.	137	853	26	41	85	11	60	1	28	23	41	0	0	1
Yar.	202	1096	21	299	42	19	357	0	462	58	63	0	0	2
Ant.	279	980	33	16	20	33	195	12	143	10	86	0	0	0
Col.	310	1987	26	59	25	46	616	8	389	19	92	0	0	25
Cumb.	889	4688	39	93	31	93	1137	21	189	52	171	0	0	43
Guys.	242	210	71	62	57	14	44	0	536	16	98	0	0	2
Hfx.	465	416	82	190	940	41	284	10	188	124	115	0	0	1
Hants	229	472	13	48	32	17	198	2	108	76	84	0	0	0
Pictou	456	847	27	18	44	54	368	60	15	11	89	0	0	23
CB	215	573	36	48	16	46	67	0	110	36	132	0	0	0
Inv.	350	1141	31	40	16	22	41	0	712	85	129	0	0	0
Rich.	89	406	43	44	10	18	8	0	303	73	106	1	0	0
Vic.	57	203	18	32	8	23	24	0	518	17	113	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>4973</b>	<b>17,980</b>	<b>619</b>	<b>1,708</b>	<b>750</b>	<b>595</b>	<b>4,916</b>	<b>132</b>	<b>8,050</b>	<b>1,001</b>	<b>1,838</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>117</b>

**Fur Harvest As Calculated From License Returns and Fur Buyer Slips in 2005/2006**

County	B'ver	M'krat	Otter	Mink	B'cat	Fox	R'coon	S'knk	S'qrrel	W'sel	C'yote	Lynx	Marten	Fisher
Anna.	201	1233	23	63	31	22	98	3	86	19	142	0	0	2
Digby	277	595	27	579	39	21	290	4	1752	198	133	0	2	3
Kings	214	1151	8	92	21	19	432	6	92	22	128	0	0	1
Lunen.	345	134	37	114	74	62	180	0	146	98	154	0	0	7
Queens	142	40	27	77	36	9	72	0	102	48	62	0	1	0
Shel.	162	1033	27	68	70	9	80	0	5	65	60	0	0	0
Yar.	196	942	20	208	46	23	167	1	200	139	141	0	1	0
Ant.	251	1830	37	59	17	42	121	0	65	37	131	0	0	0
Col.	501	2809	29	120	61	76	247	7	206	81	232	0	0	38
Cumb.	805	4519	29	139	24	113	508	4	85	86	273	0	0	48
Guys.	223	282	64	82	92	6	25	0	227	63	69	0	0	1
Hfx.	425	543	84	188	94	46	209	4	158	157	177	0	0	1
Hants	209	335	11	45	25	14	151	0	91	94	183	0	0	1
Pictou	534	969	22	34	70	57	318	96	44	41	173	0	0	36
CB	250	686	26	61	21	61	31	0	21	56	149	0	0	0
Inv.	313	799	27	136	6	31	32	0	412	229	147	0	0	0
Rich.	102	434	41	41	10	17	14	0	93	164	104	0	0	0
Vic.	101	225	12	69	5	32	21	0	156	94	161	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>5251</b>	<b>18559</b>	<b>551</b>	<b>2175</b>	<b>742</b>	<b>660</b>	<b>2996</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>3941</b>	<b>1691</b>	<b>2619</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>138</b>

## Fur Bearing Animals Taken by Furharvesters from 1996-2006

Species	96/97	97/98	98/99	99/00	00/01	01/02	02/03	03/04	04/05	05/06
<b>Beaver</b>	8642	6385	5807	4126	3828	5792	4166	5281	4973	5251
<b>Muskrat</b>	36834	31531	26623	15859	13391	18779	15274	19340	17980	18559
<b>Otter</b>	765	555	478	440	447	625	591	696	619	551
<b>Mink</b>	2168	1681	1724	1686	1267	1889	1811	2049	1708	2175
<b>Bobcat</b>	976	1029	1103	1403	1163	1394	1193	1205	750	742
<b>Fox</b>	1549	898	841	662	491	797	677	805	595	660
<b>Raccoon</b>	6490	6165	5577	2018	1409	2725	3019	3551	4916	2996
<b>Weasel</b>	1037	602	468	1156	561	96	1179	1477	1001	1691
<b>Squirrel</b>	6890	5199	6543	1486	2554	4251	5152	3161	8050	3941
<b>Skunk</b>	229	74	151	247	108	96	183	150	132	125
<b>Fisher</b>	217	184	131	115	84	128	138	138	117	138
<b>Coyote</b>	1311	1031	1254	1388	835	1587	1809	2422	1838	2619

### Bag Limit Changes

#### **Bobcat**

- 1990/91: bag limit increased to two province wide
- 1991/92: bag limit reduced to one province wide
- 1993/94: bag limit increased to two province wide
- 1994/95: bag limit reduced to one in Cumberland and Colchester Counties
- 1995/96: bag limit increased to three province wide (except Cumb/Col)
- 1996/97: bag limit increased to four province wide (except Cumb/Col)
- 1997/98: bag limit increased from one to four in Colchester County
- 1998/99: bag limit increased from four to five province wide except for Cumberland County
- 1999/00-2005/06: bag limit increased to five province wide

#### **Fisher**

- 1988/89 to 1994/95: season closed
- 1995/96, 1996/97 and 1997/98 one mistake fisher allowed
- 1998/99 to 2005/06: one mistake fisher allowed in Cumberland, Colchester and Pictou Counties

#### **Marten**

- season closed

#### **Lynx**

- season closed

## Otter Project 2006

*By Sarah Spencer, B.Sc, M.Sc*

In the spring of 2006 we live-trapped an otter from the back country in Yarmouth County. We are currently tracking it by helicopter. Mercury analysis is yet to be completed. This year, I also analyzed otter fur collected from trapper provided carcasses across Nova Scotia. On average, otter from the western part of the province had the highest mercury levels, followed by the central region, with the eastern region having the lowest.

Mercury in the fur of otter in Nova Scotia was correlated to the presence of a Nova Scotia Power hydroelectric dam, bedrock and the distance from the coast that an otter lives. In central Nova Scotia, two otter from the same watershed had mercury levels of 100 and 137 ppm, the highest in the province. There was a power dam on this watershed.

Although the project is nearing its end, I will continue to track radio-implanted otter into next spring.



## Species Abundance as Recorded by Furharvesters

*By Mike O'Brien and Mike Boudreau*

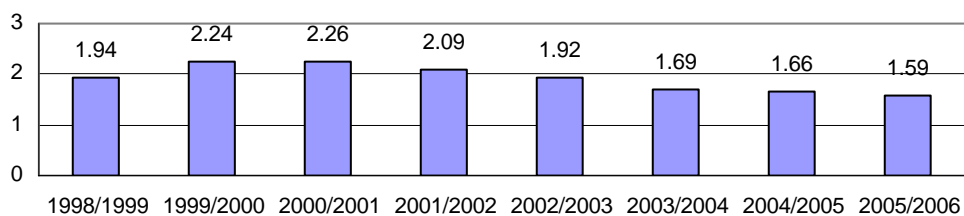
Furharvesters were asked again last year to record their perception of population levels for 16 animal species. Population levels for five of those species have been recorded for seventeen years, while population levels for the other nine species have been added more recently. This has been a very successful program as it gives us the ability to draw on hundreds of skilled observers who tell us how abundant each species is in their area. We encourage all furharvesters to fill in this section of their report form. Higher numbers of participants increases the accuracy of the data.

Rankings for individual counties may not provide a reliable picture of annual trends because of low response numbers from some areas. The summaries for each of the three regions, as well as the provincial totals, are considered very reliable. The table shows results for the 2005-06 season. The numbers are averages calculated by assigning values to the ranks selected by each furharvester. The values given to the ranks are shown under the table.

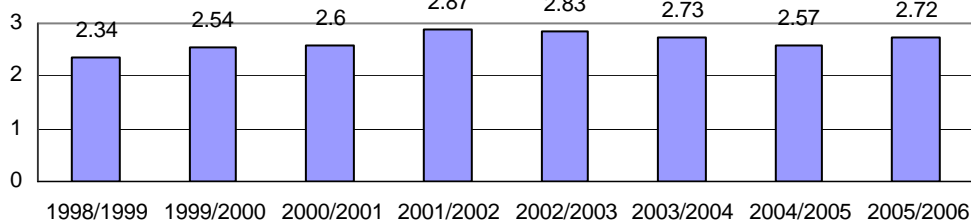
The lowest possible value for a county is "0", which means that all respondents in that county felt that none of that particular species was present in the given area. The highest possible value is "4", which means that all respondents from that county felt that numbers for that species were "very high."

This type of information is most valuable when looking at changes from year to year. Graphs are presented to show the rankings for five species over an eight year period for all of Nova Scotia.

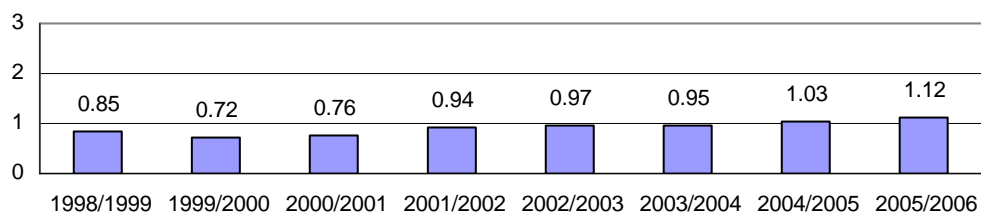
**Bobcat  
Furharvester Abundance Ranking**



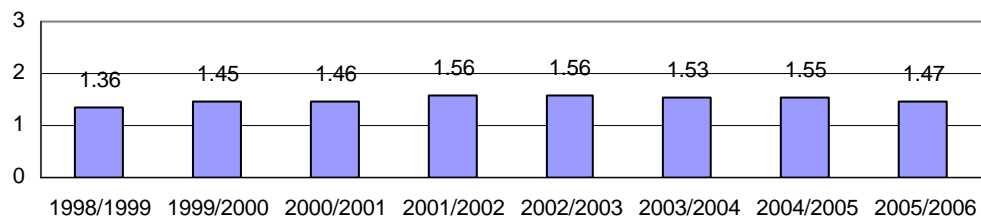
**Coyote  
Furharvester Abundance Ranking**



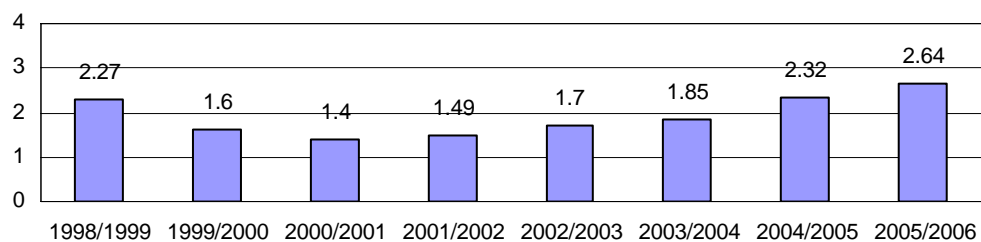
**Fisher  
Furharvester Abundance Ranking**



**Otter  
Furharvester Abundance Ranking**



**Snowshoe Hare  
Furharvester Abundance Ranking**



## Abundance Ranking for Furbearer Harvest 2005 - 2006

County	B'ver	Mskrt	Otter	Mink	Bobcat	Fox	Rac'on	Skunk	Sq'rel	Weasel	Coyote	Lynx	Marten	Fisher	Bear	Hare
Anna.	2.55	1.86	1.64	1.77	156	1.33	2.27	2.56	2.78	1.87	2.79	0.00	0.52	1.23	2.45	2.10
Digby	2.19	2.09	1.26	1.97	1.76	1.48	2.38	1.38	2.10	1.61	2.73	0.88	1.24	1.38	1.79	2.08
Kings	2.13	1.84	1.41	1.94	1.63	1.29	2.95	2.53	2.62	1.67	2.83	1.50	1.00	1.38	2.00	2.13
Lunen.	2.54	1.78	1.60	2.04	1.95	1.75	2.50	1.94	2.94	2.07	2.71	0.10	0.26	1.47	2.47	2.35
Queens	2.17	1.67	1.39	1.89	1.55	1.14	2.66	1.00	2.80	2.18	2.61	0.10	0.23	0.24	2.21	2.20
Shel.	1.76	1.94	1.30	1.59	1.60	1.14	2.53	0.47	2.91	2.14	3.00	0.08	0.12	0.52	2.12	1.80
Yar.	2.36	1.95	1.18	1.80	1.60	1.11	2.23	1.04	2.49	1.95	2.76	0.30	0.47	0.95	1.77	1.77
<b>Western</b>	<b>2.25</b>	<b>1.88</b>	<b>1.40</b>	<b>1.85</b>	<b>1.67</b>	<b>1.33</b>	<b>2.49</b>	<b>1.67</b>	<b>2.67</b>	<b>1.93</b>	<b>2.79</b>	<b>0.21</b>	<b>0.44</b>	<b>1.02</b>	<b>2.15</b>	<b>2.07</b>
Anti.	2.51	2.83	1.53	1.83	1.41	1.91	2.39	2.41	2.91	1.85	2.66	0.13	0.06	0.89	2.22	3.47
Col.	2.77	2.59	1.61	2.7	1.62	1.84	2.62	2.73	3.00	2.38	2.71	0.50	0.00	2.18	2.68	3.38
Cum.	2.58	2.29	1.22	1.77	1.51	1.91	2.81	2.46	3.08	2.17	2.63	0.22	0.22	1.58	2.86	2.72
Guys.	2.56	2.10	1.72	1.67	1.86	0.65	1.68	1.70	3.10	1.74	2.59	0.18	0.07	0.45	1.79	3.24
Halifax	2.39	1.95	1.65	1.94	1.82	1.41	2.51	2.02	2.75	2.21	2.47	1.03	0.03	0.35	1.88	2.74
Hants	2.44	1.90	1.43	1.93	1.40	1.14	2.30	2.11	2.67	2.00	2.85	0.00	0.19	0.90	1.81	2.72
Pictou	2.61	2.48	1.60	1.85	1.90	1.61	2.55	2.82	3.08	2.33	3.00	0.63	0.36	1.95	2.52	3.33
<b>Eastern</b>	<b>2.55</b>	<b>2.30</b>	<b>1.52</b>	<b>1.86</b>	<b>1.67</b>	<b>1.54</b>	<b>2.47</b>	<b>2.37</b>	<b>2.95</b>	<b>2.14</b>	<b>2.71</b>	<b>0.17</b>	<b>0.13</b>	<b>1.36</b>	<b>2.31</b>	<b>3.04</b>
CB	2.51	2.18	1.56	2.28	1.53	1.83	2.15	0.00	2.94	2.30	2.68	0.68	0.22	0.22	1.25	2.31
Inv.	2.31	2.33	1.49	2.14	1.26	1.42	1.43	0.00	3.03	2.53	2.59	0.80	0.19	0.18	2.37	3.03
Rich.	1.59	2.53	1.57	1.47	0.88	1.30	1.30	0.00	2.91	2.29	2.42	0.41	0.00	0.00	0.65	2.92
Vic.	1.80	1.70	1.11	4.64	1.00	1.64	1.44	0.00	3.27	2.50	2.82	0.45	0.11	0.00	2.60	1.73
<b>CB Region</b>	<b>2.12</b>	<b>2.29</b>	<b>1.50</b>	<b>1.94</b>	<b>1.20</b>	<b>1.53</b>	<b>1.62</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>2.99</b>	<b>2.39</b>	<b>2.59</b>	<b>0.61</b>	<b>0.12</b>	<b>0.09</b>	<b>1.67</b>	<b>2.66</b>
<b>Province</b>	<b>2.38</b>	<b>2.15</b>	<b>1.47</b>	<b>1.87</b>	<b>1.59</b>	<b>1.47</b>	<b>2.36</b>	<b>1.90</b>	<b>2.86</b>	<b>2.10</b>	<b>2.72</b>	<b>0.28</b>	<b>0.25</b>	<b>1.12</b>	<b>2.18</b>	<b>2.64</b>

## **American marten in southwestern Nova Scotia**

*By Jennifer Stevens, DNR*

### **Fall 2005**

Once common throughout Nova Scotia, the American marten (*Martes americana*) is now limited to two known populations in the province; Cape Breton Island and the southwestern portion of the mainland. The marten population on Cape Breton Island was listed as endangered in May 2001 and the mainland population is classified as 'data deficient.' Beginning in the Fall 2005, the Wildlife Division, in partnership with the Trapper's Association of Nova Scotia (TANS), started a marten pilot study to increase the foothold of the American marten in southwestern Nova Scotia.

To date, two main threats exist for the marten in southwestern Nova Scotia. Both threats involve ranched mink. In 2000, ranched mink production in Nova Scotia totaled 600,000 pelts and the Nova Scotia Fur Institute estimates that 85 percent of this fur production is in the southwestern part of the province. Every year, hundreds of these ranched mink escape into the landscape and are harvested by local trappers. In doing so, however, there is a risk of accidentally trapping marten. Although the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and TANS have offered several workshops and presentations to curb such incidental take of marten, approximately six accidental catches have been reported annually since 2002. Ranched mink may also carry Aleutian disease that can infect other wildlife, especially within the weasel family. In 2003, 82% of tested feral mink (14 of 17) from southwestern Nova Scotia tested positive for the disease and one out of four marten showed positive results.

The marten pilot study, started last Fall, involved broadening the southwestern NS marten population's range through translocation to areas with limited public access and away from the main concentration

of mink farms, thereby decreasing the animals' vulnerability to incidental trapping and potential sources of Aleutian disease. Four marten were successfully live-trapped in the Weymouth area, Digby County and translocated to the East Kempt area in Yarmouth County. Once trapped, blood and fur samples were taken from each marten and then each was fitted with a radio collar for tracking purposes. All translocation efforts and releases were successful. One of the marten slipped its collar prior to release; prohibiting any movement data to be collected. Another marten was actively tracked until March 2006 when it was submitted to the Tusket DNR office by a local furharvester from Quinan as an accidental catch. The remaining two marten are actively being tracked to date.

### **Fall 2006**

This autumn, TANS will continue efforts to increase the foothold of the southwestern marten population by examining the size and extent of this population through live trapping, the use of hair snags and track plates. Positive identification of marten tracks, regardless of trap success, will be recorded as marten presence.

The mainland marten population is believed to be, at least partially, the result of a reintroduction program that released 116 marten from New Brunswick into 11 park sites at Kejimikujik National Park between 1987 and 1994. The objective of the program was to re-establish a viable and self-sustaining population within the park from which the species could eventually re-establish itself elsewhere. Since 1998, marten sightings, tracks and accidentally trapped marten have been reported from the area bounded by Digby, Weymouth and Yarmouth, with the most reports from the Weymouth to Clare District. The focal point of this year's study will consequently be Weymouth in Digby County where a known marten population has been thriving and where three marten were radio-collared and tracked throughout 2003/04

by DNR. The study area will eventually radiate out to include the surrounding counties of: Annapolis, Yarmouth, Shelburne, and Queens.

Increasing the knowledge base regarding the size and extent of the SW NS marten population will involve taking weight measurements, identifying sex and general health conditions of each trapped animal. Fur and blood samples will also be taken for genetic analysis and Aleutian disease testing. In order to more fully understand required marten habitat components, a GPS coordinate and specific habitat descriptions for each location of a successfully trapped marten will also be recorded.

Results of the proposed trapping activities will increase knowledge of the size, health and extent of the mainland marten population. Successful trapping records will also provide information on marten habitat preferences and have the potential to lead to further studies on suitable habitat availability in southwestern Nova Scotia

**Project Partners:**

NS DNR - Wildlife Division

Trapper's Association of Nova Scotia

The Habitat Conservation Fund

Wildlife Conservation Society

Parks Canada- Kejimikujik National Park

Acadia University

Mersey Tobeatic Research Institute





## Certified Traps - AIHTS Implementation

### Updated March 17, 2006

The Canadian Wildlife Directors, Competent Authorities for implementation of the Agreement on International Humane Trapping Standards (AIHTS), have approved a 3-phase process for implementing the AIHTS in Canada. The following lists show the three phases for regulating species-specific traps: (1) the **certified** traps to be regulated for specific species in 2007; (2) **certified** traps that will not be affected at that time, pending development of testing technologies; and, (3) the future addition of cage and box traps. The traps listed by name have all been certified as meeting the requirements of the AIHTS for specific species, through the Canadian trap-testing program administered by the Fur Institute of Canada.



### Phase 1. **STARTING IN FALL 2007 - Certified Traps to be regulated for trapping the following species:**

the following species:

KILLING TRAPS			
SPECIES	CERTIFIED TRAPS TO BE REGULATED FOR USE IN FALL 2007		
BEAVER Underwater and On Land	Bélisle Classic 330	LDL C280	Species-Specific 330 Dislocator Half Magnum
	Bélisle Super X 280	LDL C330	Species-Specific 440 Dislocator Half Magnum
	Bélisle Super X 330	Rudy 280	Woodstream Oneida Victor Conibear 280
	B.M.I. 330 Body Gripper	Rudy 330	Woodstream Oneida Victor Conibear 330
	Bridger 330	Sauvageau 2001-11	
BEAVER On Land Only	Sauvageau 1000-11F		
BEAVER Underwater Only	Duke 330	B.M.I. 280 Body Gripper	Sauvageau 2001-8
FISHER	Bélisle Super X 120	Koro #2	Sauvageau 2001-5
	Bélisle Super X 160	LDL C160 Magnum	Sauvageau 2001-8
	Bélisle Super X 220	LDL C220 Magnum	
MARTEN	Bélisle Super X 120	LDL B120 Magnum	Sauvageau C120 Magnum
	B.M.I. 126 Magnum Body Gripper	Rudy 120 Magnum	Sauvageau 2001-5
RACCOON	Bélisle Classic 220	Duke 220	Sauvageau 2001-6
	Bélisle Super X 160	LDL C 160	Sauvageau 2001-7
	Bélisle Super X 220	LDL C 220	Sauvageau 2001-8
	B.M.I. 160 Body Gripper	LDL C 220 Magnum	Species-Specific 220 Dislocator Half Magnum
	B.M.I. 220 Body Gripper	Rudy 160	Woodstream Oneida Victor Conibear 160
	Bridger 160	Rudy 220	Woodstream Oneida Victor Conibear 220
	Bridger 220		
MUSKRAT On Land	Bélisle Super X 120	Bridger 120	Sauvageau 2001-5
	B.M.I. 120	LDL B120 Magnum	Triple M
	B.M.I. 120 Magnum	Rudy 120 Magnum	Woodstream Oneida Victor Conibear 110
	B.M.I. 126 Magnum	Sauvageau C120 Magnum	Woodstream Oneida Victor Conibear 120
MUSKRAT Underwater	Any jaw type trap (body gripping or leghold) set as a submersion set that exerts clamping force on a muskrat and that maintains a muskrat underwater.		
LEGHOLD RESTRAINING TRAPS			
SPECIES	CERTIFIED TRAPS TO BE REGULATED FOR USE IN FALL 2007		
LYNX	Bélisle Footsnare	Oneida Victor #3 Soft Catch equipped with 4 coil springs	Oneida Victor #3 equipped with a minimum of 8mm thick, non-offset steel jaws, 4 coil springs and an anchoring swivel centre mounted on a base plate
	Oneida Victor #3 Soft Catch equipped with 2 coil springs		

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.

**Phase 2. YEAR OF IMPLEMENTATION TO BE DETERMINED - Certified Traps to be regulated after 2007 for trapping the following species:**

Although the traps listed in Phase 2 are certified for the following species and trap categories, the year of entry into force of the obligation to use only AIHTS Certified traps **has not yet been determined**. This date, which could vary from one species to another, will be known at least 3 years in advance.

Until then, traps that are currently legally permitted can still be used.

Check with your provincial or territorial government for regulations related to trap uses applicable in your trapping area.

<b>KILLING TRAPS</b>	
<b>SPECIES</b>	<b>TRAPS CERTIFIED BUT NOT MANDATORY FOR USE IN FALL 2007</b>
<b>OTTER</b>	Woodstream Oneida Victor Conibear 330
<b>WEASEL</b>	Victor Rat Trap
<b>LYNX</b>	Woodstream Oneida Victor Conibear 330
<b>BOBCAT, BADGER</b>	No killing trap certified to date

<b>LEGHOLD RESTRAINING TRAPS</b>	
<b>SPECIES</b>	<b>TRAPS CERTIFIED BUT NOT MANDATORY FOR USE IN FALL 2007</b>
<b>COYOTE</b>	Bélisle Footsnare
	Oneida Victor #3 Soft Catch equipped with 2 coil springs
	Bridger #3 equipped with 5/16-inch offset, doubled rounded steel jaw laminations (3/16-inch on top side of jaw and 1/4-inch on underside of jaws), with 4 coil springs and an anchoring swivel centre mounted on a base plate.
<b>WOLF</b>	No leghold restraining trap certified to date
<b>BOBCAT</b>	Bélisle Footsnare

**Phase 3. YEAR OF IMPLEMENTATION TO BE DETERMINED - Cage and Box Traps to be Regulated after 2007 for live-trapping the following species:**

<b>LIVE CAPTURE CAGES OR BOXES</b>	
<b>SPECIES</b>	<b>TRAPS CERTIFIED BUT NOT MANDATORY FOR USE IN FALL 2007</b>
<b>BEAVER, RACCOON, FISHER, MARTEN, MUSKRAT, OTTER, WEASEL, LYNX, BOBCAT, BADGER</b>	No live capture cage or box certified to date

**THIS LIST WILL BE UPDATED AS ADDITIONAL TRAPS ARE CERTIFIED**

## **Cape Breton Marten Augmentation Project - Summary**

Marten historically occurred throughout much of forested areas of Nova Scotia including Cape Breton, although they were not particularly abundant. The Cape Breton population of marten was provincially listed as endangered in Nova Scotia in 2001 and is currently persisting at very low numbers. Two major factors likely contributed to the decline of marten on Cape Breton Island: over-exploitation via unregulated trapping through the late 1800s and early 1900s as well as loss, degradation and fragmentation of suitable habitat. As far back as 1867, approximately 1,000 marten pelts were shipped annually from the province, however only one pelt was exported in 1931, and were listed provincially as protected in 1933.

Since that time marten have been close to extirpation in the province but a few persisted in southwest Nova Scotia and around the Cape Breton Highlands National Park and the greater Cape Breton highlands area. Individual sightings, track reports and the occasional accidentally-trapped animal have turned up on the highland plateau and associated valleys. During a period of unusually heavy trapping activity for other furbearing species, six animals were turned into the Department of Natural Resources during the winters of 1979, 1980, and 1982. No animals are known to have died of any such cause in Cape Breton since these captures. In southwest Nova Scotia, a marten was reported trapped in 1979 and more have been trapped since a translocation project in Kejimikujik National Park between 1986 and 1994.

Translocation, or the release of captive bred animals, is considered the best way to recover marten in Cape Breton because of the small number of individuals within the current population and the absence of nearby populations. Marten have been successfully reintroduced or translocated in several

provinces and states in North America. Recent genetic analysis suggests that the marten in Cape Breton are genetically similar to other northeastern North American populations but suffer from low genetic variation.

Recently, a study was undertaken by Parks Canada, in partnership with the Nova Scotia Department of Natural Resources and the Nova Scotia Marten Recovery Team to determine the feasibility of translocating wild, live-trapped marten, and/or releasing captive-bred marten to Cape Breton. A team comprising of scientists with expertise in marten, carnivores, genetics and Geographic Information System habitat analysis provided guidance in design and implementation of the study. Objectives of the study were to determine if there was an adequate amount and configuration of marten habitat and prey in Cape Breton, if there was a suitable source population available for reintroduction, the usefulness of a captive marten colony at Shubenacadie, to assess potential interspecific impacts, determine implementation and legal requirements, the development of a communications plan, monitoring techniques and evaluation criteria.

Past habitat assessments were used to determine the amount and configuration of suitable marten habitat in Cape Breton and to evaluate its capability to support a marten population. In Northeastern North America, marten are closely-associated with extensive stands of mature/"overmature" pure or predominantly coniferous or mixed forest with tree cavities for denning and windthrown/fallen trees to provide additional shelter for prey mammals and subnivean entry points in winter. Currently, in northern areas of Cape Breton, there is about 50,000 ha of marten habitat, and habitat forecasts predict there will be over 100,000 ha in 2030.

A marten augmentation in Cape Breton is not likely to adversely affect recovery of other provincial or federal species of concern. Although lynx populations are currently very

low on Cape Breton, their numbers should increase as they rebound through the low of their cycle. Lynx use similar habitats and at times prey species as the marten, but co-existence in other parts of their range suggests that marten will not adversely affect lynx populations. Because marten are protected under the Nova Scotia Endangered Species Act, there are provincial forest special management practices critical to habitat in Cape Breton for this species. An augmentation would not result in additional regulations for forest management practices on federal, provincial, or private lands, based on current statutes.

Eight potential reintroduction areas were identified based on the habitat assessment, the marten habitat management zone and level of habitat protection (Federal Park or Provincial Wilderness Area). Initial releases will take place near the Trout Brook, North River, and Middle River Wilderness Areas and two locations (Cheticamp River and Aspy) within Cape Breton Highlands National Park.

Genetic analyses and logistical considerations suggest that marten from New Brunswick would be the most suitable source population for translocation to Cape Breton. This population is capable of sustaining the removal of thirty to fifty marten a year over three years, starting in the fall of 2006. After three years of translocating marten from New Brunswick, an opportunity exists to release captive-bred marten currently being held at the Shubenacadie Wildlife Park. Using captive-bred animals necessitates the development of a pre-release training program and the construction of pre-release training facilities. Captive-bred marten can be used after three years of translocating marten to supplement those animals already released to reach the 90 - 150 animal and sex ratio goals for the overall project. It also offers a chance to test if releasing captive-bred marten can be used effectively.

A number of cooperators and stakeholders are interested in a marten augmentation. Some have contributed to the assessment, including Stora Enso, Parks Canada and the Nova Scotia Department of Natural Resources. Other cooperators, the Department of Natural Resources, the Trappers Association of Nova Scotia, and Unama'ki Institute of Natural Resources have offered support in implementing the plan and assistance with monitoring. Monitoring will include the use of radio-collared animals, track-plates, remote cameras, live-trapping, snow track surveys, carcass collection and incidental reports.

The project will be evaluated through the different stages of capture, transport, holding and release to determine if changes in protocol are necessary, after each year of release, and two, five and ten years after releases have been completed. These evaluations should look at: whether the target of 90-150 translocated animals was met, whether mortality rates were acceptable, if released marten helped to link the separate sub-populations, if the extent of the population increases into lowland areas, and if there an indication that there is a free-living viable population of marten on CBI two, five and ten years after release.

## Black Bear

Beginning in 2005, the bear snaring season was extended nine days by changing the season opening date to October 1<sup>st</sup>. No new changes were introduced in terms of bear hunting this year but licenses continued to be issued through selected vendors and DNR offices as a consequence of the change to baiting regulations established in 2003. Mandatory bear hunting report forms are still available from local DNR offices and as a removable postcard in the Licence & Summary of Regulations booklet.

Although bear hunters and snarers are required by law to submit their completed report form(s), regardless of success, returns for fall 2003, 2004 and 2005 were dismally low. Though on-line reporting has been offered as an alternate and convenient means to report, only 748 bear hunter reports (36% of licences issued) were received in total (659 mail-in or over the counter, and 89 on-line) during the 2005 season. A total of 118 bear snaring report forms (65% of licences issued) were received from trappers throughout the same season.

Low reporting compliance affects harvest estimates for hunting and snaring, as presented in Table 3 below. Potential consequences are poor sampling on which to derive key indicators on bear age/sex ratio and the number of bears taken from specific areas and/or from the province as a whole. Without reliable data on these parameters, it is difficult to assess whether the kill is within acceptable/sustainable limits.... another reason why it is so important that hunters take the time to fill out their report cards each season.

One of the ways that DNR is addressing the issue of low report card compliance is through use of the Wildlife Resource Card. This new card was designed to replace the old (orange) Hunter Education Card and allows clients to have all certifications related to wildlife resource use on one card. It also allows for improved tracking of license

sales and related report card submissions. Education remains essential to informing clients of their obligation as part of purchasing a license, to complete reporting requirements (postcard type or online). If hunter compliance continues to remain low, additional enforcement measures may be considered.

A key factor in this issue is to instill in the minds of hunters and trappers **that they are an integral part of managing** Nova Scotia's large mammals and furbearers. This partnership not only benefits year to year management but also ensures sustainable use.

**Table 3 BEAR HARVEST SUMMARY, 1993-2005**

<b>Year</b>	<b>License Res.</b>	<b>License Non-Res.</b>	<b>Estimated Hunter Harvest</b>	<b>Estimated Hunter Success</b>	<b>Snaring Permits</b>	<b>Estimated Snaring Harvest</b>
<b>1994</b>	<b>481</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>248</b>	<b>47.9%</b>	<b>181</b>	<b>110</b>
<b>1995</b>	<b>708</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>286</b>	<b>36.2%</b>	<b>227</b>	<b>91</b>
<b>1996</b>	<b>656</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>247</b>	<b>32.6%</b>	<b>184</b>	<b>67</b>
<b>1997</b>	<b>540</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>191</b>	<b>29.2%</b>	<b>162</b>	<b>65</b>
<b>1998</b>	<b>505</b>	<b>109</b>	<b>243</b>	<b>39.6%</b>	<b>142</b>	<b>65</b>
<b>1999</b>	<b>522</b>	<b>123</b>	<b>208</b>	<b>32.2%</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>2000</b>	<b>498</b>	<b>153</b>	<b>264</b>	<b>40.6%</b>	<b>127</b>	<b>54</b>
<b>2001</b>	<b>544</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>226</b>	<b>35.0%</b>	<b>155</b>	<b>54</b>
<b>2002</b>	<b>584</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>284</b>	<b>42.6%</b>	<b>197</b>	<b>96</b>
<b>2003</b>	<b>1322</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>393</b>	<b>27.9%</b>	<b>156</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>2004</b>	<b>1510</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>741</b>	<b>46.6%</b>	<b>195</b>	<b>101</b>
<b>2005</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>573</b>	<b>27.3%</b>	<b>182</b>	<b>81</b>

Calculated Harvest =  $\frac{\text{\#Bears Reported Harvested}}{\text{\#Reports Received}} \times \text{\# of Licenses Issued}$

## 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



**Marten**

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 may be 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 the endangered species list web page <http://www.gov.ns.ca/natr/wildlife/biodiv/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 on how to avoid incidental take of these animals visit <http://www.speciesatrisk.ca/martenandlynx/>

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



**Lynx**

## **Trap Standards - 2006 Update on the Agreement on International Humane Trapping Standards**

*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 the furs of 13 wild species of furbearers into Europe from Canada. The effects of such a ban would have been very serious, directly affecting markets for 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. Consequently, the 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 1999, the US decided in August to also bring their Agreed Minute into force as of June 1, 1999. Canada continues to make every effort to encourage and support Russian ratification at the earliest possible opportunity. Russian representatives continue to indicate that we might expect ratification by their government 'soon', but this has still not occurred.

The signing of the AIHTS and the US Agreed Minute with the EU has kept the critical European marketplace open to North American wild furs. However, these agreements were reached only at considerable cost to the wild fur producing nations. With the initialing of the original Agreement in 1997, Canada 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 2005 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 six 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/index-e/trap\\_research/index.asp?action=trap\\_research&page=traps\\_standard\\_gateway](http://www.fur.ca/index-e/trap_research/index.asp?action=trap_research&page=traps_standard_gateway) . Watch the FIC website for regular updates as more results become available). Significant effort and financial resources from federal and provincial/territorial governments and fur industry partners 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 in compliance with our obligations to this international Agreement. The Canadian Wildlife Ministers are committed to maintaining Canada's compliance with the Agreement by ensuring that adequate resources are available to accomplish the necessary testing, research and education.

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 it was recognized that 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 has allowed 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 and the Canadian Wildlife Service, reporting to the Canadian 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 goes into effect in fall 2007. With the certification process now in place, manufacturers have been submitting previously tested qualifying traps for certification. As a result, manufacturers, trappers, and wildlife management agencies 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 also includes a second column to indicate whether the trap has been certified. (see [http://www.fur.ca/index-e/trap\\_research/index.asp?action=trap\\_research&page=traps\\_certified\\_traps](http://www.fur.ca/index-e/trap_research/index.asp?action=trap_research&page=traps_certified_traps)) 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 the first 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 2004 in New York City, USA. Canada hosted the fifth provisional meeting of the AIHTS in Quebec City and on a trapline in the Quebec bush in early November 2005. 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 EU Implementing Directive for the AIHTS, which was under consideration by the EU Parliament during 2005, was eventually rejected by the parliament. The matter has been deferred for further study and there is currently no clear time line as

to when reconsideration of implementation by the EU government will take place.

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. 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. There appears to be a resurgence of anti-fur rhetoric by animal rights activist groups, particularly in the US, in recent months. Canada's leadership in humane trap standards, trapping system research and development, fur harvester training, furbearer conservation and management, and in implementing this Agreement send a strong message 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.