



Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

STATE FURBEARER PROGRAM NEWSLETTER

Spring 2012

Wildlife Division P.O. Box 200701 Helena MT 59620-0701

This newsletter is provided through Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) state furbearer program to inform trappers, hunters, the public, and department personnel about current furbearer management activities and issues in the state of Montana –
Brian Giddings, State Furbearer Coordinator.

VISIT THE FWP WEBSITE

For more information on FWP's furbearer program, check out the trapping webpage on the site by clicking on Hunting and scrolling down to Trapping. The trapping page has reference material on the role of regulated trapping in wildlife management and specific furbearer management information. There is also a trapping guide to state regulations, species quota status, and other information. The section on identification provides a link to various wildlife species, including the state classified furbearers. There is also some information on the voluntary trapper education program and the annual Youth Trapper Camp, along with recommended guidelines and the ethical behavior standards suggested for trappers to follow. In addition there are the past ten years of newsletters available on this webpage.

TRAPPING REGULATIONS & QUOTAS

Regulations for the 2012 and 2013 trapping seasons and harvest quotas for the 2012 furbearer season will be proposed to the FWP Commission at their upcoming June 14, 2012 meeting in Helena. Regulations will be

reviewed and trapping district quotas will be evaluated for otter, bobcat, fisher, wolverine, and swift fox. Regulations are adopted on a two-year cycle while quota levels are adopted by the FWP Commission on an annual basis. Data on furbearer population trends, species harvest data, and trapper effort are used in evaluating proposed recommendations by FWP regarding any changes. Trappers are encouraged to attend the meeting or can receive copies of any proposed changes by contacting the FWP Wildlife Bureau at 444-2612 or through the website at fwp.mt.gov The FWP Commission will take final action on trapping regulations and furbearer harvest quotas at its August 2, 2012 meeting, following a public comment period on proposed changes.

Comments on any proposed changes should be sent to FWP Commission, Wildlife Bureau, P.O. Box 200701, Helena MT 59620-0701 or through the FWP website at fwp.mt.gov

STATUS OF FISHER PETITION

Last year a 12-month petition finding was conducted by the USFWS for the fisher. In 2010 a preliminary 90-day finding determined that the Northern Rocky Mountains population of fisher may be warranted for ESA listing as an endangered or threatened species. At that time Montana and Idaho provided information on the status of fisher to the USFWS. Harvest and survey records over the past 25 years indicate Montana's

fisher population is stable and has actually expanded its distribution to some new forested habitats in northwestern and west-central Montana. On June 29, 2011 the Service determined that fisher in the Northern Rocky Mountains of western Montana and central & northern Idaho does not warrant listing under the ESA.

13th ANNUAL YOUTH TRAPPER CAMP

In working together for trapping's future the Montana Trapper's Association, Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks and Montana 4-H will again be sponsoring the 13th annual Youth Trapper Camp (YTC). The YTC is scheduled this year for June 15, 16, and 17, 2012 in Beaver Creek County Park south of Havre. A variety of classes are conducted for first year attendees from furbearer species identification to water sets to pelt preparation and second year students from stretcher building to furbearer management. The third year advanced attendees may set up coyote trap/snare lines on ranches in the Bears Paw Mountains and/or water sets for beaver throughout the weekend.

Drawings and awards including donated traps and lure are presented to students at the end of camp. For more information and registration packets contact Fran or Jim Buell at 406-376-3178 or 7mbuell@itstriangle.com Registration is due by mid-May but limited to 150 participants.

TRAPPER HARVEST QUESTIONNAIRE

This newsletter is included with FWP's annual mailing of the trapper harvest questionnaire which is intended to survey all trapping license holders about their activities during the past 2011-2012 trapping season. Although this remains a voluntary survey, you are encouraged to complete the sections that apply to your harvest activities. It is also important to return the survey even if you did not trap or hunt these species during the past season. Of the 5,053 licenses sold for the 2011-2012 season, 4,880 were general

trapper, 127 landowner, 41 youth, and 5 nonresident trapper.

The results from this harvest survey provide FWP with the information to estimate the number of animals harvested for the species that are not pelt tagged and registered. This data is also used each year to calculate the catch per unit effort (CPUE) for all species that is used to follow long-term trends in harvest rates and population levels from the harvested sample.

STATWIDE HARVEST NUMBERS 2010

Harvest numbers from last year's 2010-2011 season, which is the most recent year with harvest figures from both the trapper harvest questionnaire and pelt tagged animals, were as follows: Beaver 5,445 – Otter 59 - Muskrat 18,495 – Mink 761 – Marten 932 – Fisher 7 – Wolverine 4 – Bobcat 1,673 – Weasel 488 – Skunk 3,975 - Coyote 8,489 – Fox 1,419 – Raccoon 3,202 – Badger 609.

AVERAGE PELT PRICE VALUES

Average pelt prices listed below are from the February 21, 2012 wild fur sale by North American Fur Auctions in Canada. The market was strong for bobcat, coyote, red fox and beaver also sold relatively well.

Species	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
Beaver	16.74	16.57	38.22
Otter	51.10	57.63	102.29
Muskrat	4.23	6.66	10.19
Mink	17.39	17.48	23.14
Marten	47.76	61.98	55.94
Fisher	50.08	47.58	74.99
Wolverine	211.42	253.15	319.67
Bobcat	346.54	411.84	426.31
Coyote	35.29	73.16	77.30
Red Fox	22.34	24.37	57.49
Raccoon	18.02	18.50	19.45
Weasel	4.07	3.13	3.16
Skunk	2.34	2.11	7.30
Badger	72.56	24.12	38.61