ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME
DIVISION OF WILDLIFE CONSERVATION
PO Box 115526
Juneau, AK 99811-5526

Alaska Department of Fish and Game
Wildlife Restoration Grant

GRANT NUMBER: AKW-B-R2-2020 Amendment #1 FY2021

PROJECT NUMBER: 7.0

PROJECT TITLE: Region 2 Furbearer S&I program: Furbearer Populations and Factors Influencing Their Status

PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE: July 1, 2019 - June 30, 2021

PERFORMANCE YEAR: July 1, 2020 - June 30, 2021

REPORT DUE DATE: August 28, 2021

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Cynthia Wardlow

COOPERATORS: David Saalfeld

Authorities: 2 CFR 200.328
2 CFR 200.301
50 CFR 80.90

I. PROGRESS ON PROJECT OBJECTIVES DURING PERFORMANCE YEAR

OBJECTIVE 1: **Population Size, Status, and Trend.** Assess the size and status of each furbearer population to determine the 5-year trend.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS: In FY2020, we compiled information and data and wrote 4 five-year Furbearer Management Reports and Operational Plans for Units 6, 7 & 15, 8, and 14C. These reports included historical and current data, management directions, methods, Board of Game actions, harvests and natural mortality, habitat assessments, and local and statewide non-regulatory issues. They were completed in FY2020 and are now available at the following url: http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=librarypublications.wildlifepublications&sort=all&program=Wildlife+Management&speciescategory=Furbearer&submit=Search

During this reporting period, we completed the second year of a 3-year study in Game Management Unit (GMU) 14C to determine the feasibility of ground captures and collaring of Canada lynx (*Lynx canadensis*). In winter 2020 – 2021, we were able to successfully capture and collar 16 adult lynx (6 males and 10 females). To date, most collars are still functioning correctly with one individual dispersing > 700 km to Canada. These animals are providing valuable

movement data, and over the course of this study could provide important population trend data (i.e., population status, survival rates, recruitment, etc.) and habitat suitability for GMU 14C.

Track count surveys are conducted opportunistically with other species surveys. In winter 2020 – 2021, 18 ground-based winter track surveys were conducted on Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson in GMU 14C. We conducted 1 track survey near all Canada lynx trap sites during late winter (i.e., March). Of the 18 surveys conducted, snowshoe hare tracks were documented on all transects. Other furbearer species detected on these surveys include red squirrel (*Tamiasciurus hudsonicus*; 9 transects), red fox (*Vulpes vulpes*; 4 transects), coyote (*Canis latrans*; 2 transects), wolverine (*Gulo gulo*; 2 transects), wolf (*Canis lupus*; 1 transect), and Canada lynx (6 transects).

Wolverine SUPE surveys are conducted when conditions allow. However, during this reporting period, we were unable to conduct any of these surveys.

OBJECTIVE 2: **Mortality/Harvest Monitoring and Regulations.** Assess the number of furbearers harvested by hunters and trappers and assess other sources of mortality that might have an impact on each population.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS: We collected data from 149 beaver, 266 marten, 142 lynx, 32 wolverine, and 157 river otter pelts that were presented for sealing, including harvest location, size measurements and sex determination. Harvest data were analyzed, and the results were applied to management planning and ongoing population assessment. The trapping season for lynx was open in 2020 – 2021, due to lynx numbers increasing during this stage of their population cycle. The hunting season was also open, with a bag limit of 2 lynx.

A statewide questionnaire was distributed by headquarters to a sample of trappers. Questions about trapping effort and success, demography of trappers, and the trends of furbearer and prey populations observed on traplines were included to assess furbearer populations and trappers who utilize the furbearer resource.

OBJECTIVE 3: **Habitat Enhancement /Assessment.** Assess furbearer habitat availability directly or indirectly in specified areas of Region 2 and perform habitat enhancement in areas where it is feasible.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS: Habitat availability surveys for furbearers are conducted opportunistically with other species surveys or field work. No specific habitat surveys were conducted during this time.

Continued work with collaring Canada lynx in GMU 14C could provide valuable data on habitat availability.

OBJECTIVE 4: **Furbearer Management with Public Participation and Outreach.** Manage each furbearer population with an emphasis on engaging the public in management goals and objectives through public meetings, working groups, educational materials, and incentive programs.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS: We communicated with and attended meetings of local Fish and Game Advisory Committees, the Alaska Board of Game, and 2 Federal Regional Advisory Councils, providing information about furbearer management and to review and analyze regulation proposals.

II. SUMMARY OF WORK COMPLETED ON PROJECT TO DATE.

Project results are not yet available. Summaries of past data trends are published at the following url:

http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=librarypublications.wildlifepublications&sort=all&program=Wildlife+Management&speciescategory=Furbearer&submit=Search

III. SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENT REPORTS AND/OR AMENDMENTS.

N/A

IV. PUBLICATIONS

Publications for FY2020 are now available. Project publications are available at the following url:

http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=librarypublications.wildlifepublications&sort=all&program=Wildlife+Management&speciescategory=Furbearer&submit=Search

The following furbearer management reports were completed in 2020 and are now available online:

Furbearer management report and plan, Game Management Unit 6: Report period 1 July 2012–30 June 2017, and plan period 1 July 2017–30 June 2022
Westing, C. 2020. Furbearer management report and plan, Game Management Unit 6: Report period 1 July 2012–30 June 2017, and plan period 1 July 2017–30 June 2022. Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Species Management Report and Plan ADF&G/DWC/SMR&P-2020-17, Juneau.
Linkto https://www.adfg.alaska.gov/static-f/research/wildlife/speciesmanagementreports/pdfs/furbearer_2012_2022_smr_gmu_6.pdf

Furbearer management report and plan, Game Management Units 7 and 15: Report period 1 July 2012–30 June 2017, and plan period 1 July 2017–30 June 2022
Herreman, J. 2020. Furbearer management report and plan, Game Management Units 7 and 15: Report period 1 July 2012–30 June 2017, and plan period 1 July 2017–30 June 2022. Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Species Management Report and Plan ADF&G/DWC/SMR&P-2020-18, Juneau.
Linkto https://www.adfg.alaska.gov/static/research/wildlife/speciesmanagementreports/pdfs/furbearer_2012_2022_smr_gmu_7_15.pdf *(PDF)* More details

Furbearer management report and plan, Game Management Unit 8: Report period 1 July 2012–30 June 2017, and plan period 1 July 2017–30 June 2022
Svoboda, N. J., and J. R. Crye. 2020. Furbearer management report and plan, Game Management Unit 8: Report period 1 July 2012–30 June 2017, and plan period 1 July 2017–30 June 2022. Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Species Management Report and Plan ADF&G/DWC/SMR&P-2020-34, Juneau.
Linkto
https://www.adfg.alaska.gov/static/research/wildlife/speciesmanagementreports/pdfs/furbearer_2012_2022_gmu_8.pdf

As a Statewide publication, the 2019 fur trapper questionnaire report were published in 2020 – 2021:

2019 Alaska trapper report: 1 July 2019-30 June 2020
Bogle, S. E. 2021. 2019 Alaska trapper report: 1 July 2019–30 June 2020. Division of Wildlife Conservation, Wildlife Management Report ADF&G/DWC/WMR-2021-2, Juneau.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THIS PROJECT

The Canada lynx project will continue for at least 1 more year, the Department of Defense has extended the project through FY22, which will continue to help supplement this grant.

We recommend continued funding for this project in order to effectively manage furbearer populations in Southcentral Alaska.

Prepared by: David Saalfeld

Date: September 2021