

Wildlife Restoration MULTI-YEAR GRANT INTERIM PERFORMANCE REPORT

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-R4-2020 Amendment #1

PROJECT NUMBER: 7.0

PROJECT TITLE: Region IV Furbearer S&I program: The Status of Alaska's Furbearer
Populations and Factors Influencing Their Status in Central/Southwest
Alaska

PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE: FY21

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

REPORT DUE DATE:

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Todd A. Rinaldi, Regional Management Coordinator

COOPERATORS: Dave Crowley, Heidi Hatcher, Tim Peltier & Bryan Reiley

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:

- Use the trapper questionnaire, interviews, field observations, and other anecdotal information from reliable observers as a basis for determining the status of various furbearer populations.

We use the trapper questionnaire to provide us with a relative sense of furbearer abundance from year to year based on observations by trappers. This can be a valuable tool since many trappers have long tenures in this area and have a lot of history to fall back on when providing information on population trends. However, in

some areas where trapping is declining or where harvest is low, the questionnaire is limited due to the pooling of data across the region.

During field work and various wildlife surveys we pay close attention to furbearer sign or sightings and make notes of furbearer activity when observed. All of these anecdotal pieces of information help keep us better informed of furbearer population status in across the region.

- Assess population status and trends utilizing sealing records, track surveys, cache surveys, hunter/trapper interviews and questionnaires, village harvest surveys and observations by staff and the public.

In Region IV to better understand furbearer populations we use harvest information, and discussions with trappers and hunters, to supplement observation made by staff. Current information suggests that furbearers across the region are harvested at low rates and naturally regulated – particularly in the western and southwest portion of the region. Information collected from the central and eastern portion of the region indicates that lynx are going through a high cycle; marten are low (as to be expected with a lynx high), and other populations appear stable, but no conservation concerns exist.

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:

- Collect harvest data on beaver, marten, otter, lynx, fisher, and wolverine when pelts are presented for sealing.

Across the region sealing is required for wolverine, lynx, river otter, and beaver. In Units 14A&B and 16 marten are also required to be sealed however there is no requirement to seal beaver in Unit 16. Red fox and coyotes are common species but are not required to be sealed.

Three hundred and sixty-two beaver, 1003 lynx, 178 river otter, 187 wolverines and 651 marten were taken in Region IV and sealed. During the sealing process, we collect data on pack size, pelt color, sex of the animal, location of harvest, method of take and timing of harvest. For beaver and river otter length and width maybe recorded. Additionally, we take the opportunity to talk with the hunters and trappers to get a broader understanding of furbearer populations in the area through their valuable insight.

- Monitor the furbearer harvest through fur sealing reports, trapper questionnaires and contact with trappers and hunters.

Two thousand three hundred and sixty-two furbearers were harvested and sealed in Region IV during this reporting period. Our understanding of furbearer abundance, distribution, and habitat use benefitted immensely from our discussions with trappers and hunters during the sealing process. Additionally, we are able to gather other valuable information on small game and other furbearers that are not required to be sealed during the sealing process. The in-person discussions that the sealing process provides are extremely valuable for managers.

We use the trapper questionnaire to provide us with a relative sense of furbearer abundance from year to year based on observations by trappers. This can be a valuable tool since many trappers have long tenures in this area and have a lot of history to fall back on when providing information on population trends.

During field work and various wildlife surveys we pay close attention to furbearer sign or sightings and make notes of furbearer activity when observed. All of these anecdotal pieces of information help keep us better informed of furbearer population status in across the region.

OBJECTIVE 3: 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:

- Finalize five-year Furbearer Management Operational Reports and Plans.

Region IV is finalizing 3 Furbearer Management Report and Plans this performance period. Four have been published, and the remaining will be finalized next performance period. These reports include historical and current data, management directions, methods, Board of Game actions, harvests and natural mortality, habitat assessments, and local and statewide non-regulatory issues.

- Provide information to state and federal regulatory processes on furbearer management.

All information collected is used inform state and federal regulatory processes. Outside of common communication with members of the public and our federal counterparts there is a federal proposal addressing wolves and wolverines this reporting period in Units 9 & 17. Staff compiled and presented biological, population, and hunting information at more than 12 state Advisory Committee meetings, 4 Regional Advisory Council meetings, Subsistence Resource Commission meetings,

and 1 Federal Subsistence Board meeting. There are 23 Region IV BOG proposals addressing furbearers in this cycle.

II. SUMMARY OF WORK COMPLETED ON PROJECT TO DATE.

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

III. SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENT REPORTS AND/OR AMENDMENTS.

None during this reporting period.

IV. PUBLICATIONS

Region IV finalized drafting 7 Furbearer Management Reports and Plans this performance period and published 4. It is anticipated that the remaining will be finalized in the coming months. Current information on furbearers is located here:

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

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

Spivey, T. J. 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.

<https://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=trapping.reports>

V. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THIS PROJECT

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

Prepared by: Todd A. Rinaldi

Date: 8/18/2021