

Furbearer Management Report and Plan, Game Management Unit 1D:

Report Period 1 July 2012–30 June 2017, and

Plan Period 1 July 2017–30 June 2022

Carl H. Koch



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Species management reports and plans provide information about species that are hunted or trapped and management actions, goals, recommendations for those species, and plans for data collection. Detailed information is prepared for each species every 5 years by the area management biologist for game management units in their areas, who also develops a plan for data collection and species management for the next 5 years. This type of report is not produced for species that are not managed for hunting or trapping or for areas where there is no current or anticipated activity. Unit reports are reviewed and approved for publication by regional management coordinators and are available to the public via the Alaska Department of Fish and Game's public website.

This species management report and plan was reviewed and approved for publication by Stephen Bethune, Acting Management Coordinator for the Division of Wildlife Conservation.

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Purpose of this Report

This report provides a record of survey and inventory management activities for furbearers in Unit 1D for the previous 5 regulatory years and plans for survey and inventory management activities in the 5 years following the end of that period. A regulatory year (RY) begins 1 July and ends 30 June (e.g., RY10 = 1 July 2010–30 June 2011). This report is produced primarily to provide agency staff with data and analysis to help guide and record its own efforts, but is also provided to the public to inform them of wildlife management activities. In 2016 the Alaska Department of Fish and Game’s Division of Wildlife Conservation launched this 5-year report to more efficiently report on trends and describe potential changes in data collection activities over the next 5 years. It replaces the furbearer management reports of survey and inventory activities that were previously produced every 3 years.

I. RY12–RY16 Management Report

Management Area

Unit 1D is located on the northern Southeast Alaska mainland lying north of the latitude of Eldred Rock, excluding Sullivan Island and the Berners Bay drainages (Fig. 1). It is bordered on the north, east, and west by Canada. Communities include Haines, Skagway, and the Chilkat Indian Village of Klukwan. Haines is the largest community with approximately 1,400 people and Klukwan is the smallest with approximately 95. Most of the residents in this unit are federally qualified rural residents. The economy is primarily based on tourism, fishing, and mining. The unit is 2,854 mi² and composed of a variety of terrain and habitats including wide river valleys, rugged mountains, lakes, muskegs, coastal areas, and old-growth spruce and hemlock forest. The Chilkat River Valley with its numerous tributaries is the largest drainage in the Haines area and one of the most important travel corridors for hunting and trapping in the unit. Land management within this unit is complex and includes the Haines State Forest, several state parks and recreation areas, two national parks, Tongass National Forest land, and two large blocks of BLM managed lands.

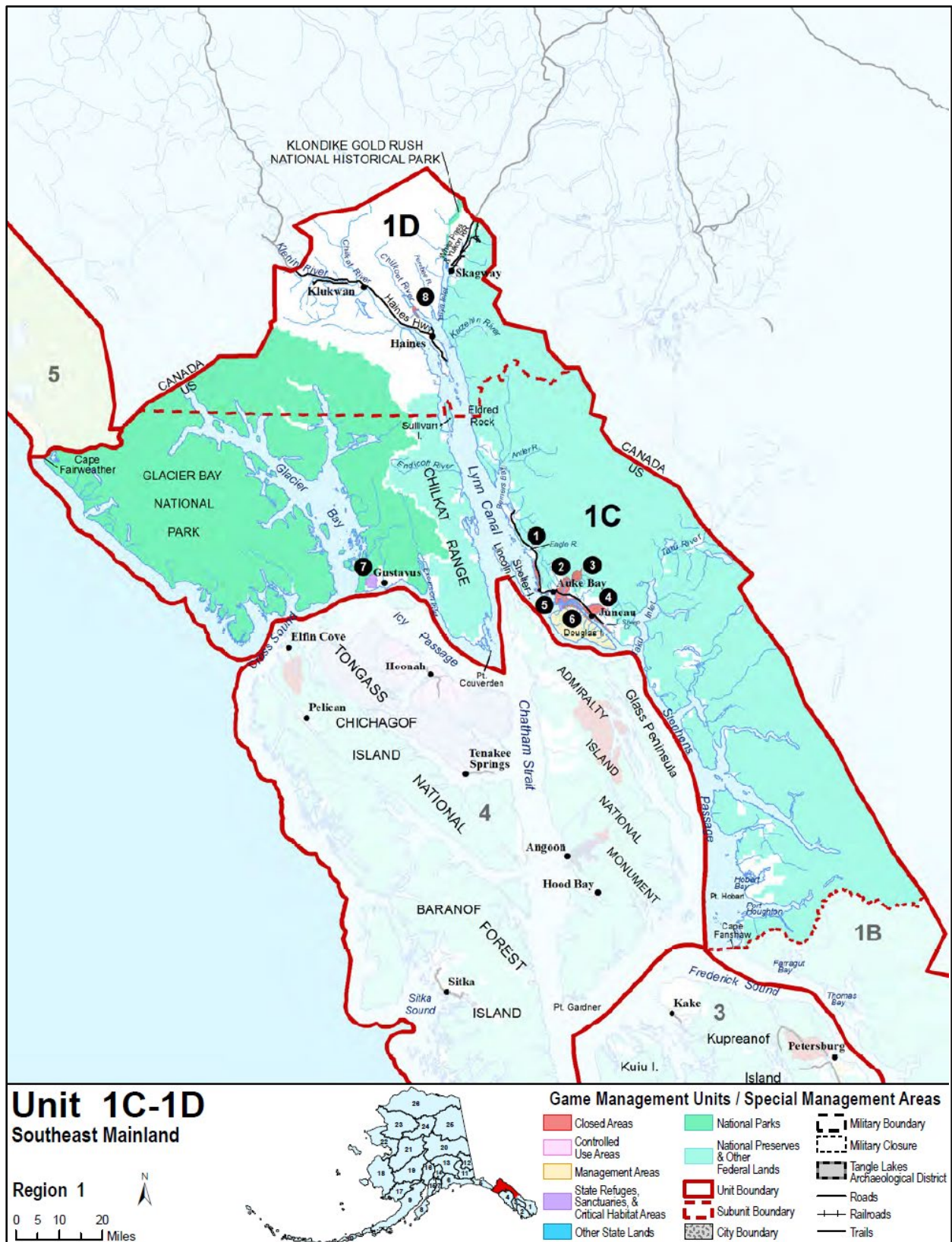


Figure 1. Map of Game Management Unit 1D, Southeast Alaska.

Summary of Status, Trend, Management Activities, and History of Furbearers in Unit 1D

Furbearers managed by ADF&G in this area include marten (*Martes americana*), river otter (*Lontra canadensis*), beaver (*Castor canadensis*), coyote (*Canis latrans*), ermine and weasel (*Mustela spp.*), lynx (*Lynx canadensis*), mink (*Neovision vison*), red fox (*Vulpes vulpes*), and wolverine (*Gulo gulo*). Furbearer population levels likely depend on level of harvest and food abundance, but population densities have not been estimated for Unit 1D. Historical population information comes from anecdotal reports and the ADF&G trapper survey (Parr 2017). In addition, harvest of marten, river otter, beaves, lynx, and wolverine are monitored through mandatory sealing. Harvest levels are affected most by fur prices. Logging has had the biggest influence on furbearer habitat in Southeast Alaska (ADF&G 1976).

Although fisher (*Martes pennanti*) are found in Southeast Alaska, they are primarily found in Unit 1C and there are no confirmed reports in Unit 1D. Wolves (*Canis lupis*) are discussed in a separate report (Koch 2018).

Marten are the most popular species targeted by trappers in Southeast Alaska (Parr 2017). These habitat specialists experience better survival and reproductive rates in old-growth forests which have never been clear-cut (Thompson et al. 1994). Timber harvest is included in the Haines State Forest Management Plan (ADNR/DMLW 2002) and is currently being proposed in other locations in Unit 1D. Logging has the potential to reduce marten numbers through loss of habitat. Flynn and Schumacher (2009) found strong correlations between marten and rodents (especially voles) abundance in Southeast Alaska. Seasonally available salmon may be an important dietary supplement when rodent populations are in decline (Ben-David et al. 1997).

Mink and river otters ranked second and third among species targeted by trappers in Southeast Alaska during this report period (Parr 2017). However, due to the limited amount of marine shoreline, river otter and mink habitat is less prevalent than other areas of Southeast Alaska (Sell 2013). Harvest trends for mink are unknown since sealing is not required. Although most river otter were harvested in the Chilkat River and its tributaries, some were taken from the Chilkoot River corridor, and in Lutak Inlet.

In 2001, the beaver trapping season in Unit 1D opened for the first time since 1976. Anecdotal reports of an increase in abundance prompted the season opening and subsequent liberalization of bag limits (Sell 2013). Anecdotal reports indicate that beaver are present throughout the Chilkat Valley.

Sealing is not a requirement for coyote or red fox in Unit 1D. All the population information obtained by ADF&G comes from anecdotal reports and observations recorded during aerial surveys for other species. Trappers have reported that coyote numbers may be increasing in the Chilkat Valley. Reports of red fox observations are far less common than coyote, but both species have been observed in the Chilkat Valley and Skagway areas during this report period.

Lynx are uncommon in Southeast Alaska compared to Interior Alaska (MacDonald and Cook, 2007). Although harvest in Unit 1D is typically low, the Chilkat Valley typically sees the highest lynx harvest in Southeast Alaska except for Yakutat. This may be due in part to Haines

proximity to interior Canada's boreal forests. Populations are likely influenced by the trends in snowshoe hare populations (Ruggiero et al. 1999). Anecdotal reports and increased harvest (RY16) indicate that the lynx population may have increased in the Chilkat Valley during the last year of the report period.

Information about wolverine populations in Unit 1D comes from sealing records, anecdotal reports, and observations during aerial surveys for other species. Wolverines in Alaska are born between February and April. Natal dens are usually in snow caves at elevations from 984–4101 ft. (Magoun and Copeland 1998). In some areas of Unit 1D commercial heli-skiing operations occur within this range of elevations. Den abandonment after human disturbance at maternal dens has been documented (Copeland 1996).

Muskrats (*Ondatra zibethicus*) were translocated from Haines to Klawock Lake in 1931 (Paul 2009). The most recent available records of muskrat in Southeast Alaska states that they "have never been abundant" but were found in "fair numbers" in the Haines area (ADF&G 1976). However, we have not received reports of muskrat observations in Unit 1D for several decades and it is likely that they no longer occur in the area.

Management Direction

EXISTING WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT PLANS

Greater Alaska Furbearer Management Plan in 1976 Species Management Plan (ADF&G 1976).

GOALS

To provide the following:

1. An optimum harvest of furbearers.
2. The greatest opportunity to participate in hunting and trapping furbearers.

CODIFIED OBJECTIVES

Amounts Reasonably Necessary for Subsistence Uses

The Board of Game (BOG) has made a positive subsistence finding for furbearers in Unit 1D with the amount necessary for subsistence at 90% of the harvestable portion of each population for each species.

Intensive Management

Not applicable.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES

1. Provide information to the BOG for maintenance of viewable and harvestable populations of furbearers.

2. Seal harvested beaver, marten, river otter, lynx, and wolverine pelts as they are presented for sealing.
3. Contact reliable observers for general information about the status and trends of furbearer populations, including the use of an annual trapper survey.

MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

1. Population Status and Trend

ACTIVITY 1.1

Record anecdotal reports and observations during surveys for other species.

Data Needs

Observational data collected during surveys for other species are not adequate for detecting population changes that would require management action. Detecting statistical changes in furbearer populations would require a sample-based estimator (e.g. capture-mark-recapture).

Methods

We record the GPS location, and number of furbearers during aerial surveys for other species (e.g. moose). We record anecdotal reports with as much information as available.

Results and Discussion

None.

Recommendations for Activity 1.1.

Continue to seek information from consumptive and nonconsumptive user groups in addition to recording observations during surveys for other species.

2. Mortality-Harvest Monitoring and Regulations

ACTIVITY 2.1.

Monitor harvest trends through mandatory sealing records.

Data Needs

Monitoring harvest trends is required in order to understand the potential effects of harvest.

Methods

Data from harvested marten, river otter, beaver, wolverine, fisher, and lynx are collected during mandatory sealing. Information collected includes location of harvest, method of take, transportation mode, sex, and hide measurements from beaver, lynx, and otter. Sealing is required within 30 days of season closure dates. Data is archived in ADF&G's Wildlife Information Network database (Winfonet).

Season and Bag Limit

Hunting Season and Bag limit, RY12–RY16

| Species | Season | Bag Limit |
|-----------|----------------|-------------|
| Beaver | No open season | |
| Coyote | 1 Sept–30 Apr | 2 Coyotes |
| Fox, Red | No open season | |
| Lynx | No open season | |
| Wolverine | 1 Sept–15 Feb | 1 Wolverine |

Trapping Seasons and Bag Limit, RY12–RY16

| Species | Season ^{a,b} | Bag Limit |
|---------------------|-----------------------|-----------|
| Beaver ^c | 10 Nov–30 Apr | No limit |
| Coyote | 1 Dec–15 Feb | No limit |
| Fisher | 1 Dec–15 Feb | 1 Fisher |
| Fox, Red | 1 Dec–15 Feb | No limit |
| Lynx | 1 Dec–15 Feb | No limit |
| Marten | 1 Dec–15 Feb | No limit |
| Mink and Weasel | 1 Dec–15 Feb | No limit |
| River Otter | 1 Dec–15 Feb | No limit |
| Wolverine | 10 Nov–15 Feb | No limit |

^a Coyote season was expanded by the Board of Game to 30 April beginning in RY13.

^b Wolverine season was extended by Board of Game to 28 February beginning in RY15.

^c The Board of Game made it legal to shoot beavers in Units 1–5 beginning in RY15.

Results and Discussion

Harvest by Hunters-Trappers

All furbearers taken during the report period were by trappers.

AMERICAN MARTEN

Marten harvest varied considerably during the report period ranging from 62 marten harvested during RY15 to 215 marten harvested in RY13 (Table 1). Harvest appeared to correlate with the number of successful trappers and effort may have been influenced by fur prices. Prices during the report period ranged from \$46.51/pelt in RY15 (when harvest was lowest) to \$143.81/pelt in RY12 when harvest was high (Parr 2017). All martens were harvested using traps. The proportion of the harvest which were males was consistent ranging from 61% to 66% annually.

Table 1. Harvest and method of take for marten sealed in Unit 1D, Southeast Alaska, RY12–RY16.

| Regulatory Year | Total Harvest | Successful Participants | Percent Males | Method of Take % | | | |
|-----------------|---------------|-------------------------|---------------|------------------|---------|--------|---------|
| | | | | Shot | Trapped | Snared | Unknown |
| RY12 | 212 | 14 | 62 | 0 | 100 | 0 | 0 |
| RY13 | 215 | 16 | 66 | 0 | 100 | 0 | 0 |
| RY14 | 99 | 8 | 62 | 0 | 100 | 0 | 0 |
| RY15 | 62 | 5 | 61 | 0 | 100 | 0 | 0 |
| RY16 | 195 | 11 | 63 | 0 | 100 | 0 | 0 |

RIVER OTTER

An average of 9 river otters per year were harvested during the report period (Table 2). Most river otters were taken by trapping but 4 were shot. The proportion of juveniles in the harvest was high ranging from 55% to 75%. The proportion of males varied annually ranging from a 20% to 75%. In RY16, several otters were legally harvested at the Haines boat harbor primarily to address nuisance concerns.

Table 2. Harvest and method of take for otter sealed in Unit 1D, Southeast Alaska, RY12–RY16.

| Regulatory Year | Total Harvest | Successful Participants | Percent Males | Percent Juveniles ^a | Method of Take (%) | | | |
|-----------------|---------------|-------------------------|---------------|--------------------------------|--------------------|---------|--------|---------|
| | | | | | Shot | Trapped | Snared | Unknown |
| RY12 | 10 | 5 | 20 | 70 | 20 | 60 | 20 | 0 |
| RY13 | 4 | 3 | 75 | 75 | 25 | 50 | 0 | 25 |
| RY14 | 9 | 2 | 44 | 56 | 0 | 100 | 0 | 0 |
| RY15 | 10 | 4 | 20 | 60 | 0 | 90 | 0 | 10 |
| RY16 | 11 | 4 | 42 | 55 | 9 | 91 | 0 | 0 |

^a Juvenile otter measure (length) <42".

BEAVER

The average annual harvest during the report period was 11 beavers per year (Table 3). The highest harvest during the report period (24 beavers) occurred during RY 14. Trapping was the only method of take reported for beaver during the report period. The portion of juveniles in the harvest ranged from 0% to 38% and all beavers harvested during RY 15 were adults.

WOLVERINE

Average wolverine harvest was 7 per year during this report period. Harvest ranged from 6 to 10 per regulatory year (Table 4). Most wolverines were harvested using traps or snares but 1 was shot in RY15 by a homeowner with a handgun. Males composed 44% to 67% of the harvest.

Table 3. Harvest and method of take for beaver sealed in Unit 1D, Southeast Alaska, RY12–RY16.

| Regulatory Year | Total Harvest | Successful Participants | Percent Juveniles ^a | Method of Take (%) | | | |
|-----------------|---------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------|---------|--------|---------|
| | | | | Shot | Trapped | Snared | Unknown |
| RY12 | 8 | 4 | 38 | 0 | 100 | 0 | 0 |
| RY13 | 9 | 3 | 22 | 0 | 100 | 0 | 0 |
| RY14 | 24 | 3 | 29 | 0 | 100 | 0 | 0 |
| RY15 | 5 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 100 | 0 | 0 |
| RY16 | 8 | 3 | 13 | 0 | 100 | 0 | 0 |

^a Juvenile beavers measure (length + width) \leq 52".

Table 4. Harvest and method of take for wolverine sealed in Unit 1D, Southeast Alaska, RY12–RY16.

| Regulatory Year | Total Harvest | Successful Participants | Percent Males | Method of Take % | | | |
|-----------------|---------------|-------------------------|---------------|------------------|---------|--------|---------|
| | | | | Shot | Trapped | Snared | Unknown |
| RY12 | 10 | 5 | 60 | 0 | 100 | 0 | 0 |
| RY13 | 9 | 4 | 44 | 0 | 55 | 45 | 0 |
| RY14 | 4 | 2 | 50 | 0 | 100 | 0 | 0 |
| RY15 | 4 | 3 | 50 | 25 | 75 | 0 | 0 |
| RY16 | 6 | 4 | 67 | 0 | 50 | 50 | 0 |

LYNX

During the report period an average of 1 lynx per year were harvested in Unit 1D. However, no lynx were harvested from RY13 to RY15 and only 1 was harvested in RY12 (Table 5). In RY16, 3 lynx were harvested which was the highest harvest during the report period. We also noted an increase in anecdotal observations by drivers traveling highways from Haines and Skagway to Canada. Trapping was the only method used to take lynx during the report period. Only 1 juvenile was harvested during the report period.

Table 5. Harvest and method of take for Lynx sealed in Unit 1D, Southeast Alaska, RY12–RY16.

| Regulatory Year | Total Harvest | Successful Participants | Percent Juveniles ^a | Method of Take (%) | | | |
|-----------------|---------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------|---------|--------|---------|
| | | | | Shot | Trapped | Snared | Unknown |
| RY12 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 100 | 0 | 0 |
| RY13 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| RY14 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| RY15 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| RY16 | 3 | 3 | 33 | 0 | 100 | 0 | 0 |

^a Juvenile lynx measure (length) \leq 34".

Hunter Residency and Success

Haines and Skagway residents accounted for most of the harvest in the unit. Success rates are unknown because only successful take is reported.

Harvest Chronology

Chronology of harvest normally depends on the timing of adequate snowfall and freeze up which increases access by snow machine. Marten harvest was highest during December. Nineteen marten were harvested when the season was closed in RY13 (2 in March and 17 in November). December and January had the highest harvest of river otters during the report period with only 3 otters in total taken in February during this report period. In November of RY14, beaver harvest was 3 times higher (15 beavers) than any other month during the report period (Table 6). This may have been due to the low precipitation as all 15 beavers were taken by the same trapper via highway vehicle from logging roads. Wolverine harvest was highest in January and only 1 wolverine was taken in November.

Transport Methods

Most marten trapped during the report period were accessed by snow machine. River otter trappers primarily trapped on skis/foot or highway vehicle for transportation. Beaver trappers most often used highway vehicles for transportation. Snow machines were the primary mode of transportation used to harvest wolverine and lynx most years. However, in RY15 skis/foot was the most common transport method used to harvest wolverine (Table 7).

Other Mortality

One beaver was harvested under a nuisance permit. Two river otters were killed by highway vehicles and 1 drowned in a crab pot.

Alaska Board of Game Actions and Emergency Orders

In January of 2014 the Skagway Assembly contacted ADF&G with concerns about trapping. ADF&G biologists from Douglas attended Skagway Assembly meetings in an effort to help facilitate compromise. A compromise was never reached, and the Skagway Assembly passed a trapping ordinance in June of 2014. The ordinance closed some areas to trapping and placed restrictions on methods and means in other areas. The Alaska Department of Law contacted the Municipality of Skagway to inform them that the ordinance (despite an amendment in 2015) exceeded their authority because regulation of hunting and trapping falls under the authority of the Board of Game (BOG). Department of Law encouraged the Skagway Assembly to address their concerns to the Upper Lynn Canal Advisory Committee and follow the BOG process. The Municipality submitted an Agenda Change Request to the BOG intending to have the issue addressed out of cycle. In June of 2015, ADF&G board support staff informed the municipality that their request was denied. Due to the steep terrain in the Skagway area, the ordinance essentially bans trapping in most accessible areas of the Municipality. This reduces opportunity for subsistence trapping and may have economic impacts on local trappers. At the department's recommendation, the Municipality of Skagway intends to submit a proposal for consideration at the January 2019 BOG meeting in Petersburg. Department staff will monitor the situation and help facilitate compromise to increase opportunity for trappers where possible.

Table 6. Unit 1D marten, river otter, beaver, wolverine, and lynx harvest chronology by total number, RY12–RY16.

| Regulatory Year | Month | | | | | | | <i>n</i> |
|--------------------|-----------------|-----|-----|-----|----------------|-----|-----|-----------------|
| | Nov | Dec | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | |
| <i>Marten</i> | | | | | | | | |
| RY12 | 0 | 112 | 68 | 32 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 212 |
| RY13 | 17 ^a | 140 | 40 | 16 | 2 ^a | 0 | 0 | 215 |
| RY14 | 0 | 43 | 36 | 20 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 99 |
| RY15 | 0 | 42 | 20 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 62 |
| RY16 | 0 | 85 | 81 | 29 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 195 |
| <i>River Otter</i> | | | | | | | | |
| RY12 | 0 | 3 | 6 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 10 |
| RY13 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 4 |
| RY14 | 0 | 3 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 9 |
| RY15 | 0 | 3 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 10 ^b |
| RY16 | 0 | 6 | 3 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 11 |
| <i>Beaver</i> | | | | | | | | |
| RY12 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 8 ^c |
| RY13 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 1 | 4 | 0 | 9 |
| RY14 | 15 | 0 | 4 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 24 |
| RY15 | 4 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5 |
| RY16 | 1 | 0 | 4 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 8 |
| <i>Wolverine</i> | | | | | | | | |
| RY12 | 1 | 3 | 5 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 10 |
| RY13 | 0 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 9 |
| RY14 | 0 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 |
| RY15 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 |
| RY16 | 0 | 1 | 4 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 6 |
| <i>Lynx</i> | | | | | | | | |
| RY12 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| RY13 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| RY14 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| RY15 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| RY16 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 |

^a Sealing records indicate harvest during a closed season.

^b Includes 1 otter that drowned in crab pot in June.

^c Includes 1 beaver taken under nuisance permit in September.

Table 7. Unit 1D marten, river otter, beaver, wolverine, and lynx harvest by transport method (%), RY12–RY16.

| Regulatory Year | Percent of Harvest | | | | | | | <i>n</i> |
|--------------------|--------------------|------|------|----------------|--------------|-----------------|---------|----------|
| | Airplane | Foot | Boat | 3 or 4-wheeler | Snow Machine | Highway Vehicle | Unknown | |
| <i>Marten</i> | | | | | | | | |
| RY12 | 0 | 9 | 9 | 0 | 73 | 6 | 3 | 212 |
| RY13 | 0 | 15 | 1 | 0 | 70 | 4 | 10 | 215 |
| RY14 | 7 | 5 | 0 | 34 | 25 | 15 | 14 | 99 |
| RY15 | 0 | 8 | 0 | 42 | 32 | 18 | 0 | 62 |
| RY16 | 0 | 19 | 0 | 14 | 67 | 0 | 0 | 195 |
| <i>River Otter</i> | | | | | | | | |
| RY12 | 0 | 30 | 20 | 0 | 0 | 50 | 0 | 10 |
| RY13 | 0 | 50 | 0 | 0 | 25 | 25 | 0 | 4 |
| RY14 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 100 | 0 | 9 |
| RY15 | 0 | 0 | 10 | 0 | 10 | 80 | 0 | 10 |
| RY16 | 0 | 91 | 0 | 0 | 9 | 0 | 0 | 11 |
| <i>Beaver</i> | | | | | | | | |
| RY12 | 0 | 50 | 0 | 0 | 50 | 0 | 0 | 8 |
| RY13 | 0 | 56 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 44 | 0 | 9 |
| RY14 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 100 | 0 | 24 |
| RY15 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 100 | 0 | 5 |
| RY16 | 0 | 50 | 38 | 0 | 0 | 12 | 0 | 8 |
| <i>Wolverine</i> | | | | | | | | |
| RY12 | 0 | 30 | 0 | 0 | 70 | 0 | 0 | 10 |
| RY13 | 0 | 12 | 0 | 0 | 44 | 44 | 0 | 9 |
| RY14 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 100 | 0 | 0 | 4 |
| RY15 | 0 | 75 | 0 | 0 | 25 | 0 | 0 | 4 |
| RY16 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 100 | 0 | 0 | 6 |
| <i>Lynx</i> | | | | | | | | |
| RY12 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 100 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| RY13 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| RY14 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| RY15 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| RY16 | 0 | 34 | 0 | 0 | 66 | 0 | 0 | 3 |

The Board of Game (BOG) expanded the coyote season to align with wolf season in Units 1–5 beginning in RY13. The wolverine season was extended to 28 February and shooting became a legal method for harvesting beaver under a trapping license effective in RY15. At the March 2016 Statewide BOG meeting the board discontinued the requirement for all traps and snares to be marked with a trapper’s permanent identification number or to post a sign nearby with identifying information.

No emergency orders for furbearers in Unit 1D were issued during the report period.

Recommendations for Activity 2.1.

Continue.

3. Habitat Assessment-Enhancement

The Department has not engaged in habitat assessment or enhancement for furbearers during this reporting period.

NONREGULATORY MANAGEMENT PROBLEMS OR NEEDS

Data Recording and Archiving

- Data sheets from aerial surveys are scanned and stored on the DWC server and the local assistant area biologist’s hard drive.
- Original survey data sheets are stored in file folders located in the Douglas assistant area biologist’s office.
- Historical notes and data sheets are being scanned to a digital format for storage on the Region I Server.

Agreements

None.

Permitting

None.

Conclusions and Management Recommendations

It is not feasible to set meaningful harvest objectives without population estimates. Some demographic information is available from sealing records, but harvest may not be a good index of short-term population trends because effort is affected by fur prices. It may be possible to develop better population monitoring techniques for species in which sealing is required. This would likely require consultation with a biometrician. For species in which sealing is not required (e.g., coyote, mink, etc.) we must rely on a limited amount of anecdotal information.

The strategy used to manage furbearers has been to expect populations to self-regulate trapper effort and harvest. Harvest fluctuates likely based on trapping effort, fur prices, and population trends but is generally thought to be sustainable. No changes in seasons or bag limits are recommended at this time.

II. Project Review and RY17–RY21 Plan

Review of Management Direction

MANAGEMENT DIRECTION

The existing management direction and goals appropriately direct management of furbearers in Unit 1D. The management direction for Unit 1D ensures that furbearers will persist as part of the natural ecosystem and ensures continued trapping (on applicable species) and viewing opportunities. There is no indication that the long-term sustainability of the furbearer populations or that statewide goals (ADF&G 1976) for human uses cannot be met; therefore, the Unit 1D management direction should continue to be that furbearers will be managed in a manner that complements the statewide furbearer management goals. Furbearers are currently managed across Unit 1 as a whole. Unit 1 is divided into 4 administrative units (1A, 1B, 1C, and 1D), however there are no area-specific issues in Unit 1D that require management at this scale. However, increasing tourism, proposed timber harvest, and mineral extraction may have negative impacts on some species. Potential impacts will depend on the extent of future disturbance and habitat loss. We will continue to work with other agencies and provide information to avoid or mitigate these effects where possible. Better population data including information about habitat use would aid in this effort.

GOALS

To provide the following:

1. An optimum harvest of furbearers.
2. The greatest opportunity to participate in hunting and trapping furbearers.

CODIFIED OBJECTIVES

Amounts Reasonably Necessary for Subsistence Uses

The Board of Game (BOG) has made a positive subsistence finding for furbearers in Unit 1D with the amount necessary for subsistence at 90% of the harvestable portion of each population for each species.

Intensive Management

Not applicable.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES

1. Provide information to the BOG for maintenance of viewable and harvestable populations of furbearers.
2. Seal harvested beaver, marten, river otter, lynx, and wolverine pelts as they are presented for sealing.
3. Contact reliable observers for general information about the status and trends of furbearer populations, including the use of an annual trapper survey.

REVIEW OF MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

1. Population Status and Trend

ACTIVITY 1.1.

Record anecdotal reports and observations during surveys for other species.

Data Needs

Incidental observations are insufficient for estimating the population or detecting changes that would trigger management action. Statistical estimates of furbearers derived from a sample-based estimator including a measure of the precision would be needed to detect change in the population.

Methods

GPS locations and characteristics are recorded for any furbearers observed during other field work. Most observations occur during spring deer pellet, mortality and body condition surveys. Anecdotal reports are recorded to the maximum level of detail available.

2. Mortality-Harvest Monitoring

ACTIVITY 2.1.

Monitor harvest through sealing records.

Data Needs

Harvest must be assessed to understand the potential impact of furbearer harvest.

Methods

We collected harvest data by sealing hides of beaver, marten, fisher, wolverine, and otter taken by trappers. We recorded location and date of harvest, method of take, transportation mode, and sex. Otter and beaver hides were measured. Sealing must occur by ADF&G or a State appointed sealer within 30 days of the close of the season. These data are entered into ADF&G's Wildlife Information Network database (Winfonet). Harvest data were summarized by regulatory year (RY), which begins 1 July and ends June 30 (e.g., RY15 = 1 July 2015–30 June 2016).

3. Habitat Assessment-Enhancement

No habitat assessment or enhancement is planned.

NONREGULATORY MANAGEMENT PROBLEMS OR NEEDS

Data Recording and Archiving

Observations during aerial surveys will be recorded on data sheets and entered into an excel spreadsheet located on the Douglas area office server.

Species wildlife management reports and plans for furbearers in Unit 1D will be stored online at:

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=librarypublications.wildlifemanagement>. Memos, electronic data, and hard copies will be stored in the Douglas assistant area biologist files in Douglas.

Agreements

None.

Permitting

None.

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